



# Charrette & Pre-Charrette Activities

## Key Takeaways

June 11 -22, 2019

*City of Panama City Long Term Recovery Planning Project*

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| <b>Purpose of Meeting</b> | Charrette and Pre-Charrette Activities |
| <b>Facilitator(s)</b>     | Long Term Recovery Planning Project    |
| <b>Date and Time</b>      | June 11 – 22, 2019                     |
| <b>Location</b>           | City of Panama City                    |

### **6/11 Community Recovery Town Hall**

- Mental health services are incredibly important for the residents of Panama City. Rebuilding needs to be focused on physical, mental, and emotional stability, not just one or the other.
- Panama City is unique and historic; it has an authentic character and a strong sense-of-self. Preserving this in the rebuilding process is important.
- The city should embark on projects that have a positive rippling effect throughout the community; the City should prioritize activities that maximize co-benefits.
- Panama City is a lot more than just downtown and its waterfront. The rebuilding process must be an inclusive one; every member of the community should have a voice in recovery.

### **6/12 High School Students Focus Group**

- The schools serve as anchors of the community. Regardless of who you are, they serve you, or someone you know, daily. It's important that this is reflected in the rebuilding process, and that schools are prioritized.
- Panama City has an abundance of local businesses and industries. Creating working relationships between the schools and the business communities is mutually beneficial.
- Hurricane Michael was physically and emotionally draining for the entire community, including students. Ensuring that mental health services are available in schools is necessary to assist students to work through the trauma.
- Many of the problems seen in schools reflect the precarious housing situations of students and their families. Restoring housing and ensuring housing security for students is a necessary first step.

### **6/12 Educators Focus Group Takeaways**

- Educators from every walk of the education spectrum need to come together to work through the problems students are facing. An educator's action group would be a great way to address a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the youth in Panama City.

- Schools provide more than algebra and language arts. Extracurriculars should be up and running as soon as possible to provide a sense of community for the students, faculty, and their families.
- Panama City has the unique opportunity to rebuild towards the future. The schools should also capitalize on this opportunity.
- Wrap-around services for students should be prioritized, especially in the near-term. Nutrition, security, and social services should all be available.

## 6/12 Non-Profits and NGO/Volunteer Focus Groups

- Panama City is served by nonprofits, NGOs, and volunteer organizations. Understanding how these organizations work together, and how they may support each other, is important.
- Non-profits, NGOs, and volunteer organizations can fit the needs of groups that are not traditionally met by public services.
- Collectively identifying and serving the needs of those individuals not traditionally provided services is important. Finding established structures and building partnerships will help organizations better deliver services to all community members with unmet needs.
- When it comes to disasters, nonprofits and similar community service organizations need to be able to spread the word about their services in formats that reach the community members in need. Having a strong ground game and communication strategy is important.

## 6/13 Faith-Based Focus Group

- Leaders within the faith-based communities need to come together to ensure that they are helping each other during their times of need. A faith-based action team is a strong way forward.
- Faith-based organizations can help match people who *want* to help with people who *need* help. It's all about coordination, both internal and external, to see that those with needs are paired with those who can provide the services.
- It is important to judge the success of recovery in incremental steps. It might be unreasonable to expect a drastic increase in a community or congregation; smaller, steadier increases are good indicators of strong community involvement.
- Faith-based communities touch people's lives in many personal and profound ways. Making sure faith-based communities are linked in with the broader community is important to ensure that all personal needs are being met.

## 6/14 Educators Town Hall

- Students aren't the only ones who benefit from the services provided by schools. Making sure that these resources are available to all should be a recovery priority.
- Schools help to provide a sense of stability for students. Ensuring their functionality by the beginning of the school year should be a priority.
- Schools and the services that they provide reach everyone in Panama City, not just the students. The extent of their work should be reflected in how the community works with them.

- Panama City's schools should be thinking about how they can partner with local organizations to provide locally-inspired project-based courses.
- Athletics, the arts, and other extracurricular activities help to provide students and the community with a sense of pride and place. Prioritizing the reintroduction of these activities, and encouraging relevant resource sharing across schools, is incredibly important.

## **6/16 On-Hands Design Studio**

- Groups of citizen planners discussed the current assets of the downtown of the City of Panama City, including the waterfront, McKenzie Park, and the beautiful buildings downtown that should be repaired.
- The groups also discussed ideas to enhance the assets of the current downtown, including increasing walkability, preserving open space, attracting artists, and increasing the restaurants and bars.
- Groups developed ideas to transform and envision a new downtown, including developing of a walk/bikeway around the marina/waterfront, utilizing height restrictions and zoning codes to protect waterfront access and view, making the downtown walkable, preserving open space and parks with a pool in the downtown, and developing areas for entertainment for all ages.
- Attendees discussed what would attract people to the downtown area, including creating a vibrant downtown, attracting local artists, and increasing restaurants and bars.

## **6/18 Hospitality and Tourism Focus Group**

- Panama City has a unique sense of self; this should be preserved to maintain the City's flair and attract visitors from afar.
- The arts are incredibly important for Panama City. Thinking about the arts and artists' role and how they can be amplified is important to creating a sense of community for locals and tourists.
- Anchor institutions should play an important role in attracting folks from out of town, especially leveraging public-private partnerships and engagement with academia.
- The City's relationship with the waterfront should be emphasized, as should its wide variety of water-related activities. Panama City has a unique opportunity to re-brand what these areas and activities mean for the City. Focusing the City's recovery to capitalize on these key attractions should be a priority.

## **6/18 Arts and Artists Focus Group**

- While maintaining local flair is important, Panama City should be open to the opportunity for change. Allowing for traditional architecture and style to be developed alongside new styles will help to make Panama City an eclectic destination.
- Artists and the arts need to be supported as ends in themselves, not just as means for community engagement and entertainment.
- Multipurpose public spaces, such as amphitheater/performance center hybrids, are a great way to serve artists and the community.
- Panama City has the opportunity to serve as a destination center for annual arts-related events. How can annual events, and things that generate recurring revenue streams for the arts and local community, be leveraged?
  - Example: Floriopolis

- *This group is uniquely positioned to make things happen in the short term. We can see incremental progress rapidly. One venue that was mentioned was the Bay County Arts alliance, and the space offered by Trigo.*

## **6/18 Ward 4 Meeting**

- The Bay is the anchor institution within the community. It brings a sense of identity and unity, as well as visitors and a slew of recreational activities. Making sure that all within Ward 4 can access it should be prioritized
- While St Andrews needs to be thinking big, it also needs to think incrementally. Neighborhood clean-up events and hyper-local initiatives can help attack some of the problems from an incremental perspective.
- St. Andrews can easily become a truly walkable community. This should be prioritized.
- When thinking about safety, some fundamental action such as repairing street lights would go a long way in providing a sense of security.
- All zoning ordinances should be enforced, and in the short-term, permitting processes should be streamlined. This provides great benefits for all lines of effort.

## **6/18 Ward 3 Meeting**

- A key priority for the group was affordable housing, as the root of many problems stems from this issue (e.g. safety and security, jobs, schools). The group brainstormed solutions to bring in affordable housing into the community including tiny homes, workforce housing, and integrated subsidized housing.
- Another key priority was not to forget the projects that were planned or in progress ahead of the storm as these projects were exacerbated by the effects of the storm. Infrastructure repair was a key component of this priority.
- Ward 3 wanted better safety and connectivity in their public transportation. Bus stops are currently not well lit. Buses don't run when needed, and it takes a long time to get around. The group discussed solving this through transit-oriented development in the City.
- The effects of the storm on medical and mental health were discussed. The group discussed the need to restore and build more medical facilities. The group also discussed the detrimental effects of the storm on the community, and warranted greater emotional and mental health care, and how this was particularly hard on children.
- Participants want transparency to be throughout the process of recovery and civic works.
- One participant stated, and the rest of the group agreed: "We don't live here, we love here, or we would have left." There is work to be done, but they are all there to support the recovery process.