



MEMO

TO George Lahanas and Ellis Seide, City of East Lansing
FROM Rory Neuner, Public Sector Consultants
DATE 19 December 2017
SUBJECT Community Meeting Facilitation

INTRODUCTION

Public Sector Consultants (PSC) is pleased to provide the following scope of work and proposed budget for facilitation services to support upcoming community meetings in the City of East Lansing.

The City of East Lansing is currently in the process of reshaping its budget, and the City Council would like community input on potential changes. PSC proposes to design a process that demonstrates current budget constraints, showcases options for potential cuts and/or additional revenue, and then gathers valuable community input and gives residents an option to vote on preferences. Finally, PSC will document the process and outcomes via a short, timely report to City staff and the East Lansing City Council.

SCOPE OF WORK

PSC proposes to take a team approach to this facilitation work, utilizing a primary facilitator and a supporting facilitator (more information on staffing is provided below), as well as a key staff member to provide strategic counsel. We anticipate the following three key activities as part of this project:

Activity #1: Frame the issues and design the process.

First, PSC will work with the City to kick-off this process to gather information on the overall goals of this process, anticipated process challenges, as well as current budget constraints and options for potential cuts and/or additional revenue generation options. This includes an in-person meeting to gather information and ask questions, as well as document collection and questions via email. We anticipate that the kick-off meeting, document collection, and other initial project communication would be held in early January.

Once PSC has a firm understanding of what success looks like, and the various options being considered, we will develop a draft community meeting agenda. Based on the information collected from our conversations with City staff, we anticipate we can design one agenda that will be used in each community input session. This agenda will aim to be engaging and participatory to ensure adequate public input. It

will also include prioritization exercises. PSC will share the draft agenda with City staff and then conduct a follow up meeting to discuss necessary edits and changes.

Activity #2: Facilitate Community Input Sessions.

With a final agenda in hand, PSC will facilitate the two community input sessions. Our facilitation skill set includes small-group facilitation techniques designed to create an inclusive environment, as well as skills for large-group facilitation that maximize input and interaction, and that seek to minimize distractions. Our extensive experience facilitating has led us to develop a three-phased approach to facilitation, which we will use to guide our overall approach to both meetings. This approach includes the following elements:

- **Grounding:** Armed with relevant, fact-based information, stakeholders can then have productive discussions and provide meaningful input.
- **Visioning:** The visioning process is critical when working with diverse interests to set priorities. Even in an environment of severely constrained resources, residents and other stakeholders should make decisions based on their vision for the future of the City of East Lansing.
- **Decision making:** With stakeholders informed with relevant research and information and a clear vision in hand for guidance, PSC guides a group to a consensus on decisions.

Facilitation Techniques

To successfully facilitate each community meeting, our team will utilize our deep experience facilitating to implement the best processes to fit each group's unique needs. The list below identifies some of the techniques we draw from to generate discussion and make decisions. Given the nature of this process, we anticipate that our stoplight decision making process could potentially be useful in the prioritization portion of the agenda. However, we are also open to designing other methods.

- **Brainstorming and categorizing:** The facilitator asks participants to generate ideas without judgement. After a critical mass of ideas is formed, the facilitator engages participants in activities and dialogue to combine similar ideas and identify relationships between them.
- **Small-group work:** For large meetings that need to efficiently engage members in discussion, small-group work can be a very effective solution. This method is often modified to include "passing the ball around" for inclusive dialogue, dividing sections of work, or organizing participants by different perspectives. In all cases the small groups share their findings with the larger group.
- **Gallery walks:** This interactive technique is used to gather feedback and gets participants up and moving. By posting paper around the room segmented by topic, participants use reflection time to write down their comments directly on the poster paper.

- **One/two/four work:** This method encourages consensus by combining individual reflection time with small-group work. It begins with individual reflection and then two individuals come together to discuss their respective thoughts and identify common ground. This group of two is then joined by two more, again sharing respective input and finding common themes.
- **Classroom-style dialogue:** A standard meeting format where there is typically one person speaking at a time, either as a presenter or facilitator.
- **Stoplight decision making:** Focused on mitigating conflict, this tool ensures everyone has a chance to express their opinion on a decision. Each participant is given green, yellow, and red cards to hold up during discussion—green: “I support it;” yellow: “I support it with reservations, but I can live with it;” and red: “I don’t support it, we need to talk further.”
- **Sticky-dot voting:** Each participant is given a set number of stickers to vote on a choice of options. The stickers give a visual pulse of the group’s preferences.

Conflict Management

Through our facilitation techniques, PSC works to bring differing opinions to consensus. However, we also recognize conflict is often inherent to group decision-making processes. It is in these moments of conflict that the larger vision and ground rules for a community meeting become very important. PSC will work with City staff and meeting attendees to establish and reinforce ground rules. To ensure a transparent decision-making process, we will review both the vision and ground rules with all participants before the beginning of each community meeting.

Activity #3: Process and Report on Results.

The final stage of this work will be to gather the input collected across the two meetings to generate a final report of findings, to be distributed to the City Council. This activity will take place in late January. However, given the short time period during which this project will be conducted, we built in time to process results between meeting #1 and meeting #2, as well as time for a check in call with City staff and other stakeholders. This will make the final reporting process following meeting #2 more efficient.

Once both sessions are complete, PSC will prepare a short final report documenting the findings. Our in-house editing and marketing staff will contribute to ensure this document is well-formatted and easy to digest.

BUDGET AND TIMELINE

A budget and timeline for this work is provided below, totaling to \$9,465. This budget includes and assumes travel to and from East Lansing and includes all project supplies.

Task	Timeline	Budget
Kick Off Project and Design Process	Early January	\$2,940
Conduct Community Meetings	Mid-January	\$2,750
Check In / Process Results Between Meeting #1 and #2	Mid-January	\$1,250
Process Results and Write Short Final Report	Late January	\$2,525
Total		\$9,465

PROJECT STAFF AND QUALIFICATIONS

PSC brings a team of seasoned facilitators to this project, people with the content knowledge necessary to engage residents in meaningful ways. Our team is made up of compassionate and effective facilitators with experience working on municipal planning and finance issues. We are enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with the City of East Lansing because we have both the technical knowledge and passion for facilitation needed. We excel at engaging people with diverse perspectives—from concerned residents to technical experts—to identify practical solutions to the most trying problems and move forward together.

Our facilitation work isn't just about the destination, however. The process of getting there should be engaging and enjoyable. To that end, we have extensive experience with designing and executing participatory engagement processes that maximize opportunities for input and interaction. We are adept at facilitating in a way that supports a sense of the collective, develops leadership, and generates sustained buy-in, enthusiasm, and collaboration.

Senior consultant **Rory Neuner** will play the role as the lead facilitator on this project and will be the main point of contact. She will lead the development of the agenda, facilitate the community input meetings, provide overall project management leadership, and write the final report.

As a senior consultant at PSC, Rory manages projects, conducts research and analysis, writes reports, and prepares presentations on a variety of policy issues. Rory also staffs various partnerships and committees, facilitates group discussions, and conducts program evaluations.

Rory has significant experience facilitating stakeholder groups and strategic planning processes, and brings an energetic, open style to facilitation. At PSC, she facilitated the transportation work group for the Governor's 21st Century Infrastructure Commission, and participated in a team that led stakeholder engagement for the state's contentious Section 298 process (described in more detail in the Prior Experience section). Prior to joining PSC in 2016, she facilitated learning circles, focus groups, and strategic planning work for a variety of small nonprofit organizations, including the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Most recently, she co-facilitated a series of workshops held across the state for a Michigan foundation seeking to aimed to help their grantees develop inclusive, multisector partnerships.

Rory holds a BA with distinction in Political Science from Yale University and an MPP from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. She is a former resident of East Lansing, and served on the City's Transportation and Planning Commissions.

Chris Dorle will play a contributing role on the project, supporting the facilitation and reporting. Mr. Dorle is a senior consultant at Public Sector Consultants. He conducts research and analysis, writes reports, and prepares presentations and other project materials.

Before joining PSC in 2017, he served as the deputy director of city systems at Detroit Future City (DFC), which he supported as a fellow through the White House Council's Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. At DFC, he partnered with local, national, and international stakeholders to help Detroit become more sustainable, resilient, and equitable. Following a 2014 presidentially declared national disaster, Chris helped develop an \$8.9 million proposal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to transform blighted vacant land through renewable energy and blue-green infrastructure as a way to mitigate future disasters and stabilize communities, helping to facilitate and coordinate representatives from multiple City of Detroit departments as well as university and community stakeholders. At DFC, Chris also helped develop additional pilot projects around blue and green infrastructure, demonstrating how green infrastructure buffers along freeways could improve air quality, how blue infrastructure could work with planned DWSD fee and policy changes to improve stormwater management, and how dendro-remediation could help clean contaminated soil in Detroit's vacant lots.

Prior to this, Chris worked in international development, primarily with the U.S. Agency for International Development, which he joined as a presidential management fellow. Chris has also worked with Arbor

Strategy Group (now GFK Strategic Innovation), the U.S. Department of State, AECOM, and the William Davidson Institute. Chris is a resident of the City of Lansing.

Also joining the project team will be PSC Vice President **Jeff Guilfoyle**. Mr. Guilfoyle will provide strategic oversight of the project, lending his finance expertise to the development of the agenda. At PSC, Mr. Guilfoyle specializes in school finance, tax policy, intergovernmental fiscal relations, and issues pertaining to Michigan's economy and the state budget. He has particular expertise in early childhood issues, serving as a contributor to the Office of Great Start's *Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future: The Plan for Early Learning and Development in Michigan*.

Prior to joining PSC in 2014, Jeff was president of the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, an independent nonpartisan public policy research institution. As president, he developed the CRC's research agenda and edited its research. He also frequently presented the organization's findings to a variety of audiences and stakeholders. In addition, Jeff served as the director of the Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis in the Michigan Department of Treasury. His responsibilities there included forecasting and tracking state tax receipts, estimating the impact of legislation on state tax revenues, and providing economic research support to the state treasurer.

Jeff holds a BA in Economics from the University of Michigan and an MA and PhD in Economics from Michigan State University.

ABOUT THE FIRM

Public Sector Consultants is an objective, nonpartisan research and consulting firm. Our services have been used to advance innovative solutions to difficult public policy challenges in Michigan and beyond for over 37 years. Offering a full suite of services in research, implementation, facilitation, and evaluation, PSC has served hundreds of local, state, and federal government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses. Since our founding in 1979, PSC has built a reputation as the consulting firm of choice for anyone working to better people's lives.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Facilitation Services for the 21st Century Infrastructure Commission. Client: Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget. Contact: Claire Khouri, Deputy Director of Strategy, Executive Office of the Governor, 517-335-9079, khouric@michigan.gov

Created by Executive Order 2016-5, the 27-member 21st Century Infrastructure Commission was charged with developing a comprehensive 50-year vision for improving the state's communications, energy, transportation, and water infrastructure system as well as providing recommendations to the governor and the legislature. PSC served as facilitation staff for the commission and led the group through a three-step process that involved grounding (providing the necessary research and information to ensure all commissioners had a common level of understanding about the issues at hand), visioning (describing the

desired future state of Michigan's infrastructure), and drafting recommendations over an eight-month period. PSC's specific tasks included developing commission operations documents; planning, facilitating, and summarizing full commission discussions as well as subgroup meetings on communications, energy, transportation, and water infrastructure; conducting best practice research on infrastructure planning and asset management, financing and funding strategies, and infrastructure investment models and policies from other states and countries; coordinating with government agencies and other consultants to gather and synthesize required information; and writing, editing, and designing a 189-page final report submitted to the legislature and governor. PSC managed the project in collaboration with staff from the Executive Office of the Governor and met weekly, both internally and with the commission Chair, to ensure the project progressed according to the timeline and budget. The project began and was completed in 2016.

Section 298 Behavioral Health Workgroup Facilitation. Client: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Contact: Lynda Zeller, Deputy Director for Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration, ZellerL2@michigan.gov; 517/335-0196.

When Governor Rick Snyder proposed controversial boilerplate in his FY17 executive budget (Sec. 298 of the MDHHS budget) to integrate behavioral and physical health delivery and finance, the resulting uproar among stakeholders, especially families, compelled the MDHHS to respond. In cooperation with Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley, the department's senior leadership convened 120 stakeholders and called on PSC to facilitate the large group. For the department and lieutenant governor, we designed and carried out a consensus-building process that, over the course of five meetings, led to agreement on (a) a set of core values, (b) revised boilerplate language (much of which was adopted by the legislature and is part of the final FY17 budget), and (c) key design elements that will be the foundation for an integrated physical and behavioral health delivery system in Michigan. The project began in March 2016 and concluded with a final report in July 2016.