

**New York City Regional Economic Development Council
Public Participation Working Group Meetings
Office of Empire State Development
Thursday, August 18, 2011, 9 a.m.**

Summary

Co-facilitators:

Steve Lemson, American Express
Jay Hershenson, CUNY

Attending:

Carol Conslato, Queens Chamber of Commerce
Kenneth J. Knuckles, UMEZDC
Marcia Keizs, York College, CUNY
Marlene Cintron, Bronx Overall EDC
Ademola Oyefeso, representing Stuart Appelbaum
Josh Gold, representing Peter Ward
Peter Spinella, representing Nick Lugo
Michael Slattery, representing Steve Spinola
Shauneequa Owusu, representing Francine Delgado
Tim Sullivan, representing DM Steel
Andrew Steininger, representing BP Markowitz
John Bittner, representing BP Marshall
Jason Razesfky, representing BP Molinaro
Raymond Sanchez, representing BP Ruben Diaz
Arana Hankin, Atlantic Yards
Howard Apsan, CUNY
Joe Tazewell, ESD and Executive Director
Marion Phillips, ESD
Nydia Lloyd, DOL
Tara Brooks-Smith, DOL
John Moye, DOL
Maisha Lopa, intern
David Weinberger, intern

Jay Hershenson welcomed everyone at 9:05 a.m. and introduced Steve Lemson of American Express. He thanked Joe Tazewell for making this morning's arrangements.

Joe Tazewell noted that public participation is an integral part of the process. The governor wants a regional-based decision-making process, so the community must be involved, and public participation constitutes 10 percent of the strategic plan. Each region will develop its own strategy for participation. Five scheduled meetings remain.

Jay reviewed the concise time frame being followed by the regional council for the preparation of the initial strategic plan and suggested that the group discuss three major aspects: first, the meetings themselves; second, what the public participation should be at those meetings, or at public forums, which were

referenced in the manual; and third, how the public should be engaged in a broader sense (e.g., outreach, opportunity for public comment, media, publicity, etc.). Chancellor Goldstein is favorable to conducting the regional meetings as open meetings, with the council reserving the right to go into executive session if need be. The public would be invited to attend the regional meetings. Going forward, subject to the discussion of this group, there should be meetings in all five boroughs. He then asked for feedback.

Attendees' suggestions included giving the public the opportunity to make statements during the meetings through a sign-up process; conducting breakout sessions by invitation only; offering the public some policy parameters to better focus the feedback; having access to a website to submit proposals and projects; creating a submission requirement, with a time limit; and having the option of a closed session during or after the process. It was noted by working group members that when Chancellor Goldstein chaired the NYC Charter Revision Commission, meetings were held in all five boroughs, and a portion of time was reserved after business was conducted for the public to comment; the public was also able to observe the body deliberating and could comment on its deliberations. This arrangement maximized attendance, as it did not add new meetings for busy council members.

Joe noted that public input will be recorded, and the best ideas could be incorporated. There is a dedicated website where all documents will be available for review. It was suggested that public input could be circulated to council members so that participants know that they are being heard. It was also suggested that much of the work will be framed by the vision statement, which will help the public understand the focus; following that, specific criteria will be developed, which should help explain the reasons that some projects are included and some are not.

Future council meetings will be open to the public, beginning with the Aug. 23 meeting at the CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, and the council should reserve the right to have executive sessions as needed. Once business is conducted, a portion of the meeting will be reserved for public participation, following a summary from the co-chairs to help focus the public, with sufficient time for input. The council will work closely with the borough presidents' offices to identify locations for the final four meetings (one per borough, following the Aug. 23 meeting in Manhattan).

On Aug. 23, both this working group and the vision working group will report out to the council. Elizabeth Mitchell from ESD noted that some other councils will do a mixture of open and closed meetings, and that there will be a public notice sent to the press. She will also utilize blast lists, the website, and individual reporters to get the word out. The current website is nyworks.ny.gov (this is not the final site, which will be "New York is Open for Business").

There was discussion focusing on creative ways for public to be engaged, including asking groups and organizations that are involved in economic development to be involved in working groups, as noted in the manual. Attendee suggestions included involving community organizations, and using social media, particularly to collect public feedback. Steve Lemson commented on social media and the various uses of such, including Facebook and other resources that could be tapped. There was discussion of a voting mechanism to allow the public to vote on the most important issues, and about asking the borough presidents to elicit input (on economic development proposals in the context of the work of the regional council) from all elected officials in their boroughs. All the borough president representatives in attendance supported this suggestion.

Other suggestions included reaching out to community boards, EDCs, BIDs, SBDCs, and other community organizations, as well as to philanthropic groups; creating a survey for the public; and allowing the public to comment on proposals submitted by other members of the public. It was noted that the public outreach approach for PlaNYC included the ability to post a project and comment on others' projects, and that model is generating transparent public engagement and ideas.

It was pointed out that submissions would have to be made well before Nov. 14, which means criteria will have to be set very quickly. The city will make a presentation on PlaNYC at the Aug. 23 meeting so that there will be awareness of that plan.

It was also suggested that the council expand its target groups to include direct service providers and professional organizations, as well as immigrant communities, which may involve translation of communications. The central website will have information about how to participate, and then a uniform communication should be distributed to the widest possible audience possible.

Joe reminded the group that government has certain procurement rules, so members might suggest other resources (e.g., for setting up a Facebook page). It was suggested that the central website include share features (e.g., Twitter), and that all members could send a centrally developed communication to their own databases.

Lists of special groups that will have a strong interest in the council's work should be sent to Joe; they should immediately get an e-mail letter from the council to solicit input. In addition, suggestions about who should be involved in working groups should be sent to Joe. Both speakers' offices (city and state) should be included, and in general all appropriate levels of elected officials should be communicated with.

Joe asked that media inquiries be directed to him, so that he can forward them to the media office: 212-803-3130 or jjazewell@empire.state.ny.us. Elizabeth Mitchell can be reached at emitchell@empire.state.ny.us. She is in close coordination with the chamber and has developed a set of talking points for council members. The website should also note how to contact Joe.

Other outreach suggestions included mobile technology engagement; web broadcasts of meetings; taking questions via Twitter; and borough public access stations. While the borough presidents will be used to contact borough elected officials, city offices should be contacted centrally (through Joe) so that no one is left out. Committee chairs are often from New York City and should also be kept in the loop. Regional planning associations and other larger entities should be invited to make submissions or have representatives on the working groups.

Joe noted that the manual has prescribed areas of focus and that the council will have to move into the CFA phase soon, which will be funneled through the regional council. The next work group should probably be the project priority/endorsement group, as the council will begin getting applications soon. The due date for the draft of the strategic plan is Oct. 11.

Jay suggested that in the working group's presentation to the council on Aug. 23, they present first a summary of how meetings should take place, then a summary of the public participation and outreach portion. That is: the remaining meetings (including the next one) will each be held in a different borough, and the business of the council will take place in the first couple of hours, utilizing working groups, and then time at the end will be set aside for public participation. That portion of the meetings should be as open-

ended as possible. The council will make the vision statement available through the website in order to focus the public participation. The council should also ensure that the working groups include individuals outside of the council and offer a range of media, social media, and other opportunities to submit input.

It was noted that the Sept. 14 Crain's breakfast, featuring Ken Adams, could be an avenue for disseminating information and involving attendees.

Jay will pursue CUNY TV's continued involvement and noted that CUNY would work with the borough presidents' offices on Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island meeting locations (possibly New York City College of Technology, Hostos Community College, York College, and the College of Staten Island). The goal is to mention possible locations at the Aug. 23 meeting, if only tentatively.

Jay and Steve will jointly make a report on the working group's proceedings at the Aug. 23 council meeting.

Everyone was thanked, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.