



# Sample Briefing Slides with Commentary

Prof. Xavier de Souza Briggs

# Overview

- **This file includes sample slides from each part of a briefing** (title slide, summary/overview, body of the briefing, summary/next steps). I've added text boxes with brief comments.
- **Please review this material on-screen only and/or print via your home system.**
- **And remember, the visuals, text, numbers (if appropriate) should work together as part of an *integrated story***, told in a clear sequence, for the busy, easily distracted decision maker(s) you're briefing. Visual elements are not merely "aids," and text is often key to delivering the story of the visuals. See comments ...

Good luck -- Xav

# Title slides

- Should have an engaging image or color background but not be distracting (too cute, alarming, etc.) or off topic.
- Should include the basics: A name for the briefing (ideally, one that captures the core puzzle or focus), the date, the audience/sponsor name, and the presenters' names.

# Briefing title was here

This is great eye candy—a very dramatic image. Unfortunately, it was only loosely connected to the focus of the briefing, so the team dropped this image (in favor of one that fit well) after the dry run.

City - date

Name of the team



This image is in the [public domain](#).

## Briefing title was here

Presented by: Student 1  
Student 2  
Student 3  
Etc ...

By comparison, this one is clean, takes us to a focal site, and conveys most of the essentials without making the eye work too hard. Should *always* include the briefing date, though, and usually the sponsor name (audience) or setting, too.

# Briefing title was here

**Audience**  
**Location of the briefing**  
**Date went here**

**Team gave itself a name (here)**

Student names

This variation de-emphasizes the image details but still strongly signals “place,” plus delivers the basics in a readily understood format: Title stands out in its own panel of color, the rest is super-imposed, etc.

# Summary slides

- Briefings should generally begin with a thank you, an intro of your team members, minimal background and then your major points, so a summary slide of your major points often appears at the start and finish (as a “bookend”). As background, indicate what you were analyzing (very briefly, as a reminder of your scope) and not just what you concluded about it.
- Label it as you choose: Summary, Our Conclusions, Scope and Key Findings, etc.
- This slide may double as a preview slide if it clearly signals the structure of your briefing, else add a second, distinct Preview slide.

# Summary of action points

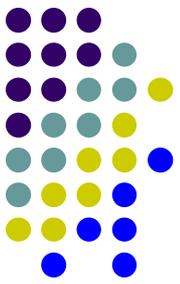
This immediately signals the listener that you've distilled what they should DO ("action points"), all in one place. It does not, on its own, signal the scope or any background, though, which is fine as long as you compensate elsewhere

Recommendation #1 in a simple, declarative sentence  
(went here).

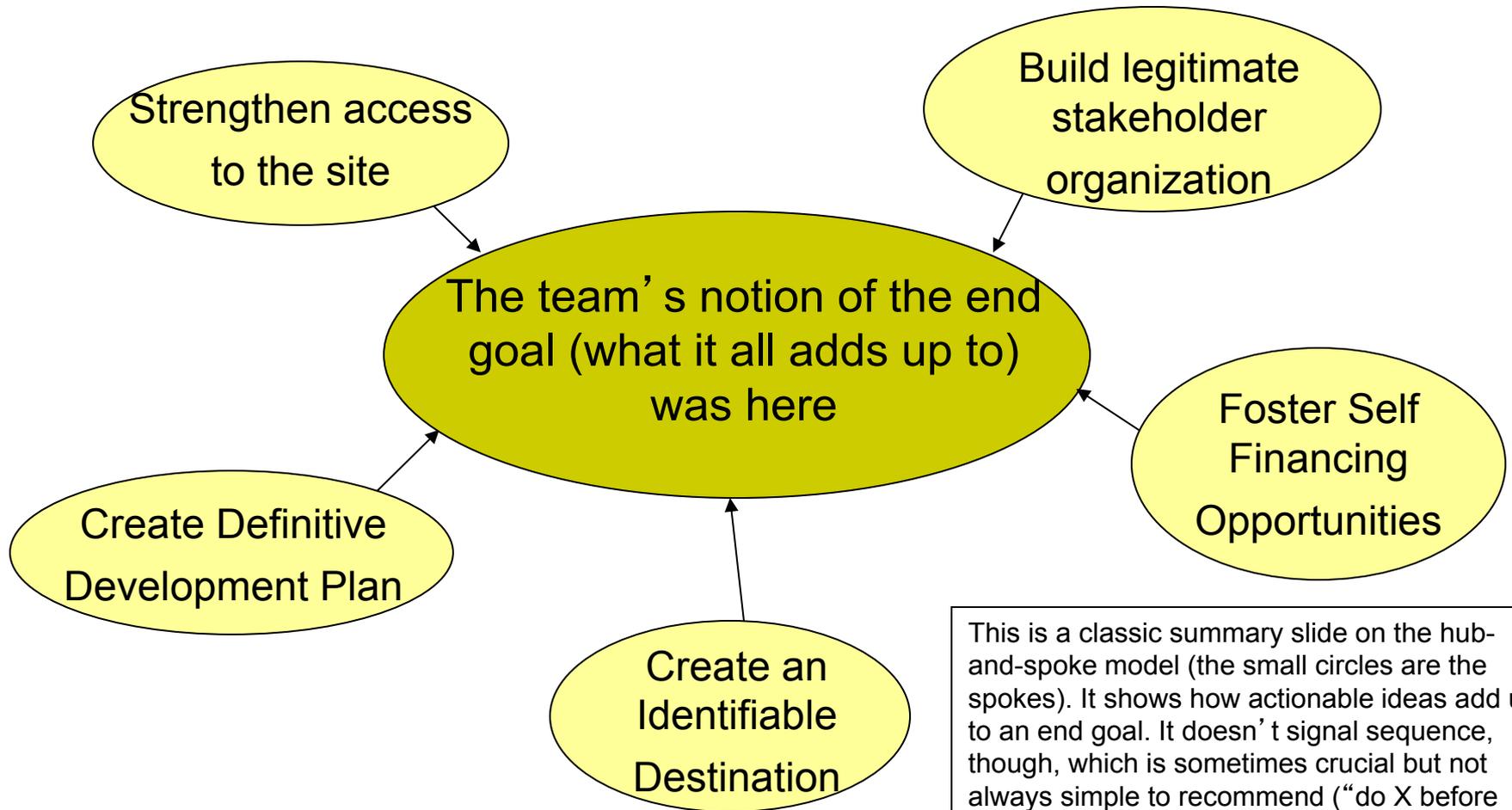
Recommendation #2 in a simple, declarative sentence  
(went here).

Recommendation #3 in a simple, declarative sentence  
(went here).

[and the three were logically sequenced: 1 should come before 2, which set the stage for 3, etc.]



# A Development Agenda



This is a classic summary slide on the hub-and-spoke model (the small circles are the spokes). It shows how actionable ideas add up to an end goal. It doesn't signal sequence, though, which is sometimes crucial but not always simple to recommend ("do X before Y"). The team envisioned a set of mutually reinforcing, concurrent steps.

# Our Scope

- ✓ Evaluate XYZ ...
- ✓ Identify Key Assumptions
- ✓ Challenge Weak Assumptions
- ✓ Issue Further Recommendations

The layout is simple and effective, and the team used this well up front to say, in effect, “this is what we covered ... check, check ... and this is what you’ ll hear ...” In this instance, one would want to be sure to match the scope elements precisely (even if we must summarize). Don’ t headline “scope” but invent—in the form of something we can’ t quite recognize—your own twist on the scope! Also, the word “further” is extraneous here and should be dropped. Make every word count, and use no more than you must.

# Upfront Recommendation

*The XYZ [current] plan should move forward, but with the following considerations:*

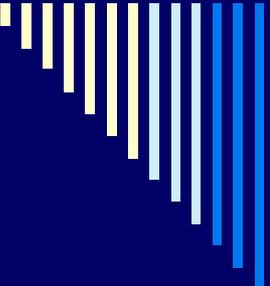
## The Plan Must Be Improved Through:

- ✓ *Main idea #1 here*
- ✓ *Main ideas #2 here*
- ✓ *Main idea #3 here*

This one is well-conceived: Headline a “bottom-line” general recommendation about an existing plan (dump it? use parts? Etc.) and then the team’s main ideas for how to improve on it. The word “Upfront” should be drooped, though. It’s the way the team thought about this (“placing it upfront”), not the way the briefee would (we expect your main ideas upfront). Also, “considerations” is an over-used, imprecise word. One could instead say “Move forward with the XYZ [Plan Name] but improve it in three key dimensions:

# Body slides

- These are the slides between the “frontmatter” (title, summary, perhaps preview) and whatever you use to finish (summary, next steps, etc.). These slides represent your core material (any additional background plus mainly analysis of the issues).
- These should follow good slide etiquette: thoughtfully chosen layouts and colors, avoid distractions, try to balance words (not too many, ever, just a few points per slide) and images and numbers/charts. Avoid excess “decoration,” but do use visuals to help tell your story.
- And the most important rule of all: Each slide should have a message, which should be intelligible without your voice-over. That is, the slide should function as a stand-alone point in your larger sequence (the slide handout might be passed on to key players who couldn't attend the briefing, and even your listeners need clear messages consistently).



# Evaluation of the current plan

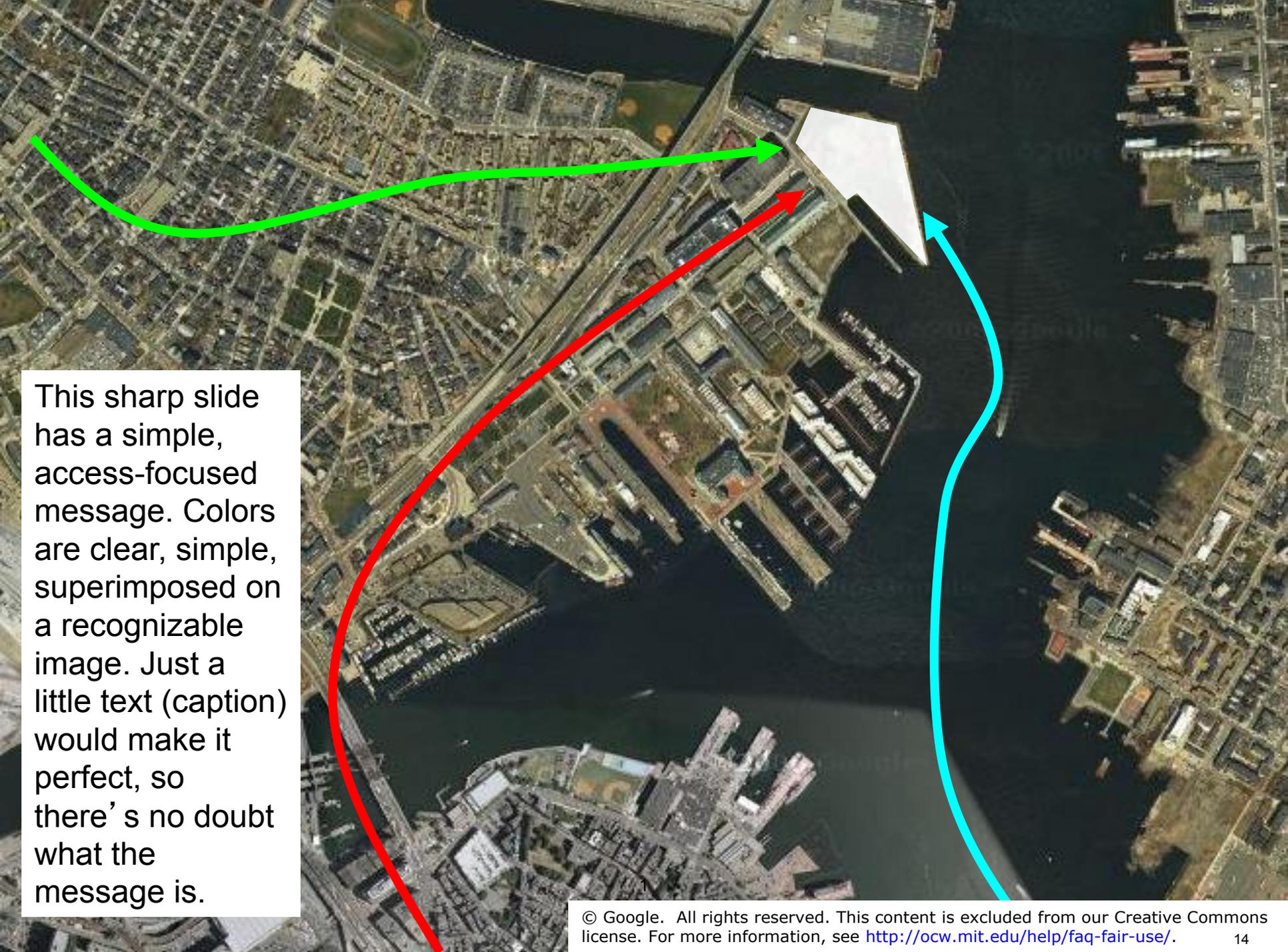
## □ Strengths

- Addresses XYZ well.
- Engaged stakeholders and secured public support
- Celebrates rich history of the area
- Element Z engages diverse interests

## □ Weaknesses

- Small, scattered element Y's fail to create signature attraction for the area
- Relies on actors with limited capacity
- Overdevelops subarea Y

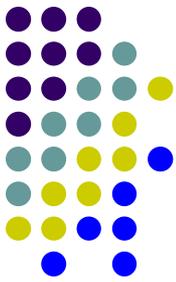
It just works: The title is lifted straight from the scope ("evaluate the current plan ...") and the two lists form a logical pair and are concise in their contents. One could further streamline it visually: The words "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" don't need bullet markers (the squares). The underline is enough.



This sharp slide has a simple, access-focused message. Colors are clear, simple, superimposed on a recognizable image. Just a little text (caption) would make it perfect, so there's no doubt what the message is.

This could be a bit better formatted, but it reflects an intuitive, readily grasped logic: “Things we should keep” vs. “things we can enhance” (or drop, as the case might be). It might be possible to use an annotated image to make the same points, but there’s probably too much text for that (the slide would be too “busy”). Note the very large header in the upper right: Need to simplify and perhaps shrink that a bit.

**Access**  
Destination  
Self-Finance  
Definitive Plan  
Stakeholder Organization



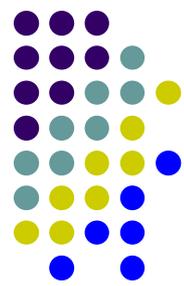
## Retain from current plan

- Element 1
- Element 2
- Element 3
- Element 4

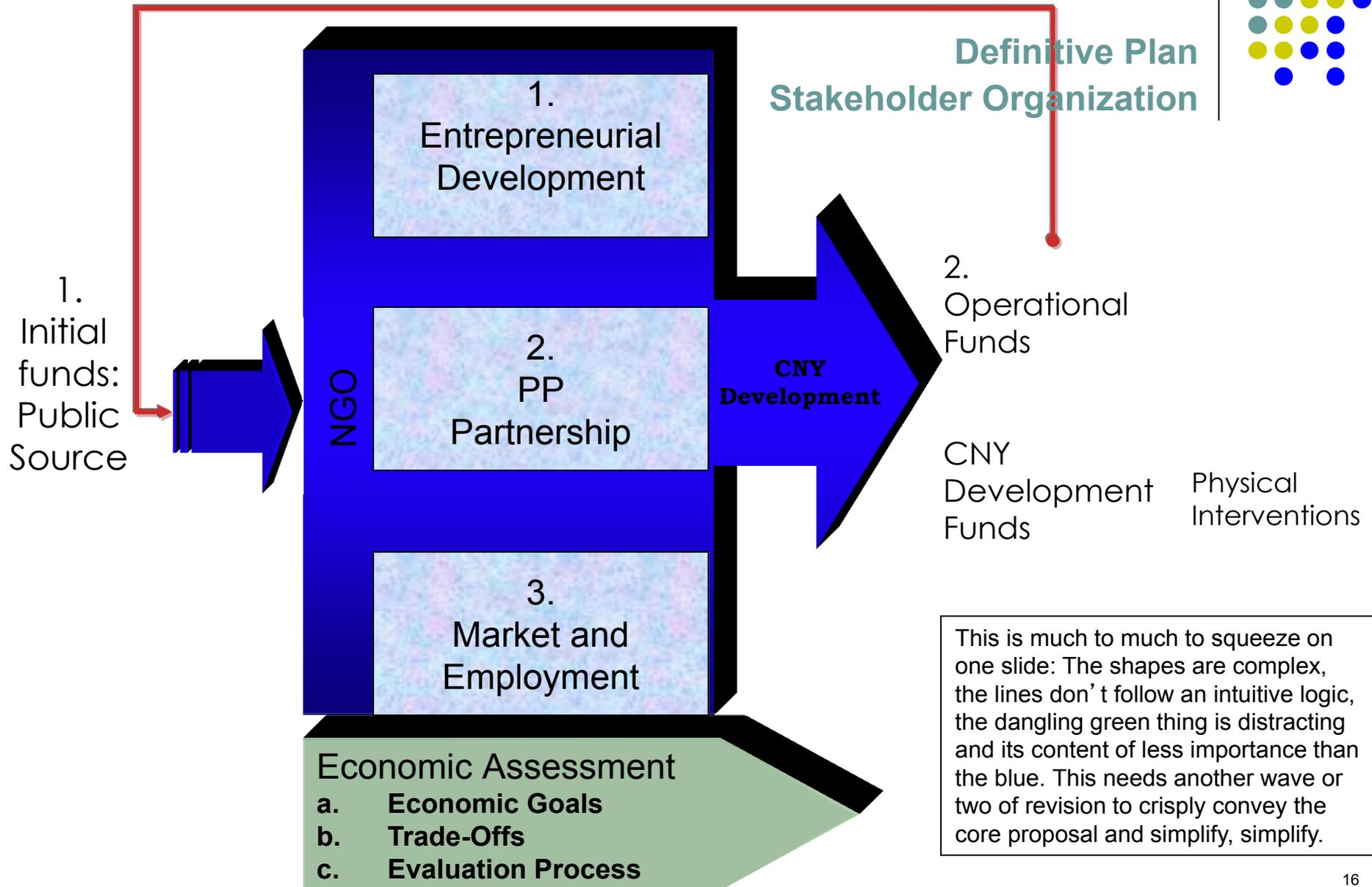
## Supplement/Expand

- Modification to element 1
- Modification to element 2
- Modification to element 3
- Modification to element 4

# Self-Finance



Definitive Plan  
Stakeholder Organization



# A strong partnership

**PROGRAMMING PARTNERS**

**LOCAL GROUPS**

**PRIVATE TENANTS**

**SCHOOLS**

**CITY & NATIONAL AGENCIES**

**NON-PROFITS**

Locally prominent  
executive director

**PARTNERSHIP  
NAME WAS HERE**

Strong board of  
directors

**STEWARDSHIP**

**OUTREACH**

**ADVOCACY**

**MARKETING**

**EVENTS & ART**

**EDUCATION**

This is a well-conceived and executed slide. It uses color, shapes, and boundaries (e.g., the dotted lines) effectively to make a centerpiece concept of the team's briefing accessible and engaging. The next slide is similar: We don't need to read every word to get the message and impact.

**BRIEFING TITLE WAS HERE**

# Synergy of public and private

## LOCAL GROUPS

XYG Neighborhood Association

The Local Coalition

Friends of the AREA

ABC Society

...

...

## PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

Museum A

Foundation Y

...

...

...

## NON-PROFITS

Name #1

Name #2

Name #3

## PRIVATE TENANTS

Business #1

Business #2

Business #3

## CITY AND NATIONAL

City of X

X Redevelopment Authority

National Park Service

## EDUCATION

School A

Community College B

Community Training Program C

# Historical Context

**1800-1974**



[“Pre-history”  
summarized]

**1974**



Milestone #2

**1979**



Milestone #3

**1984**



Milestone #4 (agency gains control of site)

**2010**



Milestone #5 (plan completed, stalled progress)

Nice layout and logic: Most briefees know instinctively that history matters (shapes the present) and also that it can be a source of lessons. But defining them is another matter. This team picked out milestones and framed them carefully to lead to a specific lesson (about “quick fixes”), which was aligned with the team’s recommendations.



**“Quick fixes” have not  
worked in the past**

# Economic Viability

## Assumption 1:

Funds for capital improvements come from philanthropy, non-governmental organization membership, corporate sponsorship, and ...[more content was here]

## Critique

*These monies are uncertain, or non-existent.*

## Assumption 2:

This plan is the most economically viable option.

## Critique

*The plan does not consider the city's current economy or leading trends.*

This is a bit wordy and vertically “long”—the two critiques should perhaps be split into two slides—but the structure is clear: The current plan has key assumptions, and here’s our assessment of them. The next slide bases the team’s recommendations on the assessment. It’s a 1-2-3 logical argument, easy to follow. Note that two related but distinct ideas are critiqued here: Project financing viability versus true “economic” viability in light of market demand for what the current plan would place at the target site.

# Economic Viability

## Recommendations:

- ✓ Explore ...
- ✓ Explore ...
- ✓ Consider financing through ...
- ✓ Establish ...

The layout is simple and effective. It's great that the team began each declarative sentence with an "action verb." As it happens, though, the fourth idea didn't quite fit with the other three: It was an end goal based on a principle, which the other three ideas MIGHT fulfill. These distinctions matter for decisionmakers, and the structure of a briefing and a slide should reflect such distinctions as clearly and simply as possible. A visual argument here (3 ideas supporting or pointing to a 4th) may have been better.

# ***How the [current] plan meets critical values for the [area/site]***

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- Visual and physical access to the water
  - Element A of the current plan
- A diversity of uses: arts and recreation
  - Element B
- Interpretation and education of the [area's] history
  - Element C
- Equitable economic activity
  - Element D

This slide has strengths in the logic of construction: It headlines how a plan addresses key values, and then each value is paired with a single key element of the plan. But it's crying out for a more visual representation, and the text is much bigger than it needs to be. It reads like a flash card for the team more than a readily digestible, high-impact message for the briefees.



# Implementation

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- Financial Sources
- Enforcement
- Phasing

A nice marker, this slide does not offer analysis but rather marks a shift to a new component of the analysis, plus the subparts—all in concise, clear language, with an icon (intuitive image).

# Implementation

## Create an entity that:

- Specific function #1
- Specific function #2
- Specific function #3
- Specific function #4
- Specific function #5

This slide was among the more specific and discussable implementation slides—very engaging for the briefees. It worked out, from the briefee’s perspective, what key functions mattered (what a lead implementation agency should be responsible for) and boiled them down to 5 key points. This signaled that the team didn’t take effective implementation, which was a main part of the scope, for granted or treat it as an after-thought vis-à-vis critiquing the plan itself. Word construction was sharp, too: The lead line supplies the broad action (“create an entity”), there’s the link (“that”) and then each function bullet began with an action verb (coordinates, liaises with, etc).

# Community Process

## In the past....

- Problematic condition #1, words, words, words
- .... #2, words, words, words words, words, words words, words, words words, words, words
- ... #3, words, words, words words, words

## In the future....

- 1. Collaborative participation** with diverse stakeholders
- 2. Authentic listening** and mutually shared knowledge
- 3. Accessible meetings** and information
- 4. Credible developers** willing to engage public selected by agency.

Good logic: identify weaknesses in past approach and outline a different future. But the content belongs on two slides. It's over-load for the briefee, and that undermines the impact of the important content. The future" list could be sharper, too: There's an implicit logic, not quite spelled or worked out: 1 is an overall commitment, 4 about who is chosen for a role. 2 and 3 might follow from both 1 and 4. Or 4 is the first key, then 2 is overall approach, then 3 is a concrete means of working, and 2 is a practice and effect to lead toward an end state ("shared knowledge"). Would be even stronger if that shared knowledge led to a 5, spelled out: "Smart redevelopment backed by a real public mandate." Most processes don't want to stop at building knowledge.

# Wrapping up (no samples here)

- You can use your summary/findings slide again. Or you could adapt its structure to show consistency but add some detail appropriate to your summation.
- You might also wish to emphasize Next Steps (often with an additional slide), depending on the thrust of your message.
- Appendix slides could follow, but don't advance the show to them: "Freeze" on your final slide, which should capture your main points or great next-step ideas, and then invite questions (or additional ones, if you've already handled some).

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11.401 Introduction to Housing, Community, and Economic Development  
Fall 2015

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