POLICE CONSOLIDATION
Collaborating with Stakeholders

by Michael J. Polzin
and Jeremy M. Wilson

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

POLICE CONSOLIDATION
Collaborating with Stakeholders

by Michael J. Polzin
and Jeremy M. Wilson

Contents

About the Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services

Although consolidating and sharing public safety services has received much attention in recent years, such efforts are not new. Moreover, despite the many communities that have in one way or another consolidated or shared these services, the process of doing so has not become any easier. In fact, to say that changing the structural delivery of public safety services is difficult or challenging is an understatement. At the core of contemplating these transitions, regardless of the form, is the need for open, honest, and constructive dialog among all stakeholders. Key to this dialog is evidence derived from independent research, analysis, and evaluation.

To help provide such independent information, the Michigan State University School of Criminal Justice, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), established the **Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services (PCASS)** to help consolidating police agencies, and those considering consolidating, increase efficiency, enhance quality of service, and bolster community policing. Together, they also developed resources, such as publications, videos, and the PCASS website, to assist communities exploring options for delivering public safety services. These resources do not advocate any particular form of service delivery but rather provide information to help communities determine for themselves what best meets their needs, circumstances, and desires.

PCASS provides a wealth of information and research on structural alternatives for the delivery of police services, including the nature, options, implementation, efficiency, and effectiveness of all forms of consolidation and shared services. PCASS resources allow local decision makers to review what has been done elsewhere and gauge what model would be best for their community.

For more information on PCASS and to access its resources, please visit http://policeconsolidation. msu.edu/.

PCASS booth at Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP) conference

Introduction

The delivery of public safety services is in a time of great change, challenge, and opportunity. Police and fire departments are currently facing significant budgetary challenges that are not likely to improve in the foreseeable future. Units of government are caught in a time of stress as they ramp up efforts to cut costs and reduce huge deficits against a ticking clock of when their power to self-direct and self-govern may be stripped from them by appointed external forces. Earlier decades' experiments and attempts at reinventing government now seem like surface efforts and unpressured luxuries when compared to the "meat and potatoes" and "flesh and bone" changes that are being contemplated or wrought today.

All of this is indicative of the need to explore alternatives for the delivery of public services, especially public safety services. Myriad openings for serious deliberation involving a wide set of actors exist within this time of public sector challenge and opportunity. For example, as a way to manage this budget crisis effectively while maintaining and improving essential services, many communities have implemented or are considering options that would result in sharing, consolidating, or regionalizing services with other public sector entities. Many communities working under the impending shadows of externally imposed constraints or controls need to redouble their efforts at constructive change that protects self-rule and self-determination without disrupting essential services to the public.

The quality of solutions and the success of their implementation depend on the ability of leaders and citizens to gather and in good faith analyze relevant information, carry on careful and rational discussions of tough issues, and craft workable plans in a timely fashion with a minimum of divisive conflict. However, not all communities have the essential resources and tools available to them in this time of deliberation and decision making or access to the process facilitation necessary to meet current and future challenges.

Thus, this publication is meant to help stakeholders[1] in a consolidation, regionalization, and shared services project have constructive dialogue around the issues and achieve success in their projects. Stakeholders in these projects may include elected and appointed government officials, management personnel in the potentially affected organizations, unions representing affected workers, and community group representatives.

Involving stakeholders in the consolidation, regionalization, or shared services project is important for several reasons: they may have information or insights that are crucial for understanding the problem or developing options, their support for the final decisions made will be critical for effective implementation, and their participation in a transparent process will help when they communicate the decision to their constituents (the organizations and individuals the stakeholders represent). Adhering to the principles of diversity and inclusion should inform and guide stakeholder outreach efforts.

The complexity of collective bargaining agreements

Adding a layer of complexity to the process of reaching intra- and inter-governmental agreements that transform the delivery of public services is the fact that employees of many public safety organizations are represented in collective bargaining by labor unions. Labor unions' acceptance of and commitment to change is important to successful implementation. Though prohibited from blocking inter-governmental agreements in some states, including Michigan, labor unions are not excluded by law from providing input and feedback in the design of

---

1. For this publication, the term *stakeholder* includes any individual or group affected by or responsible for a consolidation, regionalization, or shared services project.

the agreements even though they have no authority in the final decision-making process. However, the municipalities involved may have to bargain collectively over the effects of any efforts that result in consolidated services.

For example, an agreement to combine police and fire services within the same community would likely affect pay scales, seniority lists, job classifications, schedules, and so on. If the merged entities are represented in collective bargaining, those terms and conditions of work would have to be negotiated. Thus, while it may be feasible for public safety organizations to force a change, they may still have to bargain over how to implement the change. Moreover, it is likely that agencies will need to integrate human resources departments and labor relations practices and policies to support the changes.

Facilitating discussion through independent, third parties

Organizational change can be a difficult, even traumatic, process for those designing the change and those affected by it. Research has shown that the most successful, effective, and enduring change requires acceptance and commitment from those required to carry it out (Watson 1969). This acceptance and commitment is achieved to a considerable extent by involving all of the stakeholders in the change process. However, negotiations that involve stakeholders can be complicated, difficult, and contentious, and union involvement adds another dimension. All parties have concerns that any proposed solution must address before agreeing to support a final outcome.

Many public safety organizations need and would benefit from third-party assistance to facilitate some of these difficult conversations involving complex situations that require making tough decisions. For example, residents of a low-income community that

> ## "Change is not necessary. Survival is optional."
>
> ### – W.E. Deming

is trying to avoid filing for bankruptcy may seek agreements with surrounding communities in better financial condition to share police and fire services; however, those same residents may be concerned that their needs will be second to those of the other communities and thus may be reluctant to provide their consent. Third-party facilitation can help ensure stakeholders that the process is fair and not intended to result in a decision that would favor one set of interests within the community over others. A facilitator's role is to be impartial toward all stakeholders and assist them in reaching an outcome that they all can agree to and support.

When considering the services of a skilled third-party facilitator, it is advisable to select one who does not reside or work in the community. While a major stumbling block for many public safety organizations is a perceived lack of funds to pay for the third-party facilitation and consultation services, many mediators at the state and federal level are skilled in facilitating and applying an interest-based approach, which is at the core of the model described in this resource guide. In addition, local colleges or universities, particularly those that have as part of their mission a commitment to facilitating organizational change that involves union and management groups, may also employ staff who can serve as facilitators.

While it may not always be possible to reach agreement every time in these situations, the chance of reaching an agreement that all perceive

as successful and fair increases if all stakeholder interests are heard, respected, and reflected in the agreement as best as is practicable. Moreover, using an open, integrative process in this manner increases the possibility that the options generated will create new possibilities not foreseen in previous conversations.

This resource guide

This publication suggests a process that units of government and public safety organizations can follow to take on the difficult discussions about sharing, consolidating, or regionalizing services. This process is adapted from an effective problem-solving and conflict-resolution approach—principled negotiation—developed by Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991) of the Harvard Negotiation Project and explained in their seminal work, *Getting to YES*.

This process, often referred to as interest-based bargaining (IBB) or interest-based problem solving (IBPS), depending on the context, has been widely and successfully applied in numerous settings ranging from strategic planning to collective bargaining. It is effective because decisions are based upon what the stakeholders need from a solution rather than simply what they want—a distinction that will be clarified in stage 1, step 5. Some also refer to this process by the term "win-win" bargaining or problem solving, though "win-win" does not readily apply to situations such as those described in this publication, that have constraints that limit the possibilities and options available to choose from. Consequently, stakeholders might agree on the best possible solution within the constraints they have to work within, but none may feel as if they had won much of anything.

The interest-based process described in these pages is about reaching an agreement that all can support in a manner that maintains and improves the public safety that stakeholders are entitled to and expect. The process is intended to preserve the values and

principles that public safety professionals are sworn to uphold. Those values and principles are likely to surface as interests—that is, what any solution must address to the satisfaction of all stakeholders—in order for an agreement to receive their support.

The process described in these pages is structured to lay a foundation for successful problem solving, negotiation, and planning. It is particularly useful for projects involving a group of stakeholders, such as projects involving changes to the way public service agencies provide services. This process can, if followed correctly, be inclusive and transparent, which will reduce resistance to change and build support for solutions reached by the stakeholders involved. It will not eliminate conflict or reduce the passion that stakeholders bring to discussions about those things they deem important. But it will provide a means to channel that passion and energy to produce wise decisions. The process will also generate stakeholders' acceptance and commitment to carry out the process of implementation.

It should be noted that not all communities will be in a position to benefit from this approach, despite the best efforts or intentions of those charged with oversight of the process. Any number of factors could derail the deliberative dialogue necessary to build understanding and to reach agreement, including local politics; fear; hidden agendas; and concern for loss of identity, employment, or stature. That does not always mean no change will occur, but the persons or entities that have the power and authority to impose change may do so, with or without stakeholder input.

Ultimately, this publication is for those communities that wish to engage stakeholders in making a good-faith effort to listen to each other, to focus on what communities and their stakeholders need from an outcome (which may differ from what they say they want), and to work together to craft solutions that all will support.

Stage 1. Building a Foundation

Transparency, diversity, and inclusion are three important elements of a change process, especially when the process has the potential to be contentious and the change difficult (Watson 1969). Typically, the need for change will not be something that sneaks up on those who would be affected. Stakeholders will see the reduction in funds to support current efforts, positions not being filled, services cut back to the essentials, and public discussions in the media about the extent of the problem and how the problem can be resolved or managed.

Ideally, the stakeholders would agree to engage in a process of deliberative dialogue[2] for the purpose of building a shared understanding of the problem, its root causes, and the core elements needed in any solution before the problem reaches crisis stage. The steps below will assist with such a situation. Once crisis stage is reached, these steps will still apply, though within a more expedited time period.

STEP 1

Articulate the problem or goal and the role stakeholders can play.

Before convening stakeholders to address a problem, it is important that the sponsor—usually the unit of government responsible for overseeing public safety—be clear about what it is asking of them (see "Facilitating discussion through independent, third parties"). The more specificity the sponsor provides to the stakeholders about their task and their role in the deliberative process, the fewer misunderstandings that can divert time and energy from the primary focus that will need to be addressed down the road.

The sponsor—that is, the decision-making authority that invites stakeholder involvement—must also be clear about the degree to which the stakeholders are free to come up with their own options and the ways in which their suggestions will contribute to the final decisions made. If the sponsor asks stakeholders to provide guidance on how best to communicate and implement a decision that, for example, an executive or working group has already made, then the sponsor needs to make this limitation clear as well. Transparency requires full disclosure to achieve stakeholders' acceptance and support throughout the process.

It is also vital that participating stakeholders be clear about their role. Optimally, their role would be to develop a solid understanding of the problem, generate and analyze options, and provide recommendations for consideration and approval by the various governing bodies involved. If it is desired that stakeholders provide only input for deliberations that others will conduct, then the sponsor should also make clear how the stakeholders' voices will be included in those deliberations.

Being clear about roles will help to mitigate problems or misunderstandings that might arise at a time more deeply into the change process. In addition, articulating role expectations at the beginning of a process will help stakeholders to decide if or how they want to participate and will provide an opportunity for them to challenge the role offered to them.

STEP 2

Obtain agreement from all stakeholders to participate in a deliberative process.

The agreement to participate in a deliberative process requires stakeholders' acceptance of certain responsibilities:

- Stakeholders will engage in all tasks in good faith.

- They will listen to understand and speak to be understood.

---

2. According to McCoy and Scully (2002), deliberative dialogue is a concept that joins the process of dialogue—an orientation toward constructive communication, the dispelling of stereotypes, honesty in relaying ideas, and the intention to listen to and understand the other—with the related process, deliberation—the use of critical thinking and reasoned argument as a way for citizens to make decisions on public policy.

- They will support the interest-based process by stating what they and their constituents need from a solution, articulating their support when they can provide it, and offering other options that address the collective stakeholder needs when they cannot.

If some stakeholders cannot agree to these terms—or if it becomes apparent that certain stakeholders are not engaging in a process that promotes the public good—then the group may decide to exclude their voice and input from deliberations. The absence of their input does not mean decisions will be delayed; rather, it means decisions will be made without their input.

These conditions do not in any way suggest that disagreements should be discouraged and that stakeholders should simply go along with options that seem to be gaining consensus within the group. On the contrary, it is only through disagreement and conflict that real growth can occur. Quality outcomes require sharing diverse perspectives and experiences but through a structured process with rules of engagement that all agree to in advance.

At this point, it is wise to consider retaining the services of a skilled facilitator. Some of the deliberations are likely to be emotion-filled and perhaps even contentious. A third-party facilitator who is neutral and would not be affected by whatever outcome is reached may be necessary to keep the group focused, to keep the parties continually involved, and to disagree without being disagreeable. A facilitator should also have the support of the entire group of stakeholders to further remove potential perceptions of bias or favoritism.

STEP 3

Identify who will be a part of the planning team.

The sponsor decides which stakeholders will be represented in the deliberative process. Ideally the group of stakeholders would include those whose knowledge and experience are necessary to build a thorough and shared understanding of the issue and the implications and consequences of options the group may consider. The group would also include those whose participation and support are necessary to achieve support for the final outcome of the process and acceptance by the communities affected. At a minimum, this group is likely to include representatives of the units of government potentially affected, their municipal governing bodies and the specific departments involved, representatives of the bargaining units potentially affected, and perhaps well-respected community organizations.

The group of stakeholders should be diverse and address the stakeholders' interests that the decision will likely affect. It should be large enough to form subgroups that would perform assigned tasks yet small enough to keep team-wide discussions manageable. Furthermore, it is essential that the group of stakeholders agree on rules of engagement or participation to guide its efforts, including a clear understanding of how to share information, how to communicate summaries of discussions to other stakeholders, how to make decisions or recommendations, and how to proceed when the group is unable to make a decision.

It is possible that not all stakeholders will want, be able, or are needed to participate in all aspects of the deliberative process, which includes developing a deeper understanding of the problem, collecting and reviewing relevant data, assessing the feasibility of various options, and crafting a recommended solution. If this proves true, then it may be advisable to engage a subset of stakeholders to serve as a planning team. This team should not have the authority to make decisions on its own but should be able to make recommendations that it believes will best address the interests of all stakeholders. In situations involving fewer stakeholders, the entire group of stakeholders would perform the planning team's duties.

STEP 4

Build a shared understanding of the circumstances facing the units of government and departments involved.

Transparency, inclusion, and an equitable process demand that all stakeholders have the same information so that no stakeholder is at an advantage or a disadvantage when trying to understand the situation or consider options for resolving it. In addition, building a shared understanding of the challenges facing the units of government or departments is likely to increase the problem-solving and creative abilities of the group so there is considerable potential that the quality of ideas coming from the group will increase. If the issue driving the need for change is financial, then all need to be clear about the financial situation and be mindful of the constraints imposed by the available resources.

STEP 5

Lay the groundwork for working together.

Change is difficult. Resistance to change is easy. However, when people see themselves as part of the change—i.e., they see the stake they have in the change and the role they will play in its implementation—resistance often declines.

Fairness, equity, and accountability: interests basic to a deliberative process

The success of a change process greatly depends on the degree to which the various stakeholders accept that process and commit to implementing it. If the change process embraces the principles of inclusion, fairness, and transparency, the process can help to build that acceptance and commitment. Sharing burdens caused by the change in an equitable fashion will also help advance the change process. People are much more likely to accept less than optimal outcomes if they believe the change process was fair and if the group of stakeholders equitably shares the burden of impending changes.

Accountability is another shared interest that has two components. The first is that each stakeholder must acknowledge and assume responsibility for participating in the deliberative process, and the second component is that the stakeholders must implement the decisions that arise from that process. However, efforts to respond to the challenges or fiscal crises that created the need for change should consider options that not only provide a solution to the problem but also make the community a better place—options that, as Peter Block proposes, reduce the separateness that exists in communities, that create and nurture connectedness, and that care for the whole (Block 2008).

To be clear, accountability is not about assigning guilt or blame, as doing so will create barriers between stakeholders. It acknowledges that the status quo did not come about on its own and is not solely the result of external forces over which stakeholders had no control. Each stakeholder, to one extent or another, made choices of commission or omission—however well-meaning—that led to the current situation.

Accepting responsibility for the current situation will be difficult for some stakeholders. Yet doing otherwise will make realizing an equitable solution that all can support—and one that not only fixes the problem but makes the community a better place in which to live —difficult to achieve. It is important for a stakeholder to keep one of Albert Einstein's axioms in mind when considering whether he or she can commit to the level of accountability required for an effective process and successful outcome: "Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."

> # The possibility for agreement will increase when the stakeholders identify what they need from a solution in order to be able to support it.

The effectiveness of the deliberative process will be greatly improved by giving attention, up front, to a few recommendations that will be helpful in evaluating options and facilitating conversations:

Identify stakeholder interests—separate what is wanted from what is needed.

The possibility for agreement will increase when the stakeholders identify what they need from a solution in order to be able to support it. These needs, or interests, are not answers to the situation or dilemma but are factors that will help all involved parties to assess which of the various options proposed— including combinations of options—provide the best solution, given the constraints that the parties have to work within. The stakeholders are likely to select the options closest to addressing all of their primary needs.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow (1970) posited that individual behavior is motivated by a hierarchy of needs, which vary from person to person and from time to time. The hierarchy begins with an emphasis on meeting basic physiological needs, the needs for personal security, social affiliation or sense of community, self-esteem or pride in one's community, and self-actualization or development of the community's potential. However, unless a stakeholder's lower-level needs for basic life necessities and personal security are met, he or she will have difficulty focusing on options intended to address higher order needs because the stakeholder's urgency for satisfying those higher needs will be not as immediate. Consequently, it is advisable to be respectful of and sensitive to the more basic needs articulated by some of the stakeholders; the degree to which they are equitably addressed will significantly affect the success of the change process.

Create and agree on a set of principles to guide deliberations.

Establishing a set of principles, or rules of engagement, to guide the deliberations at the beginning of the change process is invaluable. They will help to ensure that everyone hears and respects all voices, understands clearly the process of deciding or recommending, and has agreed ahead of time on the mechanisms of how to resolve impasses. The list of guiding principles does not have to be long, but it should anticipate the types of needs that groups often have when dealing with emotionally charged, contentious issues.

Many people and groups are familiar with the concept of ground rules. They should be clear, easily understood, and mutually acceptable to all. They

offer an alternative to the formality and rigidity of Robert's Rules of Order or other parliamentary procedures that give distinct advantage to those who have greater knowledge of the rules. Ground rules also facilitate deliberative dialogue rather than provide order to a debate.

Some simple guiding principles might include the following; however, the chosen principles should be acceptable to all:

- Treat the speaker and the listener with respect.
- Speak to be understood; listen to understand.
- Speak to the issue, and leave personalities out of comments.
- Let everyone who wishes to speak to an issue do so before a person may speak again.
- Encourage those who are quiet to share their thoughts.

Identify constraints.

Seldom will stakeholders have a blank slate upon which to design a solution that will satisfy all of their needs. They will often be bound by various constraints that may limit or affect the choices they make or the options they wish to consider. Budgetary constraints and collective bargaining agreements are two types of constraints that have implications on the solution that the stakeholders develop.

Regardless of their nature, constraints should not be looked at as barriers to agreements but merely as boundaries into which a solution must fit. It is critical to identify and discuss constraints early in the process so that they are understood and do not become "gotchas" when brought up as a reason why a particular option must be rejected or will not work.

Strengthen the team through an environmental scan.

Groups that function effectively do not require that all members be alike; think alike; act alike; or share the same affiliations, religious beliefs, or political beliefs. Communities are not like that either. A successful group does, however, require that everyone respect and embrace the diversity that exists within it. One way to express that diversity is through an environmental scan or a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis[3]—a collaborative process in which group members identify what they perceive to be the internal strengths and weaknesses that reside within the environment that is the focus of the effort and the external opportunities presented by changes affecting the environment and the threats that challenge it.

A SWOT analysis is not definitive and should not be used in that manner. It simply presents a picture of how stakeholders view their environment at that particular time. It highlights differences in perceptions and perspectives. Moreover, it provides a relatively safe opportunity to bring out varying perspectives. It enables stakeholders to build a shared understanding of the various ways they perceive the environment. A SWOT analysis debriefing does not attempt to resolve differences; rather, it helps stakeholders to acknowledge and perhaps even embrace differences.

---

3. For more information on SWOT analysis, see "SWOT Analysis: Discover New Opportunities. Manage and Eliminate Threats," Mind Tools Ltd., http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm.

There are various ways to conduct a SWOT analysis, some of which take more time than others. One less time-consuming way that also affords a small amount of anonymity to those posting information combines individual list-making with what may be referred to as "walk-around brainstorming." The fairly simple process is as follows:

- To prepare for the exercise, the facilitator sets up flip charts around the room and labels them internal strengths, internal weaknesses, external opportunities, or external threats. The facilitator also ensures markers are readily available as well as masking tape in case extra chart pages are needed for overflow.

- Group members individually create lists of the internal strengths and weaknesses that they believe are present within the community and within the group of stakeholders. Likewise, they also list what they see as opportunities that may be present for the community as well as threats that it may be facing. This can be mostly accomplished within 5–10 minutes.

- After group members complete their individual lists, the facilitator instructs group members to walk around the meeting room and post items from their lists on the respective, labeled flip charts stationed around the room. If another group member has already posted an item from a list, other members should place a check mark next to it to record the number of people who listed that particular item. The facilitator then instructs group members to review all of the charts a second time and to add check marks or new thoughts that come to them from reviewing others' contributions. This may take about 20 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

- Once completed, the facilitator reads each group's lists aloud and, one by one, asks the rest of the group to raise questions for clarification when needed.[4]

- Once the group completes the review and provides clarification of the lists, the facilitator then asks the group members to share their observations of the combined lists—but not to discuss the merits or validity of any entry. There will likely be conflicting perceptions listed; what some might see as a strength, others might view as a weakness. What some might list as an opportunity, others might see as a threat. It is not important or necessary to agree on all things in this process.

Conducting a SWOT analysis helps the group to identify resources and capabilities needed for whatever change the group is to initiate. The analysis will also draw attention to factors that group members may need to address in order to effectively move the deliberation process or resulting initiative forward. The SWOT analysis also brings to the surface not only potential opportunities, such as improved quality of services, increased response time, or expanded opportunities for promotion, but also potential threats, such as reduced response time, municipal bankruptcy, or an externally appointed emergency manager who could take control of local officials'

---

4. The facilitator also informs the group that debating the validity of any entry is not permitted, as the SWOT analysis is intended to provide only a snapshot of group member perceptions at that particular time.

decision making. Such potential threats could come into play should the change not occur, be miscalculated, or be poorly handled.

A SWOT analysis also builds a composite picture of how the various stakeholders perceive the community and the situation being addressed. There will be many perceptions that stakeholders will widely share, and there will be some that conflict. As such, it is important for stakeholders to acknowledge that differences exist because doing so is the first step toward collaboration and is necessary for engaging in deliberative dialogue (see Work Group for Community Health and Development 2013).

STEP 7

Develop a plan for communicating with stakeholders.

Deliberation over matters that concern and affect the entire community usually stirs up a range of emotions, especially if stakeholders fear their livelihood or personal security are at stake. This fear can be exacerbated by the absence of consistent information about the nature of the conversations, what the group is discussing, where alliances seem to be evolving, and so on. Where information is not forthcoming, rumors are likely to abound.

The planning team will need to follow a consistent plan for managing communication with constituents. The team will need to decide what to report, how much to report, how frequently to report, and who will do the reporting. Too little or infrequent communication violates the promise of transparency; however, too much communication could compromise the planning team's ability to explore and consider seriously a wide range of options.

An additional concern is attributing comments to specific, identified individuals—a practice that should be avoided. To foster creativity and full consideration, group members should be encouraged to "think out loud"—that is, to explore ideas without having

> Deliberation over matters that concern and affect the entire community usually stirs up a range of emotions, especially if stakeholders fear their livelihood or personal security are at stake.

to defend them or even support them later. Far-reaching thoughts, an essential element of creative yet rational thinking, may be misconstrued if reported out of context. Moreover, the individual initiating the far-reaching thought may be the target of a stakeholders' wrath if that stakeholder believes the individual was championing an idea that undermined the security and well-being of one or more stakeholders. Many groups address this concern of attribution by including ground rules that place limitations on how to report group discussions. For example, the group must own all ideas rather than attributing ideas to individuals; however, this does not mean the entire group supports every idea. Another ground rule that many groups employ is that meeting participants must agree at the end of each meeting on the message they will communicate to the various constituencies represented. It is also useful to agree on one or two people who will be the group's liaisons with the media, helping to ensure that consistent messages congruent with the group's ground rules are delivered.

Stage 2. Exploring the Possibilities

Data not only offer evaluative qualities but also serve as a counter to emotion and can guide and inform discussions and decision making.

With transparency, diversity, and inclusion as foundation principles for this process, it is important that all stakeholders have access to the same information. It is appropriate for the sponsor of the process (i.e., the convening executive or entity) to gather and share information about regionalization, consolidation, and shared services with the stakeholders or planning team. Doing so is a way to build understanding and to stimulate thinking and discussion about regionalization, consolidation, and shared services concepts. However, the sponsor should encourage and help the stakeholders to collect information on their own—or at least help them to define the kind of information they seek. To do so will help ensure the stakeholders are participating in an open process rather than being led by the sponsor to a particular solution.

However, if the sponsor has already reached a particular solution, then the sponsor should make this status clear to the stakeholders when inviting them to participate in the deliberative process. If the sponsor presents the facts surrounding the project and makes clear the stakeholders' role, then the sponsor will have achieved an open process.

STEP 1

Review the evidence base: collect, share, and review information about regionalization, consolidation, and shared services.

Before staking out a position on whether or how to develop a plan for regionalizing, consolidating, or sharing services, it is best to review the evidence that exists about units of government that have implemented one or more of these strategies. Certainly, the group should not overlook concept papers, editorials, or essays on the benefits or drawbacks of shared services strategies. However, the group should be mindful that some of these are opinion pieces written without any reference to evidence that supports or undermines their claims.

When issues are contentious, emotions often play a major role in discussions. Remember that a hierarchy of needs or interests is at stake. That is why data play such an important role. Data not only offer evaluative qualities but also serve as a counter to emotion and can guide and inform discussions and decision making.

The evidence base describing the effectiveness of shared services is mixed. A white paper by the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACP 2007) states that in some locations and in some situations, sharing services has been very effective in addressing the problems that they were intended to address. However, the NJSACP white paper and other studies (Wilson and Grammich 2012; 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania n.d.) point to shared services as being not very effective for reducing budgets in the short run yet more effective in reducing operating costs over a longer period. Perhaps more important than the final verdict on the effectiveness of the change, stakeholders should take a closer look at the factors that contributed to the outcome obtained and consider to what extent those factors have relevance in their community.

The planning team should decide how it wants to collect and review the evidence base, and it should agree on the process of gathering information. After obtaining the information, the planning team should ensure the information is inventoried and made accessible, whether via photocopies or shared electronically, so that all participants have an opportunity to review it. Ideally, this would be performed by a member of the administrative support staff of the municipality serving as the sponsor of the deliberative process.

The planning team can and should obtain the evidence base on shared service arrangements and experiments from a variety of sources. Newspaper and magazine articles may provide information on communities that have attempted this type of change

and provide additional focus for the search. Other sources include studies reported in academic journals and government publications. In addition, Michigan State University's Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services (PCASS) web page includes a large searchable database created from existing resources on consolidation and shared services.[5] For first-hand information, it may be possible to interview some of the key participants involved in successful and not-so successful change efforts.

Overall, the planning team should make every effort to be thorough and open-minded, gathering information from a range of sources regardless of the extent to which those sources support or undermine any preliminary positions held by individual stakeholders.

STEP 2

Analyze the evidence.

Most likely, a community will not be able to replicate the exact plan implemented elsewhere. Communities have their own unique characteristics—geographic, socio-economic, demographic, historic, etc.—that require plans specific to them. However, it is possible and useful to learn from the experience of communities that previously have taken the steps toward shared services.

The planning team should look carefully at the evidence gathered, identify those that seemed to be successful as well as those that did not seem to go as well, and analyze the information so that the group can answer questions such as the following:

- What were the goals the new structure intended to address?

- Are those goals similar to those in your community?

---

5. See http://policeconsolidation.msu.edu/.

- What was the design of the new structure, and what was the implementation process?

- What aspects of the planned design seemed to work well and which aspects did not?

- Were there any unanticipated challenges or consequences?

- Who was involved in the implementation?

- How was the change communicated to the stakeholders' constituencies and by whom?

- What role did stakeholders play in planning and implementing the change?

- Was there consensus about the chosen option?

- What resistance was encountered?

- What factors contributed to the resistance?

- Where did the resistance come from, how was it addressed, and was it addressed effectively?

- What lessons were learned from these examples?

- For those examples that were not as successful, would a different planning process, design, or structure have had a better chance of success?

- What aspects of the changes you analyzed resonate with your group?

STEP 3

Compare the evidence with the community's situation or needs.

The next task is to discuss the relevance and appropriateness of the gathered information in terms of the community's needs, stakeholders' interests, and desired goals. Stakeholders should consider if they can draw lessons from the experiences of others that suggest options or variations on options to consider. Also see if an example comes close to what needs to be accomplished. Remember that the evidence gathering and benchmarking is not

intended to provide an easy solution. Instead it is intended to inform the planning team's thinking, provide some guidance, and stimulate their creativity to generate options that have appropriate application in the community.

At this point, various options or possibilities encountered through the data gathering process may draw added attention from one or more stakeholder. This is both normal and acceptable as long as it remains, at this point, just one option and does not become the subject of vigorous debate and problem solving—yet. The planning team will have to evaluate

Keeping track of notes

Keeping track of all of the thoughts, ideas, data, and evidence base generated through this process is important to enable easy reference and to reduce the possibility of redundancy. It is helpful to create visual notes during each group session and transcribe those notes to an electronic file afterward. If possible, create the notes in an electronic file while in session, and in the interest of transparency, display the notes by connecting the computer to a data projector and project them onto a blank wall or screen so all can see. However, paper is still important, and use of flip charts or butcher paper should not be overlooked as a way to aid the discussion of ideas. The group or a designated individual can summarize the notes on paper during the session, but the group should agree on what to record. Creating electronic files also helps with organization and communication. Such files can be easily reproduced and shared with others. They can also easily be placed in chronological order, and files with related content can be grouped together in folders and subfolders to make it easier for people to retrieve a reference from an article, previous meeting, or event.

It is important to acknowledge an issue when it is raised and recognize that it may have importance to one or more of the stakeholders.

the extent to which each option addresses the over-arching goal of this redesign/restructuring process; satisfies or addresses stakeholders' primary needs that will include security and safety; and satisfies or addresses their secondary needs that may include a sense of community, pride in one's community, and opportunities for growth and development.

The specific task of generating and evaluating options comes a little later in this process (see stage three). However, it is important to record and keep track of ideas and options as they arise; perhaps the planning team should create a written or virtual "parking lot" of items to be discussed at a later time so they are not forgotten or overlooked. But it is also important to maintain consistency within the group's process and refrain from being drawn into a pro-tracted discussion of an option before the planning team can consider and evaluate all options together.

STEP 4

Identify desirable attributes.

After reviewing and reflecting on the evidence base for sharing, consolidating, or regionalizing services, the facilitator's next task is to identify and discuss attributes of the efforts of others that are appealing or at least interesting, as well as potentially problem-atic, to any of the stakeholders.

Listing attributes does not mean that they will be embedded in whatever solution is reached, but it does begin a process of articulating how various stakeholder interests might be addressed. Listing and discussing attributes in this way begins to move the group along on the process of developing a plan.

STEP 5

Identify what issues, problems, and concerns to address.

By this time, stakeholders will likely be formulating in their minds a sense of the dimensions of the changes they are contemplating or considering. Along with this sense, questions, issues, problems, and concerns to address will also begin to surface in their minds, which they will need to address—not only to gain each other's support or acquiescence but also to obtain the community's acceptance of the chosen solution and therefore to be able to implement that solution effectively.

It may not be necessary to create a segment within a stakeholders' meeting that is devoted to raising these questions, issues, or concerns; rather, these may con-tinue to come up throughout the entire process. It is important to acknowledge an issue when it is raised and recognize that it may have importance to one or more of the stakeholders. Moreover, when the stake-holders discuss and evaluate options, these questions and issues become part of the matrix with which the planning team reviews and evaluates options.

Stage 3. Designing a Plan

There is not a specific amount of time that must pass before the planning team gets to the point at which it is ready to generate options. A planning team will be ready to proceed with this part of the process when it has collected and reviewed the evidence gathered, discussed what the group learned, and identified desirable attributes as well as questions, issues, or concerns that the group will need to address.

STEP 1

Generate options/ideas.

Two options for designing a plan include (1) creating a draft plan and (2) generating and evaluating options as a large group. Both will apply elements of principled negotiation.[6]

Option 1. Creating a draft plan.

Creating a draft plan can result in a more efficient use of time for the group of stakeholders because it provides a platform for further discussion. A draft plan should reflect the needs of each of the stakeholders, function effectively within the constraints imposed by the external environment, and build on research findings and best practices where they apply. It is not an attempt by one faction or another to manipulate the process and control the terms of the discussion. It is not an attempt to focus discussion or limit consideration to a narrower range of options consistent with interests previously expressed by the group of stakeholders.

---

6. The Harvard Negotiation Project developed principled negotiation, which it articulated in its book *Getting to Yes* (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1991). This method is used to decide issues on their merits rather than through a haggling process focused on what parties to the negotiation say they will or won't do. It looks for mutual gains where possible, addresses the needs of stakeholders as best as is practicable, and where interests conflict, achieves results based on some fair standards independent of the will of any of the parties involved.

A draft plan predigests many of the ideas that the group of stakeholders has reviewed and discussed, tries to put those ideas into a structured plan that meets the objectives of the sponsor, effectively addresses the problem that is the focus of the effort, and satisfies as best as is practicable the interests and concerns of the group of stakeholders. The stakeholders should understand that the draft plan is not binding for anyone and that even those who take part in developing the draft plan are not obligated to support it later. Discussion of the plan is intended to stimulate critical reflection about whether the plan will adequately address the overarching issues and the stakeholders' needs.

It is best to assign the task of creating a draft plan to an individual or subgroup of people who have been participating in the entire process. Whoever accepts the task of creating the draft plan has considerable responsibility. He or she will need to synthesize elements of the conversations, readings, reports, and interviews and draft an outline of a plan that conveys the sense of the group—even if it is bifurcated. The draft plan will not only present a proposal for consideration but also identify the key issues and interests that the proposal does not yet satisfactorily address. This person or subgroup will also need a defined date by which he or she must complete the draft plan.

Volunteers work best, as long as they have the requisite characteristics needed by members of this subgroup. They should have demonstrated the ability to open-mindedly consider ideas and options at odds with their own. They should be available to work within the group's timeframe. And they must not take personally any criticism of the draft plan. Keep in mind that the draft plan is not the subgroup's or the individual writer's plan; it should represent the best thinking of the entire group of stakeholders. A paid staff person from one of the government agency

The next step requires that all understand the draft plan or the options generated as their originator intended.

stakeholders involved may be a useful member of the group for doing the heavy lifting of writing, but that requirement is not necessary.

Option 2. Generate and evaluate options as a group.

This option has stakeholders reflect on all that has been involved in their effort to date, consider their key interests that any solution will need to address, acknowledge the constraints that they are operating under, and generate options that will address—at least in part—the needs of the units of government involved.

This could be done through a facilitated group activity that generates options and captures them on a flip chart or electronically without discussion at this point—a type of informed brainstorming. Or stakeholders could have a few days to think about options and either submit them electronically or in writing to a central repository or return to the next meeting with options in writing that they present to the entire group. Regardless of the mode, discussion should be held off until the stakeholders have presented all of their ideas and options.

Address questions for clarification.

Regardless of whether the group followed option 1 or 2, the next step requires that all understand the draft plan or the options generated as their originator intended. Thus, questions for clarification are in order. Again, hold off discussion of the merits of the draft plan or the options generated until there is a shared understanding of what has been proposed. It will be a little challenging to keep the group from discussing the merits or drawbacks of the various options, but this is still not the time for such a discussion. That will follow shortly. Instead, give adequate time to make sure each option, or each element of the draft plan, has been clearly presented and clearly understood.

Discuss and critique the draft plan / options.

After clarifying the elements of the draft plan or list of options, the planning team should evaluate them to see how each stacks up against the stakeholders' interests and constraints. The team should also evaluate the degree to which the group expects each element to address the goals of the stakeholders' efforts. It is also important to consider at this time the intended and possibly unintended consequences of each option on the list or of the draft plan.

The draft plan or the options deserve their day in court. An effective way to begin the process of evaluating options or elements of a draft plan is to create a matrix with the stakeholder interests on one axis and the various options or elements on the other (see Table 1). This can be done literally or figuratively, as long as the group evaluates all options in terms of the extent to which they address the overarching problem or need, they address stakeholder interests, and they can be accomplished within the environmental constraints.

Table 1 provides a sample matrix for illustration purposes. For a draft plan, break out its elements, as with the options, and place them on the matrix. Then evaluate each part of the plan in the same way the group would evaluate the options.

The process of evaluation using a matrix is simple and works like this:

1. Create a matrix on a large sheet of butcher paper, flip chart, white board, or chalk board—big enough so that all can see.

2. On the horizontal axis, list all of the options—this can be done by simply assigning a number to each of the options listed previously, after removing any that obviously will not be considered.

3. On the vertical axis, list all of the stakeholder interests or constraints that the option must address to receive all of their support.

4. Take each option, in turn, and ask the group to determine which of the stakeholder interests or constraints an option addresses. Place an "X" in the boxes on the matrix where the option and the interest meet.

Table 1. Sample matrix of interests/constraints and options.

Interests/constraints	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	Option 7	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10
Fairness										
Within budget										
Keep jobs										
Maintain essential services										
Public safety										
Work-family balance										
Sustainable										
Promote diversity										
Inclusive										
Citizen role										
Manageable										
Total "Xs"										

5. Ask stakeholders which of their interests or needs are not addressed. Place an "O" in those boxes on the matrix.

6. After all options are reviewed, tally the "Xs."

7. Begin discussing the options. See the next step.

In this process, the group of stakeholders evaluates the extent to which each option or element of a draft plan addresses interests satisfactorily, helps to solve the problem or need, and can be accomplished within the environmental constraints. Use of a matrix provides a visual scorecard so stakeholders can see which options are most useful to a potential solution or plan.

STEP 4

Craft a solution/plan.

The planning team will need to "craft a solution" to better understand how to solve the problem or address the situation facing the community. Most likely, the team will have generated pieces of a solution or plan that do not fit cleanly together at first. They may even be missing essential parts of a solution.

Thus, the team may have to consider various options in different combinations to get a better fit. As a result, the team may decide to eliminate some options, make some modifications, or add new ones to reach a solution that addresses the stakeholder interests, addresses the problem, and can be accomplished within the constraints imposed by the external environment. Those options left then become the focus of discussion.

Discussion, therefore, is not only about the merits of each option but also about how the options can be crafted together in a way that produces a solution that solves the problem, that meets key interests as best as is practicable, and that can be accomplished within the constraints. It is possible that through the discussion the group may generate new ideas, which should receive the same thorough review as the others that preceded them. Any option or element of a draft plan considered further must help to address the problem that set this group of stakeholder's effort in motion. At this point, it is necessary, but not sufficient, to address only stakeholder needs. It is also necessary that the proposed solution effectively address the problem.

Use the results from the evaluation matrix to focus the stakeholders' attention on options or elements that score a high degree of acceptability—that is, they meet more of the stakeholder interests than other options. Focus also on the stakeholder interests. If there is a "must have" interest that any option has not addressed, then the group will either have to think about how to address the interest and generate additional options or revisit and reflect on the interest to determine if the real need has been captured correctly. Or perhaps the interest has been too narrowly defined but contains elements of an option or position or answer. If only one option or solution can satisfy an interest, then maybe that interest is actually an option. If that is the case, then it should be treated in the same manner as the other options.

It is possible that an option or solution may not be able to satisfy completely all stakeholder interests. This is why earlier in this process the group of stakeholders ranked interests according to where they fit

on something like Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see stage 1, step 5). The facilitator should engage the planning team to apply greater effort to addressing as completely as is **possible and practicable** the more basic needs or interests that stakeholders have identified. Possible and practicable are defined as those needs or interests that fall under the control of the collective or individual stakeholders and can be accomplished within the constraints that define the situation or limit the options.

This construction is not unlike remodeling a pre-existing structure, like an old house. During renovations, pieces that fit together when first built may no longer fit with the new materials added because the foundation shifted or because currently available materials have different dimensions than are standard (e.g., a 2x4-inch piece of lumber, in spite of what it's called, measures a quarter to a half inch short on each dimension). To remedy such factors, remodelers make adjustments or insert shims to improve the fit. Depending on the key interests and identified options, this process may require the group to insert shims to develop a solution.

This step of the process will seem more like art than science. There is no standard approach to take other than to continue trying different combinations of options and thinking about how to address the missing pieces. Patience and flexibility will be required of all involved. This part of the process, in particular, may require a skillful facilitator who does not have a particular agenda that he or she wants to advance.

This may appear more difficult than it actually is. The above scenarios and suggestions are meant to help the planning team to recognize that it will need to

> One of the rules of engagement established much earlier in the process should have specified how the group will reach agreements, which optimally would be by consensus.

problem solve and negotiate. However, if the stakeholders follow the same process that has brought them to this point, focusing on interests and not positions and following the rules of engagement they set for themselves, then they will arrive at a solution and reach agreement.

STEP 5

Reach agreement.

One of the rules of engagement established much earlier in the process (see stage 1, step 5) should have specified how the group will reach agreements,

which optimally would be by consensus—meaning everyone agrees that the solution reached is the best one available given the stakeholder interests and the constraints that define the situation and limit the options. Consensus does not mean everyone gets what he or she wants. Nor does it mean that the solution represents everyone's first choice. Consensus means that all recognize the solution as the best available within the external environmental constraints and that the group of stakeholders is willing to publicly and privately support the decision 100 percent as the best possible under the circumstances.

If reaching agreement proves difficult, several strategies can encourage careful and respectful deliberation yet not allow one stakeholder to block a decision simply because he or she doesn't like it. These strategies include the following:

■ Ask those who do not give their consent to explain their reasons and to offer an alternative.

■ Ask those who do not give their consent to indicate which of the key interests they see as not being adequately addressed by the solution. If they can do so, they should be encouraged to offer an alternative, though others in the group should offer their options as well. Perhaps the group will discover that the group overlooked an important interest that they should add for consideration.

■ Table the discussion and consensus gathering until another time to give those in the group a chance to think and reflect and perhaps to share other ideas informally with others.

It is possible that none of the stakeholders will be completely happy with a solution. Yet all should understand one important fact (which the procedures should reflect)—it's okay if the stakeholders do not reach a decision; in such situations, the sponsor will decide the solution. Acknowledging this reality early in the process may reduce the chance that the group will cause an impasse either by delaying or not making a decision or by hoping the situation will improve and thus make change unnecessary.

STEP 6

Obtain feedback on the plan.

During the discussion about rules of engagement, the group of stakeholders also should have devised a process about how it will obtain feedback from constituents about a proposed solution or plan. Perhaps there will be one or more open meetings at which time the planning team can explain the process it employed, including how the group arrived at the solution it proposes, and the proposed solution. During the meeting, the facilitator should permit anyone to ask questions and provide feedback. The planning team can either hold a separate meeting for each of the stakeholders' constituents or include everyone in a single meeting so that everyone hears the same message, the same questions, and the same responses.

Many groups have found that when the parties involved in the process work together to present and explain the agreements reached to their respective constituents, understanding is much greater. Moreover, constituents hear a consistent message and see that the proposed agreement has the support of all of the stakeholders involved in the process.

STEP 7

Make adjustments to the plan and finalize.

At this point, the planning team should consider feedback received from the open meetings. It is quite possible that new data, interests, or options will emerge that could influence the thinking of the team. As such, the team should consider these using the same process employed up until now: state and clarify stakeholder interests; consider the degree to which the proposed options address the problem, address stakeholder interests, and can be accomplished within the externally imposed constraints; and check for consensus.

Once all of this is done, present the final plan, one more time, to the group of stakeholders for consensus. Ask each person if he or she is willing to support publicly and privately the decision of the group 100 percent. Last, handle failed consensus in the manner specified in the group's rules of engagement.

Media as an observer and ally

This guide has not yet focused on a role of the local media, especially the editorial board of a newspaper. While the media should be included throughout the process, it should do so only as an observer and ally in communicating with the public and not as a participant in the stakeholders' data gathering process, discussions, deliberations, and decision making.

Conversations with the media should take place early on and describe the situation, the process used to address the situation, and the role the planning team will play in deciding how to address the situation. This will help the media to understand and accurately report how the process will unfold. The accuracy of this reporting will be critical when the media explains elements of the plan to the public and obtain the public's feedback.*

It may also be desirable to appoint a media liaison or chief spokesperson from the planning team who has the primary responsibility of communicating with the media. In addition, it is likely to be useful for a few members of the planning team to meet with local editorial boards on occasion throughout the planning process.

---

* For lessons about media exposure and communicating with the media about police consolidation, see Chermak, Scheer, and Wilson (2014).

Stage 4. Implementing the Plan

An implementation subgroup consisting of those stakeholders whose primary occupational role gives them access to and control over the resources necessary to implement and monitor the agreed upon solution should take the lead on developing an implementation plan and timeline but include a monitoring role for stakeholders. This subgroup is not responsible for deciding aspects of the solution because the stakeholders and planning team have already done that. Instead, the group's task is to figure out how to make the solution work.

Taking the lead on implementation does not negate a role for other stakeholders. Because the implementation will affect them and their constituents, they will have insights that can help to make the transition go smoothly for them. In stage 3, the facilitator should have specified the role the stakeholders play in developing the implementation plan. In this stage, the stakeholders should have, at the very least, an opportunity to review the implementation plan and offer suggestions for improvement before implementation.

Some suggestions for creating an implementation plan are as follows:

- Create a timeline that includes a pilot or testing period and that identifies responsibilities, milestones, and deliverables, if applicable.

- Establish measurement criteria for assessing the success of the entire planned change, and identify data sources (e.g. incident reports, response times, and citizen satisfaction surveys) that will provide the necessary measurements.

- Create a plan for monitoring and evaluating the implementation progress, process, and outcomes. Most likely, all stakeholders will be watching. However, establishing criteria for assessment, milestones, and a clear timeline will make this more effective and perhaps minimize conflict.

- Develop a plan for identifying and resolving collective bargaining issues. This might not be a major hurdle if the unions representing affected employees have been involved throughout the process, have been communicating continuously with union members about the options stakeholders are considering, and have received union members' endorsement of the proposed solution. If the unions refused to participate in the process, negotiations could be more difficult. Nonetheless, applying an interest-based approach to bargaining in a manner consistent with the approach taken throughout this exercise will help stakeholders to reach agreement.

- Plan to provide education and training to constituent groups as needed. This will, of course, depend on what the planned change ultimately includes. There may be a need for community meetings to explain in more depth what is being implemented and what will and will not change. Most important, provide information to community members about the services and level of services they can expect from the new arrangement.

- Create a process for continuous improvement: e.g., a mechanism through which the group can continue to provide and receive community input and feedback. In addition, each of the affected public agencies or units should also have mechanisms in place to identify and address problems as they arise. It may also be useful to consider training all employees and managers in the use of quality and process improvement tools—particularly those that help to identify the root cause of problems, such as a Shewhart Diagram, Is/Is Not Analysis, and the Five Whys, so that individual stakeholders or a group of stakeholders can continue to develop efficiencies as appropriate and as the need arises.[7]

---

7. For more information about quality improvement tools, visit the website of the American Society for Quality Training at http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/quality-tools.html.

Conclusion

Making decisions that result in transforming the organization and delivery of public safety services is not an easy task. Emotions, past practice, varying stakeholder needs, and other factors make changing the status quo challenging. However, a structured and inclusive process such as the one suggested in this resource guide can help to build understanding of the need for change. This process can also provide context for the change and thus foster stakeholder acceptance and strengthen the commitment to carry out the change.

This guide is meant to illustrate how a process of deliberative dialogue, which includes applying an interest-based problem-solving model, can help communities and stakeholders to build understanding, generate and consider options, and develop a plan that will meet the overarching needs of all constituents. In some cases, assistance from a third-party facilitator may be necessary or at least helpful to get the process started and pointed in the right direction.

Engaging a group of stakeholders in discussions about transforming the organization and delivery of public safety services may not be an easy task or one that many will happily embrace. However, using an inclusive process of deliberative dialogue can be an enriching experience and result in creating a viable plan that addresses the primary needs of the group of stakeholders. Moreover, doing so can also improve the quality of communication and reduce the separateness stakeholders sometimes experience, thus improving the overall quality of life in the community.

References

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania. n.d. *Opportunities for Innovation in Local Government: A Summary of Findings from Recent Research.* http://www.greaterohio.org/files/policy-research/research-summary-opportunities-for-innovation-in-local-government.pdf.

Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Chermak, Steven, Charles Scheer, and Jeremy M. Wilson. 2014. *Police Consolidation: Engaging the News Media.* Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. 1991. *Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Maslow, Abraham H. 1970. *Motivation and Personality.* New York: Harper and Row.

McCoy, Martha L., and Patrick L. Scully. 2002. "Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What Kind of Talk Does Democracy Need?" *National Civic Review* 91 (2): 117–18.

NJSACP (New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police). 2007. *Police Department Regionalization, Consolidation, Merger & Shared Services: Important Considerations for Policy Makers.* West Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police. http://www.njslom.org/documents/whitepaper.pdf.

Watson, Goodwin. 1969. "Resistance to Change." In *The Planning of Change*, 2nd ed., edited by Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, 488-497. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.

Wilson, Jeremy, and Clifford Grammich. 2012. *Police Consolidation, Regionalization, and Shared Services: Options, Considerations, and Lessons from Research and Practice.* BOLO. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. http://ric-doj.zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0641-pub.pdf.

Work Group for Community Health and Development. 2013. "Chapter 3. Section 14. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats." *Community Tool Box.* Lawrence: University of Kansas. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main.

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information
and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than $14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 125,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.

- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.

- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.57 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

For those communities that have implemented or are considering options that would result in sharing, consolidating, or regionalizing public safety services with other public sector entities, the quality of solutions and the success of their implementation depend on the ability of leaders and citizens to gather and in good faith analyze relevant information, carry on careful and rational discussions of tough issues, and craft workable plans in a timely fashion with a minimum of divisive conflict. *Police Consolidation: Collaborating with Stakeholders* aims to help those charged with exploring options for transforming an organization and for delivering public safety services by presenting a step-by-step process to constructively engage a group of stakeholders and formulate options for transformation.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

Michigan State University
220 Trowbridge Road
East Lansing, MI 48824

www.msu.edu