

Overview

In February 2005, the Washington D.C. Smart Growth Alliance and ULI-Washington District Council hosted **Reality Check Washington**, a day-long participatory planning exercise that brought together a diverse group of community stakeholders and policy leaders from 21 jurisdictions in the greater Washington D.C. region. Nearly 300 regional political, business, development, community, and environmental leaders participated in analyzing and developing alternative growth scenarios for the area.

The goals/objectives of the communications plan for **Reality Check Washington** were to

1. Focus attention on the Reality Check exercise among stakeholders
2. Further understanding of the Reality Check exercise among stakeholders
3. Galvanize action for regional planning among Reality Check stakeholders so that the serious ramifications of current growth patterns and trends in the region can be appropriately considered and addressed.

Six months prior to event – August 2004

- Develop and finalize communications strategy with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee
- Develop outline for story placements about Reality Check
- Obtain images/develop artwork to provide with story placements
- Review list of Group of 40 members for potential publications in which to place Reality Check articles
- Write and place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.) (Contemplated is a 1,000-word template story, with revisions to suit specific audiences of target publications.)
- Develop and update media list
- Identify potential magazines and other publications with long lead-times (Development, Building, etc.) for story placement opportunities
- Identify lists of public officials for potential small group meetings to inform the officials about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Five months prior to event – September 2004

- Develop lists of local officials and reporters for potential small group meetings in September 2004
- Finalize list of potential magazines and other publications with long lead-times (Development, Building, etc.) for story placement opportunities; begin placing stories
- Continue to place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.)
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Update media list as needed
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Four months prior to event – October 2004

- Plan and coordinate small group meetings with public officials to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Continue to place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.)
- Continue placing stories with magazines and other publications with long lead-times
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Update media list as needed
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Three months prior to event – November 2004

- Media relations training session with Reality Check representatives
- Develop media interview plans for reporter interviews; conduct pre-briefs as needed with Reality Check representatives and local officials
- Continue placing stories with magazines and other publications with long lead-times
- Discuss possibility of joint press release about Reality Check with Public Information Officers with participating jurisdictions
- Plan and coordinate small group meetings with local reporters, including one representative from the local government (at least one meeting per County/City)
- Follow-up calls to local reporters from meetings with local govt. reps
- Develop outline for electronic press kit
- Continue to place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.)
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Update media list as needed
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Two months prior to event – December 2004

- Begin planning for media center at Reality Check
- Create and distribute electronic press kit
- Plan and hold news conference with regional officials to announce the Reality Check event
- Write and distribute press release announcing the Reality Check
- Continue to place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.)
- Follow-up calls to reporters
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Update media list as needed
- Obtain estimates and book photographer for Reality Check
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Four weeks prior to event – January 2005

- Finalize plans for media center at Reality Check
- Continue to place stories about Reality Check in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.)
- Follow-up calls to reporters
- Identify and coordinate presentations to stakeholder organizations to inform them about Reality Check and its goals, and to obtain commitment to post-Reality Check implementation
- Update media list as needed
- Monthly updates and meetings as needed with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

One week prior to event

- Write and distribute media advisory
- Draft post-event news release
- Confirm photographer, provide shot sheet
- Follow-up calls to reporters
- Update media list as needed
- Develop day-of event media interview plan for Reality Check representatives; prebrief of reps as necessary
- Finalize plans/details for Reality Check media center
- Pre-event update with SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee

Post-event

- Finalize and distribute post-event news release and photographs
- Follow-up calls to reporters
- Place success articles in SGA Group of 40 member publications (NAIOP, NVBIA, Coalition for Smarter Growth, etc.), house organs of local jurisdictions, and industry publications
- Develop post-event report for SGA staff and Reality Check Communications/Outreach Committee