

Design Assistance Team (DAT) Logistics

Good logistics are critical to a smoothly functioning Design Assistance Team process.

Room and board

The place selected for team lodging should be close to the center of the study area and near the DAT work space. Each member should have an individual room as they sleep at different times. Wireless internet access in each room is important if it is available. Arrangements should be made for students to stay at a local university or in inexpensive dormitory-type hotel rooms. Where practical, students should eat with the team.

Breakfasts are a time for the DAT team to meet on their own. Lunches are usually casual and often served in or near the DAT work space or on tours. Evening meals are more of a respite from the day's activities. Informal discussions among team members, students, and steering committee members will, of course, continue during all meals, and arrangements should be made accordingly.

Steering committee participation

Because steering committee members will have primary responsibility for developing the eventual action plan, their continuous involvement is critical to the eventual success of the project. The team and the steering committee chair should discuss how the committee will be involved during the team visit to ensure maximum ownership of the process after the team finishes its work.

Transportation

For the team visit, members will typically arrive the evening before the DAT and depart the morning after, although the team leader may wish to arrive early for a final check on logistics. Arrangements for team member ground transportation to and from the airport should be coordinated. Don't forget to inform DAT team members what to expect at the airport and to schedule return trips to the airport for them.

Space needs

Three types of space are required—a work space where most of the team’s work will be done during the visit, a space for community meetings, and a space for the final presentation. The team leader should review all the options available on the preliminary visit before commitments are made.

Work space

The work space should be a minimum of 3,000 square feet located within or adjacent to the primary study area, with easy access from the street. The space should be suitable for the needs of production, and there should be good lighting, heat, restrooms, plenty of wall outlets with reliable electrical power, windows, and extensive wall space to pin up drawings and other graphics. Visibility to the public is very desirable. A vacant storefront right in the study area is often an ideal location. The space must be available after business hours as the DAT may work into the evening or night.

A large space with several smaller rooms is preferable. The activities that will take place there include:

- Drawing and writing—about 6 large tables that can be used for drafting and word processing
- Interviewing—Three small rooms, at least one for 6–12 people
- Conferencing—16 chairs around one or two work tables and a good pin-up wall
- Research—Internet access, preferably wireless, must be available for all DAT computers

Community meetings

A “town meeting” space is needed. This space may be located nearby in a church, school, or similar public space on neutral ground. Depending on the scale of the community, there should be space for 150 to 300 people in an informal setting. Microphones are necessary in a larger space.

Final presentation

The place for the final presentation during the team visit should have good community access and be identified as neutral ground. It does not need to be near the work space. There should be provision for an LCD data projector and screen—preferably two—and a public address system. It is desirable to provide a microphone for each team member and one or two for citizen participation. It is also important to be able to control the lights. The size of the space will vary according to the size of the community, but even small towns or rural regions can attract 200 or 300 people.

Furniture and equipment

Furniture and equipment for the DAT work space may be rented or borrowed from other offices. Generally, a major moving activity is involved, and everything must be in place before the team arrives. The following could be necessary depending upon the project:

- Drawing/writing tables and chairs
- Sofa, easy chairs (if possible)
- Conference tables and chairs
- Photocopier; 11”x 17” format, in good working condition (with plenty of paper) for quick reproduction of drawings and copy. (A continuously variable—not preset—zoom reduction/enlargement feature is required. Provide two machines, or one additional backup that can be moved immediately into the work space at any time.)
- Four to six desktop computers or laptops, depending upon team needs.
- Miscellaneous folding chairs
- Data projector(s) for PowerPoint and digital photographs, with an extra bulb or projector. Digital camera with wide-angle capabilities and capacity for high-resolution images
- Waste baskets and garbage bags
- Keys to work space for team members
- Refrigerator with food and drink

There should be a reference center consisting of copies of ordinances, statistics, maps, previous reports and studies, and histories. This should be under the control of a local steering committee member as some of these documents will be one of a kind. If there is a local GIS system, it should be set up on the computers in the work area.

Every piece of mechanical equipment should have a backup on hand or nearby, and substantial amounts of paper, toner, tape, and other necessary supplies should be stored on site. Also, service technicians should check the equipment ahead of time and be on standby during the team visit—particularly over the weekend.

Supplies

Supplies will include materials normally found in an architect's office and should be reviewed with the team prior to the Charette event. Some DATs may be more policy focused and as such may not require all of these materials. In general, the DAT work space should be stocked with:

- Sketchpads, 9" x 12" and 24" x 36"
- Writing paper pads, 8½" x 11"
- White vellum (1000#) and yellow (canary) tracing paper, 12", 24", and 36" wide rolls
- Post-its
- Felt-tipped markers (Magic Markers, Design Art Markers) in colors and gray tones
- Colored pencils
- Fiber-tipped (not ballpoint) pens, with medium and fine tips, black and red
- Large newsprint pads and easels
- T-squares, triangles, drafting pencils, erasers, scales, drafting tape, colored pencils
- Scissors
- Rubber cement, magic tape, push pins, glue sticks
- White correction fluid and tape (various widths)

- Plain bond paper, 8½” x 11”
- Reproducible base maps of the community and study area (some of these should show building outlines)
- Aerial photos
- Special photos of study area
- Snack food and drinks, including some healthy choices
- Paper plates, cups, forks, knives, napkins
- Paper towels, toilet paper
- Coffee machines and ice chest or refrigerator

Identification

Self-promotion can publicize a DAT effort and establish a spirit of fun. The steering committee should have its own letterhead to create an identity in the community. A “uniform” available to team members, students, and other participants can add to the sense of teamwork—printed T-shirts, baseball caps, buttons, or nametags all have been used in the past. Posters, signs, or banners welcoming team members, announcing meetings, or identifying the DAT work space also add to the special chemistry that makes the process work.

Photography

Team members and students are encouraged to bring cameras. This usually results in about eight working cameras. High-quality digital cameras are ideal (images should be at least 300 dpi). Digital images and photographs of drawings will be made by early on the final day to allow for integration into the report and the presentation that evening.

Computers

Team members will use computers to write their sections of the final report. Some will bring their own laptops, but others will want access to machines and programs that are familiar to them. Team preferences and local capabilities vary widely, so it is very important to coordinate computer needs well before the team’s first visit. Be sure the

hardware and software systems used in the work space are compatible. Assume that both PC and Mac platforms will be used.

Techniques for report production vary. Team members may need to generate multiple drafts that can be pinned up and reviewed. Final copy is sometimes pasted up and printed locally and other times printed as newspaper supplements. Some reports are delivered to the printer as hard copy; others are delivered on disk. In any event, it is essential to have an IT professional set up equipment before the team visit and to be available on site to troubleshoot any problems.

Computer equipment required for the work space might include:

- Computers (rented or donated), Mac and/or IBM, and software (the number of stations are required depends on the size of the team.)
- Laser printer with spare toner cartridges
- Scanner
- Disks, CDs, Windows, and/or Mac (coordinate)
- Internet access (preferably wireless) for all DAT computers

Printing of final report on site for immediate delivery

Assistance, ideally from students in design programs, is needed in to help put together the report and troubleshoot any last minute problems if you intend to deliver the written report prior to the end of the charette.

A printer must be selected well in advance and must be a skilled, understanding, and patient person. The scope of the work and deadlines must be made clear and a reasonable, fixed price for the work agreed upon. Often, but not always, the printer will scan the images to be included in the report or otherwise prepare them for printing. The format of the report, the size and type of photographs, the color and type of ink and paper, the method of binding, and the number of copies should be explained clearly to ensure the printer is able to handle the job.

Team tour

Planning should be done in advance for tours that will give the team an understanding of your community and its issues. The team and students, together with their steering committee guides, will inspect the study area by air, bus, foot—even by boat if appropriate. Rush-hour traffic is often best observed from the air, as are broad land-use patterns. Regional maps should be provided for the team.

Air inspection should be done by helicopter because these machines can fly low and slowly. If this is not possible, a light plane will do. Depending on capacity, you may need to arrange for either several aircraft or several trips in one helicopter or plane. Allow for schedule shifts in case of inclement weather. Because of the expense involved, the air inspection is usually reserved for team members only.

A bus survey should be made with everyone in a single vehicle high enough to see above traffic and with a microphone for the guide. Again, maps marked with the route are important.