

## **Power Mapping (From Mark Winne's Chesapeake Training Institute Presentation, April 14, 2016)**

Power Mapping is a tool that groups can use both formally and informally to plan (map) a strategy to achieve a specific goal. In the case of food policy councils, it can be used to identify who and what will be helpful (or necessary) in achieving a policy or program goal. The "who" and the "what" come with relative amounts of power in terms of supporting or opposing your goal.

On the matrix's "X" axis, groups and people are arrayed according to how strongly they support or oppose the goal. On the matrix's "Y" axis, groups and people are arrayed from how powerful, useful, or effective they are, relative to others, in helping to achieve that goal. The task for the group that's planning the campaign is to place your different players, according to your best judgment as to their power and degree of support, at the appropriate place along the axis. While this exercise is generally not necessary if you're trying to achieve a relatively simple goal, say asking the city planner if the food policy council could have someone appointed to a new land use task force, it is a good exercise to use when the complexity is great and achieving the goal is likely to be difficult.

Using a fairly diverse group of members with different perspectives on the problem to brainstorm the "who" and the "what" is also a good idea. It will enable you to develop a longer list of prospective players as well as to gain a better assessment of their relative power and support/opposition. This will produce a much richer and more accurate plan. Remember, you can never take it for granted that someone is either for or against your goal. Everyone should be consulted, and you should always be prepared for surprises.

The example I have used on the matrix is an actual campaign that the Hartford (Conn.) Advisory Commission on Food Policy undertook during the time I was there. It was based on the premise that most of the city of Hartford was a "food desert" and the public transportation system (bus routes) did nothing to connect residents of lower income neighborhoods to the high quality chain supermarkets that existed just outside of the city. When we realized that it was going to take a very long time to bring a supermarket into neighborhoods that had been abandoned, we took a look at the city's bus routes to see if they could be realigned to accommodate food shoppers, especially in lower income areas.

Our goal was to convince public transportation authorities to establish at least one major new bus route that would connect residents of the city's lowest income area directly to a major new suburban supermarket that had been developed about four miles away. Our research included a large "ridership survey" (conducted by students at a local college) which found that between 20 and 25 percent of the bus riders were using them to grocery shop (it also found that getting to health care facilities and the local WIC offices were other major uses which turned out to be important information later). We also examined public transportation and found that no existing bus route took people from the city directly to high quality, affordable food retail outlets. And lastly, we discovered that there were funds controlled by the regional transportation district and the state's Commissioner of Transportation that could be used to develop and operate (subsidize) new bus routes.

The points plotted on the power map were all individuals, groups, or agencies currently operating in Connecticut that our food policy council had identified as critical to meeting our goal. The groups in the lower right-hand quad were groups that were supportive and had a fairly high stake in success. However, they were relatively powerless in comparison to the those identified in the upper left-hand quad. Those listed in the lower left-hand quad were potential "losers" if customers were given

convenient access to better food stores. As such, they were initially opposed to plans for a new bus route but were appealed to by neighborhood groups and some local elected officials, and they eventually backed down. Groups in the upper right-hand quad, e.g. “bus guys” were the technical and planning staff who were essential to putting together the detailed plan for a new bus route. Working closely with them – in something of a modified planning charrette fashion – proved to be very valuable in presenting a convincing proposal. A solid proposal was combined with the political support of Hartford’s legislators, Mayor, and City Council. Somewhat unexpectedly, the use of buses by residents needing to get to a hospital and WIC clinic was very important since it made large health care institutions partners in our effort to design and develop a new bus route.

Ultimately, the state transportation department agreed to release funds to establish the new route known as the “L” Tower Avenue. Within a month of operation its ridership had exceeded the expectation for riders by 25 percent.

<p style="text-align: right;"><b>More power</b></p> <p>Governor State Commissioner of Transportation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regional Transportation District Transportation Planners “Bus Guys” (technical experts)</p> <p><b>Oppose</b></p> <p>Politically connected Merchant</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">City Legislative Delegation Mayor and City Council</p> <p>Chain Supermarket</p>
<p>Neighb. Merchant Assoc. Bodega owners Taxi Companies</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Less Power</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Support</b></p> <p>Neighborhood Organizations Faith Communities Health care clinics WIC Program Non-profit organizations City’s Food Policy Council State Food Policy Council Research supporting the need Local College Local Media</p>