DECISION MAGIC

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The Democracy Pie

Open to Anyone

Specific Invitation
Open to Anyone

- e.g., surveys, hearings, voting
- Anyone! (at least in theory)
- Same individuals, same kinds of folks, “thin,” non-deliberative

Specific Invitation

- e.g., stakeholders, outreach to marginalized communities
- Can be targeted & specialized
- Often same individuals, often a more top-down orientation

Lottery Selection

- e.g., lottery-selected Panels
- Guarantees new & diverse folks, in-depth deliberation, Panelist-led
- Limited participants, takes time

Better metaphor: more Democracy Pies!
How a Citizens’ Assembly Works

1. Use a democratic lottery to select a bunch of people.
2. They come together in an assembly at small tables with a neutral facilitator at each table.
3. Experts and others address the assembly to ensure everyone is aware of the facts, diverse viewpoints, & proposed options.
4. Participants deliberate, listen and talk to each other, and give reasons for their ideas.
5. The citizens’ assembly decides on what is the best way forward.
Nine reasons to hold a Citizens' Assembly

(adopted from the Sortition Foundation)

TRUSTED
People trust the outcomes as decisions are made by 'people like me'.

FAIR
Randomly selecting participants gives every person an equal chance of being selected, regardless of age, gender, location or any other characteristic.

EFFECTIVE
Hundreds of examples from around the world have shown that citizens' assemblies work. Research shows that diverse groups of people are better decision-makers than homogenous groups.

INFORMED
People develop an informed, critical understanding of complex policy decisions, hearing from and questioning a variety of experts and stakeholders.

INCLUSIVE
They increase the diversity of voices in the decision-making process, allowing very different people to find common ground by focusing on wider community needs.

POWERFUL
They open up the space for change when tackling 'wicked problems' where interest or community groups are blocking progress. They give decision-makers increased confidence that they have broad public support for a proposal.

INNOVATIVE
You will be at the forefront of democratic innovation and citizen empowerment and engagement.

TRANSPARENT
Using stratified random selection and a clear, open process reduces the influence of vested interests — you will not be engaging with the 'usual suspects'.

DELIBERATIVE
Assembly members work together to identify the pros, cons and trade-offs of policy options, giving you high-quality public judgements backed by considered, easily understood reasons.

LEGITIMATE
They increase the legitimacy of public policymaking by enabling a representative cross-section of people to inform the decision.
FIGURE 8. REGIONAL TRENDS OF DIFFERENT DELIBERATIVE MODELS

Note: The colour indicates the dominant deliberative model; the number indicates the total of representative deliberative processes in a country. The map excludes international processes that took place in more than one country.

Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2020).
Figure 9. Regional Trends of Different Deliberative Models: Europe

Note: The colour indicates the dominant deliberative model; the number indicates the total of representative deliberative processes in a country. The map excludes international processes that took place in more than one country.
Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2020).
*This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.
Flats Arterial Community Panel
THE WISDOM OF CROWDS
Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few
JAMES SUROWIECKI

‘Dazzling . . . the most brilliant book on business, society and everyday life that I’ve read in years’
Malcolm Gladwell, author of The Tipping Point
As the initial pool of problem solvers becomes large, the best-performing agents necessarily become similar in the space of problem solvers. Their relatively greater ability is more than offset by their lack of problem-solving diversity.
Democratic Lottery + Deliberation

**The People**
- Randomly selected – new voices
- Reflective of the public – a microcosm
- Panelists paid
- Result: inherent legitimacy

**The Process**
- Highly deliberative
- Tightly structured, iterative process
- Product-oriented
- Transparent & public
- Result: efficient process & high quality solutions
A Different Kind of Democracy

Reimagining Civic Participation Through Lottery-Selected Panels

Linn Davis
Program Co-Director
Core Principles:

Representation
New individuals, different types of folks, reflects the local area, considers equity

Resources
Stipend to Panelists, all expenses paid, professional facilitation, outside expertise

Reciprocal trust
Staff ⇔ Panel, Panel does 100% its own work, feedback loops, indep. evaluation
Mailings sent to 5-10,000 randomly selected addresses

~3% of recipients respond, including demographic info

Democratic Lottery in public: random and representative

Selected Panelists are supported with logistics & materials

Lottery-Selection Process
Deliberative Process

- 🚨 Publicity about the Panel
- 📖 Indep. evaluation & observation
- 👥 Diverse lineup of stakeholders & experts presents to the Panel
- 🙋‍♂️ Panelists deliberate on the issue & select additional presenters
- 😱💬😀💬 Small group work continues, largely away from staff/public
- 📄 Panel prioritizes recommendations, drafts & edits
- 🙌 Panel presents its work & follows through with advocacy for it

Throughout the Process
City of Eugene
Review Panel on Housing
Nov. 2020 - April 2021
Eugene in One (Virtual) Room
Eugene Review Panel Selection

Selected: 30 Panelists (plus alts.)
After 5 months: 28 Panelists

Representative on:
- Geographic Location
- Age
- Race & Ethnicity
- Gender
- Experience of Disability
- Educational Attainment
- Renter/Homeowner
Process Overview

Fall 2020: Guiding Principles

● Panel heard from 20+ stakeholders and experts
  ○ Most selected by the Panel itself, from a list

● Panel drafted and prioritized Guiding Principles

Spring 2021: Review the City’s Work

Two feedback loops:

1. Panel reviewed code concepts & crafted general public engagement recs.
2. Panel reviewed draft code
Elements of the Review Panel Process

- Healthy Democracy: 14 process & support staff
- City Staff: 3 primary contacts
- Third-Party Evaluators: 10+ deliberative experts
- Outside Presenters: 20 experts & stakeholders
- Steering Committee: 12 members
- Review Panel: 30 Panelists
Support for the Panel

Healthy Democracy
14 process & support staff

City Staff
3 primary contacts

Third-Party Evaluators
10+ deliberative experts

Review Panel
29 Panelists

Logistics Team
- Panelist Care & Log. Lead
- Panelist Tech Support
- Zoom Mgmt.
- Presntr. Liaison

Process Team
- Design Lead
- Process Advisor(s)
- Co-Moderator
- 4 Asst. Mods.
- Prgm. Support

Outside Presenters
20 experts & stakeholders

Randomized Small Groups

Task Cmtes.
- Information Summary (x2)
- Wordsmithing
- Process Oversight
- Outreach

Steering Committee
12 members
Information to the Panel

- 29 Panelists
  - Review Panel
- 14 process & support staff
  - Healthy Democracy
- 3 primary contacts
  - City Staff
- 10+ deliberative experts
  - Third-Party Evaluators
- 12 members
  - Steering Committee
- 20 experts & stakeholders
  - Outside Presenters
- Stakeholders
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council
Recommendations from the Panel

- **Healthy Democracy**
  - 14 process & support staff

- **City Staff**
  - 3 primary contacts

- **Third-Party Evaluators**
  - 10+ deliberative experts

- **Steering Committee**
  - 12 members

- **Outside Presenters**
  - 20 experts & stakeholders

- **Review Panel**
  - 29 Panelists
Deliverables (written by the Panel with no edits from staff)
Lottery-deliberation at a smaller scale

The Basics
- **Scope**: less extensive
  - e.g., City Councilor pay, neighborhood corridor plan
- **Panel**: 20-24 Panelists
- **Cost**: $35-50,000
- **Info inputs**: 8-12

Other Creative Ideas
- Share a single Panel between multiple small cities in a region, or between multiple agencies
- Opportunities to use pieces of lottery or deliberation
- Local capacity-building
Lottery-deliberation at a larger scale

The Basics
- **Scope**: more extensive
  - e.g., comprehensive plan, neighborhood-based system
- **Panel**: 40-200 Panelists
- **Cost**: $100-300,000
- **Info inputs**: 30+ presenters, tours, surveys, listening sess., charrette

Two-Tiered Concept
- Lottery-selected Commission: democratize agenda-setting, governance & follow-up
- Commission oversees separate lottery-selected, issue-specific or agency-specific Panels.
Common Concerns
Random People Aren’t Experts

- Random & representative Panels have an inherent credibility with the public that even experts lack.
- The basis of every Panel is evidence – expert and stakeholder Q&A is the whole first half of any process.
- All information requires interpretation; the question is only who is doing the interpreting.
- Panels have a proven track-record of identifying reliable information, even in highly political contexts.

(See healthydemocracy.org/impact)
Anyone Should Be Able to Participate

- Stakeholders are essential to these processes – on advisory committees & as advocate presenters
- But advocates aren't always the right deliberators
- Open-in-theory doesn't usually mean open-in-practice
  - Traditional public hearings and committees typically feature the same few voices (like mine!)
  - Let's focus on outcomes: Are we actually getting broad-based participation or just allowing for it?
- Lotteries allow us all a chance to engage deeply
This Seems Expensive

- This is not just public engagement; it is an investment in new civic leaders and in new civic infrastructure.
- Plus, it typically costs no more than existing methods.
- Benefits go beyond recommendations, both for Panelists in the room and a broader culture of trust.
- Also consider the quality and credibility of decisions:
  - We believe broader legitimacy and stronger processes yield better policies, more public support, and long-term savings.
Isn’t This Equality, Not Equity?

● Equality is a minimum guarantee
  ○ Democratic lotteries guarantee representation on 7+ demographic factors – all at the same time
● It’s only a minimum. So many equity opportunities:
  ○ In setting targets (e.g., using K-12 demographics, special targets for those particularly impacted)
  ○ In informational inputs (e.g., stakeholder outreach)
  ○ In the process itself (e.g., support for Panelist-organized, identity-based caucusing)
Many of us consider [this process] to be our most meaningful experience in politics. And for those of us who have struggled to keep faith in the political system, it helped to restore it.

—Joint Statement by 2016 Massachusetts Citizens' Initiative Review Panelists
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