

Feedback on Team Briefings

Case: Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

Team “Y”

Our evaluation covers your briefing, visual aids, and handout, though the feedback below may offer more on one of those than the other elements.

Briefing (content and delivery)

Your briefing had a number of key strengths: An easy-to-follow decomposition of the problem; clear attention to the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation’s (AWC’s) role and competencies; and an effective outline of policy options (grounded in available analysis) as well as data needs.

But the presentation of the Market Creek development in San Diego was somewhat confusing, as the main presentation touted it and yet, under questioning, you expressed doubt that it would translate well to Anacostia. Presenting the risks or drawbacks to that model, since it was your focal model, was important. Also, the visuals were not very visual, though text was clear, and you over-used the core slide (even though “signposting” is important). A map or two would have let you connect business development to the transportation and watershed restoration topics, since both promise to change mobility patterns dramatically over the long run, and transit-oriented shopping districts could be a natural East of the River. An excellent slide on “adjusting” the Market Creek lessons to suit the Anacostia/AWC context—this is at least as important as touting ‘community partnership’ as a goal—got buried in your “appendix.” And we needed more attention to risks in this high-risk strategy area, since planning can trigger markets but not control or predict them very well. But in general, the briefing offered a clear exposition of key opportunities that lie ahead in a critical strategy area, grounded in a solid read of the context.

As for individual speakers and points, **Student A’s** intro was clear and well linked to the preview slides. The agenda slide was busy and overly complex; this needed another revision or two. **Student B** set up the implementation speakers effectively, and simple slides helped at this point. **Student C’s** outline on attracting outside retail was missing a reference to retail demand: Beyond their concerns about crime and expensive land development, retailers under-estimate the buying power of inner-city communities. This would be a key selling point for AWC in this strategy area. Also, we could have used the key points about “adjusting” (Market Creek versus AWI) here. **Student D** made an energetic pitch for locally-owned retail, and time ran short as Andy and Xav posed questions about how AWC could leverage as much as possible in this relatively high-risk domain.

Overall, you conveyed the potential of a community-responsive retail development strategy and highlighted financial and other roles for AWC effectively. It would have strengthened your briefing had you highlighted risks or pitfalls as well, since the record on locally planned economic development is so mixed, and Market Creek is, for now, just one place.

Visual aids (slides) and handout

As noted above, key slides were so dominated by text that you missed opportunities to use images (whether maps, photos, charts, or other: See Team R's slides) to strengthen the message and give the viewer-listener relief (variety). You took the admonition to have and use a core message slide seriously, but the graphic even re-appears on the conclusion slide—and as a logo of colored bubbles on many other slides. It was over-used.

Your other slides reflected solid choices about text, though: Ideas are crisp and concisely rendered, and you manage to keep AWC's potential role in view.

Your score and grade

In scoring each group, we weighed substantive argumentation first and foremost, considering delivery only to the extent that it related directly to your effectiveness as argument makers (or persuaders). Above, we comment on style but didn't score it. We considered visuals as an additional element, weighing content more heavily than use.

Score: 91 Grade: A-