Academic and Community Collaboration: Partnership Opportunities Await!

Dr. Tim Chapin, Professor
Department of Urban & Regional Planning
Florida State University

tchapin@fsu.edu
Engagement is a Must for Universities

• Students desire “real world” training opportunities

• Many faculty are “Scholars of Practice”, interested in policy initiatives, strategic investments, program evaluations, etc.

• Universities are taking leadership roles in their local communities

• For PAB Accredited Programs, they must: “ensure that each graduate demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for competent professional planning in diverse occupational and institutional settings.”
Partnerships are a Must for Communities

• With limited staff and financial resources, communities need to be entrepreneurial

• University Partnerships provide a wonderful means of advancing community initiatives:
  – Quality work, with expert guidance from faculty
  – A high energy, low cost labor force of students
  – Bring new ideas to the table
  – Great fit for “big picture” initiatives (e.g. developing a Regional Food Systems Plan) or “project-specific” work (e.g. Corridor Studies, Neighborhood Assessments)
  – Offer the benefit of neutrality
Attributes of Successful Community-University Partnerships

- The Community partner understands the academic calendar and how that may impact work flow
- The University partner engages with and understands the needs of the client
- The Community partner understands that this work is not costless to the University
- The University partner does not over-promise, as ultimately much of the work is done by young professionals
- Both the University and Community partner recognize the educational opportunity and responsibility embedded in these partnerships
- A detailed Scope of Work is negotiated with clear deliverables, timelines, and payment
Goals for this Session

• Showcase case studies of excellent Community-University partnerships in New Mexico and Florida

• Illustrate the planning opportunities possible through Town & Gown partnerships

• Demonstrate the power of real world projects for educating the next wave of planners

• Encourage audience members to connect with nearby and regional university planning programs