

The Case for Formality <i>Primary themes:</i> Improved communication (10) More well defined roles (6) Structured (4) Informed (4) Increased participation (3) Know what to expect (3) Fairness (2) More tools/resources (2)	The Case for informality <i>Primary themes:</i> Flexible (11) Creativity/innovation/new ideas (9) Freedom/independence/open to suggestions (5) Less bureaucratic/red tape (4) Diverse suggestions/variety (4) More ownership of ideas (3) More responsive (2)
When formality dominates too much Too much control (13) Red tape/bureaucracy (7) Rigidity (7) Polarity/adversarial (7) Stifles creativity (5) Who represents the neighborhood? How decided? (4) No room for differences/variety (3) Don't own it (3) Power goes to the few (3) Creates dependency (2) No demand on attendance/low participation (2)	When informality dominates too much Communication breakdown (13) Nothing get done, no resolution of problems (10) Chaos, lack of organization (10) Inconsistent/irregular/unfair (5) Lack of coordination/collaboration (4) Lack of accountability (3) Neighbors don't know neighbors (2) Lower participation (2)

Martín's comments

Overall, I feel the process ended out providing very interesting information overall, despite some of the push back, misunderstanding, and lack of time. Overall, the polarity map is solid, and people did recognize the value of formality and informality, as well as the danger if focusing too much on either. The map itself should be useful to help others understand the overall tension, and the conversation can now move to a second phase where we refine.

Improved communication seems to be a critical issue across the responses. It is seen as a positive of formality, and a problem with informality. One of the most common themes for both. I think most people likely preferred informality, but recognized weak communication is one of the tradeoffs.

A primary tension exists between the improved communication, organization, and collaboration of formality and the flexibility, innovation, and ownership of informality (or the need to avoid the red tape and bureaucracy of formality). There seems to be rich potential for exploring ways to better negotiate this tension. In particular, training sessions could be targeted to help neighborhoods develop improved communication processes without "formal" mechanisms. Clearly Next Door can be a part of that.

One issue that was seen as a problem for both informality and formality was the lack of participation. For some, formality would decrease participation (perhaps because the neighborhoods wouldn't take ownership of projects), and for others, informality would decrease participation (perhaps because the lack of clear communication and organization). A focused discussion on how to increase participation (without obligation) seems warranted.

Another issue across perspectives involved the question of how leadership is identified. Concerns on both ends (formal or informal) of who would represent the neighborhood and the process to identify leaders. A particular concern on the "too much formality" side was providing too much power to "the few." On the informality side, neighborhood leaders would be less likely to emerge or have clear authority or accountability. The question of how "leaders" are chosen and the power they have therefore seems to be an important topic.

The most powerful words appeared with the concern regarding too much formality and the fear of too much control from the city. Terms included "authoritarian, police state, socialism, and soul sucking." There does seem to be some concern that this meeting had a "hidden agenda" and is motivated by a desire of the city to take more control.