



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

December 6, 2016

5:30 p.m.

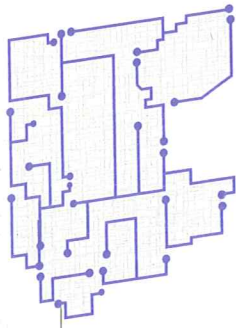
NSSC/NSAC Offices

2670 Arthur Street

A G E N D A

1. Call to Order
2. Accept Agenda
3. Accept Minutes of the September 15, 2016, Meeting
4. Set Date for Community/Constituents Conversation
↳ Board Workshop?
5. Review/Discuss Planning Assumptions (page 3)
6. Review/Discuss Critical Issues (page 4)
7. Set Next Meeting/Meeting Schedule
8. Adjourn

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North
Suburban
Communications
Commission



draft
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Minutes
September 15, 2016

1. Call to Order

Chair Hal Gray called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The following persons were in attendance: Craig Wilson, Arden Hills; Susan Majerus, Falcon Heights; Mary Burg, New Brighton; Dan Roe, Roseville; Hal Gray, St. Anthony; Coralie Wilson, Executive Director; Barbara Ray, Executive Director, Center for Policy, Planning & Performance; Tim Domke, Production & Outreach Manager; Terri Schultz, Technical Services Manager; David Rosenbloom, Business Manager.

2. Accept Agenda

Mr. Roe moved to accept the agenda, seconded by Mr. Wilson. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Accept Minutes of the June 2, 2016, Meeting

Ms. Burg moved to accept the minutes of the June 2, 2016, meeting. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

4. 2016 Strategic Planning Process

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Raye reviewed a draft strategic planning report based on the focus group meetings with the city councils, the school boards and staff, community producers and volunteers, CTV staff and community organizations. Ms. Raye said she heard a lot of conversation about expanding CTV's mission to community building and community engagement, and she outlined some key decisions for the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee members then discussed the report and its implications, including the financial costs, with Ms. Raye and Ms. Wilson.

5. Next Steps

The committee members discussed a date for a community meeting to share the report and to have the different constituencies discuss priorities together, but did not set a

date. Ms. Raye suggested that they at least send a letter to all those who participated to thank them and to give them an idea of what may happen next, and Ms. Wilson said she would take care of that. The committee members agreed to continue the discussion at their next meeting.

5. Set Next Meeting/Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on October 6, 2016, prior to the NSCC meeting.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Roe moved, seconded by Ms. Majerus, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Coralie Wilson, Executive Director

Key Decisions for Planning Committee

1. There are several planning assumptions listed in this draft of the plan. (See page 3.) Which are most critical over the next few years for CTV?
2. Primary (and secondary?) mission -- Does CTV still balance government, education, and public access as its mission? Public access per se may be less important given the tools residents have access to on their own (cell phone, cameras, computers, etc.) than it was in the past and is a fairly passive program area. Is there an emerging content of community programming that should/could better serve current needs and priorities?
3. Funding -- Diversifying funding is a critical issue and a goal for the organization, but it needs to be focused. Should the board select priority areas of exploration? Should there be a target such as 10% of revenue in 5 years, etc.? How funding from franchise fees gets determined and allocated to CTV is in flux.
4. Community Engagement -- The plan suggests more engagement, more programming, more community building with volunteers, more strategic recruitment of volunteers, more engagement with cities, and increased fundraising and communication and marketing. How will CTV gain the cultural and staffing capacity for this shift?
5. Organizational Structure – What organizational structure will balance the tension between the needs/wants of CTV's various constituents with its short and long term funding realities? What can the board do to communicate the need for a different structure in a way that gains support from cities?
6. Given the input from stakeholders and the planning assumptions, are these the right Critical Issues?

CTV Strategic Plan

Draft #2

Context

CTV North Suburbs (CTV) is a nonprofit corporation formed by the North Suburban Communications Commission (NSCC). NSCC is a joint powers agreement between Arden Hills, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Mounds View, New Brighton, North Oaks, Roseville, and St. Anthony. NSCC operates under state and federal laws to enforce cable TV franchises for use of city rights-of-way by cable providers.

CTV provides community programming and services including:

- Administration of CTV channels
- Production of community programs (both staff and volunteers)
- Provision of studio, production truck and portable video equipment
- Provision of video education and training to individuals and organizations in the community.

Franchise fees are paid by cable providers under negotiated contracts to the cities in the NSCC. (\$1,315,989 in 2015.) The cities then pay NSCC for cable franchise administration services based on an agreed formula -- \$300,000 in 2015. NSCC board members are representatives of the nine cities—either elected officials or lay people appointed by elected officials from each city. The board of NSCC serves as the board of CTV.

CTV has historically been funded by operating and equipment grants paid by the cable subscriber. This cost is passed through to cable subscribers (\$4.15 in 2015) collected by the cable providers and paid directly to CTV. The CTV budget—approved by the board was approximately \$1,388,000 in 2015.

CTV supports public/community, education and government programming with its funding. Its value to the NSCC communities is a state of the art media center that produces programs and provides community education and equipment and facilities for the individuals and organizations that want to produce video programming. Staff also provide technical assistance to the staff of each NSCC member city, ensure television and web coverage of government meetings (council and commissions), and provides up to 100 hours per year of technical and production services to each member city.

Current NSCC cities report value in being a part of the joint powers entity. They see economies of scale, technological support, and a level of equipment quality and flexibility that each city could not afford to maintain on its own. Although Councils have suggestions for improvement and ideas for program growth going forward, the group remains strong and cohesive even after one member withdrew from NSCC in 2014 to operate independently. Surveys and evaluation data indicate relatively high usage of CTV content and a 72.5% satisfaction with its services. Just as important is

the value that community members place (69.8%) on ensuring that a public access service is available.

Since 2014, the NSCC has been in franchise renewal negotiations with Comcast – the sole cable provider in the area for several years. Negotiations are making progress and resolution. In the meantime, a second cable provider (CenturyLink) has entered the market. This additional provider will bring competition and perhaps be able to deepen the market penetration of cable customers in the area (45%), which leaves an opportunity for growth.

Planning Assumptions

Over the next 4 years CTV can expect to see the following trends and themes that will impact its decisions and critical issues for strategic planning.

- The residents of the NSCC service area will reflect the changing demographics of Minnesota overall since most of the members would define as first ring suburbs.
 - The Caucasian population will be aging.
 - There will be more cultural diversity, especially in young families.
- Users will seek more diversity in their choices of access to programming (i.e., mobile apps and mobile devices.) Alternatives to cable (webstreaming, for example) will compete with traditional cable for viewers and potentially reduce use of traditional cable programming.
- Cable providers will likely be reluctant to continue the PEG fee arrangement, creating a need to re-design how CTV is funded. Funding will require more transparency, accountability, and demonstration of value to the members of the joint powers agreement.
- Technology changes will continue to force a need for staying current and continuous investment in capital improvements.
- CTV is a gem that is not as well known in the community, as it needs to be in order to ensure ongoing growth and increase both its brand and the services it provides.
- Cities will be seeking more collaboration and benefit from being part of the NSCC – not just in financial and technology benefits, but in programming, community building, and synergies regarding education and topics of interest to community members.

Critical Issues

Ensuring sufficient funding: The need for perpetual capital investment, resources for expansion of services, general operating costs, and changes in how cable providers will bill and collect PEG fees will require a look to more sustainable and diverse funding options.

Continuing to Expand Access to programming: Changes in platforms, mobility, and venues for content will require more flexibility, some creativity, and expansion of current efforts regarding access and outreach.

Expanding Programming: Everyone participating in the planning process offered ideas for expanded programming to engage and build community and to provide valuable information from city, county and other governmental levels. People also mentioned the [perception of] limited programming now available—creating an image of dull and old rather than vital, changing, and new.

Communicating value to the public and to NSCC members: Every entity faces growing challenges regarding being able to tell its story, engaging people in the activities of the organization, and establishing its services as a priority among growing competition for attention and dollars. CTV is not as known within the general public as it could be, has fewer volunteers than will be necessary to expand programming, and has council members (including board members) not optimally engaged.

Staying current with the industry and field: Staff seems to stay current, but it is not clear how that information is transferred to others or is used to influence decision-making.

Enhancing the experience of joint powers consortium members: Most cities saw opportunities to enhance the value of the consortium – through greater partnerships, ability to view information across city boundaries, sharing ideas, and partnering on some initiatives. To what extent will all NSCC members:

- Agree to help subsidize other members in order to have parity in equipment or services throughout the network?
- Accept a leadership/coordinating role from CTV?
- Attend/participate in networking or other meetings required of a more engaged network?

Strategic Goals

1. Diversify and expand revenue sources for CTV

CTV needs fund development capacity. This can be achieved through the establishment of a development committee and/or additional staff.

- The first steps are to identify priority funding options and goals and then develop a plan for achieving goals in each category of new funding. Ideas offered by stakeholders include:
 - Earned revenue from video production services. (CTV brought in \$75,500 in earned income in 2015)
 - A resident-wide technology fee vs. just cable subscriber fee.
 - Change in franchise fees flow/structure to ensure CTV funding as/if PEG fee changes or is phased out.
 - Program sponsors.
 - Merger with other cable commissions? Or inclusion of an additional city into the NSCC agreement.
 - Grant writing and more sustained development activities.
 - Membership or equipment or fees for producers, especially for non-residents.
 - Marketing materials for new business initiatives and increased individual and business donations

2. Continue to expand flexibility and access to programming

- Continue to expand use of FaceBook, YouTube and other social media vehicles to expand the reach of programming and ways to access it
- Complete development and deployment of a mobile application
- Gather data on effectiveness of website re-design in engaging people and easing access or recall of programming.

3. Expand Programming and Community Engagement

A strong theme across all groups was an expansion of programming.

- Most understood that there would not be operating funds to greatly expand staff, so a stronger, more engaged volunteer program needs to be developed. This is an additional opportunity for support through a committee or reassignment of staff to strengthen the volunteer capacity of CTV and use volunteers more strategically. Suggestions from stakeholders include:
 - Expand volunteer program – recruiting volunteers for specific markets to match demographic changes and interests
 - Expand school-based opportunities and volunteer recruitment/engagement – perhaps greater use of the truck as a mobile educational classroom.

- The 100-hour program for cities is almost sacred and each city had ideas about how to enrich and better use the resource. They also thought there was valuable information generated by other levels of government and opportunities for cooperative programming between cities. Suggestions include:
 - Encourage annual planning with Cities for events that have greatest impact—allowing them to maximize their 100 hours of additional programming.
 - Identify key issues relevant to more than one city and/or key content or events of interest to residents that would be generated by other entities, i.e., levels of government, community groups, etc.

- Community engagement and community building is a strong area for growth. This might be in contrast to a more passive approach to public access. All saw opportunities for a richer, more engaged programming that provides local news and highlights community-based interests. Some suggestions are:
 - Reinforce that community is both local and national/international by seeking ways to connect local people to a broader world (One example is local members of Olympics teams but there are many.)
 - Use “down time” during live shots to provide shorts either for sponsors or school-related programming. (This was a particular opportunity for live shoots and could enhance school-based programming, engage more students, and make more efficient use of the truck and key staff when on shoots.)
 - Much more general education/communication and marketing of CTV, its services and programs.
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4. Maintain a plan for capital investments

- Maintain a capital investment plan but also continue and/or expand more coordinated and group purchasing for both CTV and NSCC member cities. The vision is of a cohesive network that grows, updates, and plans together.
- Articulate the changes in industry and current/future issues as a way to inform decision-making and tie these changes to budgeting and decision-making.
- Consider expanding joint purchasing pool or other ways to expand technology capacity throughout the network and network-wide standards/level of excellence.
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5. Operational Excellence

- Staffing/staffing pattern
 - Continue to maintain highly skilled staff—they are respected and trusted throughout the network

- Modify staffing pattern (or increase staff) to provide more volunteer outreach and support, more engagement with cities (not just a single point of access), sponsor development, support for any advisory groups, grant-writing, and increased communication
- Engage staff and volunteers in decisions that affect them.

- Volunteers will serve as the foundation of expanded programming and will continue to be a key resource for CTV. This might require a shift in culture for CTV from transactional relationships to more proactive and engaged base of volunteers. Suggestions include:
 - Seek efficiencies and streamlining of processes for more ease in participation by volunteers.
 - Proactively identify key populations and actively recruit volunteers/producers for specific program ideas/markets.
 - Engage volunteer producers in strategies for new opportunities and create an even stronger sense of community between producers and production volunteers
 - Consider using conference calls, media and other tools to address the time requirements of face-to-face meetings

- General administration. Some cities are seeking administrative efficiencies and evidence of improved operations, in addition to the more engaged and active network of members and expanded programs. Suggestions include:
 - Articulate decision-making values and review the delegation structure to increase speed and efficiency of decision-making.
 - Increase points of contact between the NSCC board and city councils and greater visibility of board with CTV activities.
 - Establish advisory groups that can assist in program development, outreach, or planning—capitalizing on knowledge within the group but also engaging community members and businesses in being part of the organization.
 - Increase communication in every direction. Cities report they receive good information at annual presentations, but that is not the same as sharing information between/among members, or effective outreach to community about services/benefits, or fully engaging staff and volunteers as members of a “community,” etc.
 - A high level e-newsletter might be a good place to start—by assessing what information is most wanted or giving content options for more frequent communications.

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Process and Participants (attachment to follow)

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Themes by stakeholder group:

Cities:

- Expand community building programming – more engagement, more active programming and overall network
- Government transparency is priority
- Other levels of government have good information that would be valuable to residents – and other government-related/sponsored programming should be expanded (i.e., some residents were on Olympic teams, citizen swearing in ceremony, more candidate conversations, other government departments)
- Find way to get more support from schools – the programming is important but some financial contribution would be good
- Find operational efficiencies
- Target programming to key populations and seek volunteers to produce programming from those populations
- More engaged and participating network – sharing more information, exchanging ideas, co-operating on programming of interest across cities, ability to see/learn what other cities are doing/considering
- Consider innovative ways to stabilize funding – city-wide fee, earned revenue
- More general information and promoting of CTV

Community Members: (Mostly program producers)

- Expand volunteer program and create a community feeling for volunteer producers and production staff
- Remember that citizenship is both local and national
- Community building and celebrating local activities should be priority and there are many opportunities to do that
- Make volunteering easier through some administrative improvements
- Expand venues and ways to promote/offer programs

Schools:

- School-based programming is key element of CTV – it is what draws and engaged adults and youth to watch
- There are more school activities that it would be good to promote – including non-sports
- Prefer site-based work than off-site
- Students could be great source of volunteers to do additional school programming
- There is possibility of schools using CTV for creating promotional videos
- There is limited opportunity for using video for on-line education
- Alternative venues for grandparent might increase viewership
- CTV is an essential service for engaging the school community
- Finding ways to interact with community rather than have only one-way communication is emerging importance to schools

Staff:

- Focus on fewer things and do them well
- Improve efficiency of decision-making
- Build capacity to meet expectations of stakeholders
- Engage staff in decisions that affect them
- Paid interns are essential to being able to do the existing work
- Downtime on live shoots could be used to insert school programming
- Engage board members more in activities

All agreed that:

- Earned revenue is a good idea, but aware that there is completion from other cable stations trying to do the same
- Changes in demographics is a big challenge
- Changes in technology and user preferences will continue to be a major challenge (What happens if cable is not longer viable?)
- A more active, engaged, vital CTV would be great result over next few years
- More programming, more strategic recruitment of volunteers, and more general promotion are important

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