

“Tour of California”

Hello – I wanted to follow up on my offer from the League of California Cities event in San Diego. Recall I had said that if we can group several cities together we can make it more cost effective and efficient for you and for me! To that end, I have looked at the cities that expressed interest at the conference and have grouped you into this proposal.

The engagement will be based on my book, *For the Love of Cities*, and will educate the community on why an emotional connection to a place matters and create a process for engaging people in becoming part of the solution in the city they care about. I will extract themes and ideas from that are key to your cities to ensure that your main issues and agenda items are integrated into the workshop.

I propose a three city tour that would allow me to engage with each of your communities for about 2 days. In order to do that, the schedule would need to look something like this:

Proposed Schedule:

- Arrive on a Sunday – tour of Community #1 in afternoon; dinner with stakeholders (optional)
- Monday – morning presentation to traditional leadership, ex. breakfast meeting in community #1. Set up room for afternoon workshop. Community workshop begins approx. 1:30pm, wraps 4:30pm; shift to community #2. Optional dinner with community #2 stakeholders.
- Tuesday – morning tour of community #2; afternoon meetings with stakeholders and review of venues.
- Wednesday – morning presentation to traditional leadership, as in city #1 – Chamber of Commerce, Council, etc. Set up room for afternoon workshop. Community workshop begins approx. 1:30pm, wraps 4:30pm; shift to community #3. Optional dinner with community #3 stakeholders.
- Thursday - – morning tour of community #3; afternoon meetings with stakeholders and review of venues.
- Friday – morning presentation to traditional leadership in city #3. Set up room for afternoon workshop. Community workshop begins approx. 1:30pm, wraps 4:30pm; Happy Hour somewhere!
- Depart on Saturday

My partner, Michelle Royal will travel with me and provide graphic recording of each community workshop. During the session we create a large-scale mural that graphically captures all of the ideas that are generated that day. This eliminates the need for participants to take notes themselves and creates an easily understandable and sharable “artifact” that survives the day.

Example from Kalamazoo, MI



Part One: Speaking Engagement with Traditional Leadership

Format: This would be stand-alone session, ideally at a breakfast or lunch meeting. The format would be 45 minutes of presentation with time left for Q&A.

Topic: This is essentially the keynote presentation you heard me give in San Diego. It is based on my book, *For the Love of Cities* and uses that as a framework for developing community action.

My central premise is that emotional connections, “love” for lack of a better word, is a key natural resource for communities. The presentation discusses how to grow and expand that love, how it manifests in community action and how it can be the key ingredient in a community based approach to social and economic development.

I also discuss the critical role that these “unofficial” actors play in community development and how cities need to leverage these resources as traditional budgets for infrastructure, events, arts, culture, etc. have disappeared.

Who Attends: The Target Audience for part one would be the traditional leadership from the business, government, not for profit and educational

leadership communities. These groups would likely attend a keynote type presentation, particularly if lunch or breakfast is part of the event. One key aspect of this talk is to emphasize the emerging role that non-traditional players have in community making and how it is their job to tap into this group and find room for them at the table.

Timing: Ideally we do this in the morning, prior to the afternoon community workshop (outlined above). It is possible to do this as a lunch-time event in which case we combine the two elements. We invite the workshop attendees to hear the lunchtime presentation. We start the workshop after lunch. This assumes that the lunch venue and workshop venue are the same.

It does complicate things if you need to charge for the lunch. Ideally you make the community workshop free so as to bring in a broader audience. Most people are used to the idea of paying for a Chamber breakfast.

Part Two: Workshop with the broad community

Format: The heart of the engagement is a half-day workshop (ex. For the Love of Holyoke) that would allow for a meaningful engagement with a large group of participants (100 – 150 participants is ideal). Again this event should ideally be free to participants.

Objective: The central element of the workshop is to get people to examine and discuss what they love about their city and how we can increase that emotional engagement. We will get them to think creatively about what they can do to increase the love of their city and hopefully spur some of them to take action.

Who Attends: This target audience is more of the practitioners and doers in the community. The CEOs, organizational leaders and elected officials are less likely to attend a half-day event but they can send their staff and key people. Additionally we would hope to attract those activist citizens throughout the community and network them together. This would be an ideal event for young professionals and up and coming leaders of the community to participate in, as they will be the ones that ultimately build what we discuss.

One element I stress is the need to target select communities of interest who may feel disenfranchised or neglected in the city making process. With your help, we will make specific outreach to those groups to get them to participate.

Why This Is Different: Most community workshops deal with technical or overtly political issues that many people feel unqualified to speak upon. Because our event deals with the things that people love, hate and engage with in their

respective communities, the subject matter is not intimidating and promotes broader participation. And because of the inclusive approach we use to get people into the workshop, we usually have a highly representative mix of community members.

\$500 Impact: The last exercise of the workshop is called the “\$500 Project” and it brainstorms how you can make your city a better, more lovable community with a budget of just \$500. We have seen some amazingly creative ideas flow out of this process and a great way to sustain and continue the engagement would be to secure \$500 (or more) to actually fund one of the projects that is created. The participants would vote on the winner and assign champions to move the project forward. This small investment would encourage and empower citizens to take their own actions and be less dependent on official funders such as the city or the community foundation.

Suggested Venue: While hotel ballrooms are perfectly fine, if you had a more creative space for the workshop, that would be fun. We have done workshops in museums and sports facilities so perhaps you have something interesting in mind.

Outcomes: In other communities we have seen new coalitions form around the ideas generated at the workshop. We have seen local philanthropic organizations change their funding programs to accommodate “micro financing” needs within their communities. We have seen new businesses start. We have seen private funding emerge to fund projects generated at the event. We have seen more people “get in the game” and become part of their community’s solution to being a better city.

Common Questions

Why does this matter to my community?

Many people feel ill-equipped to comment on or engage with matters such as economic development, cultural planning or environmental sustainability. But by turning this conversation into emotionally relatable terms, we bring many more people into the community building process. People feel that they have a say and therefore a stake in the development process and they take ownership of at least part of the solution for their city.

In the current economic climate, communities need the support of the grassroots citizens in order to create any kind of sustained action. With limited top down budgets, we need the excitement and energy that engaged citizens bring in order to create momentum for any future efforts.

Note this is not a substitute for a strategic planning process but rather a way to enhance an existing plan or lay the ground work for a future planning process.

What kind of benefits can I expect in my city?

One key point to consider for all cities is the fact that traditional resources from government, business and the philanthropic sectors have become very scarce. In order for communities to survive and move forward it is critical to find new sources for community development and I believe that the love, passion and engagement of committed citizens is an extraordinary source of opportunity for those cities. If you are able to tap into the creative and entrepreneurial capacity of your engaged citizens, they will do amazing things for their cities; things that cities would otherwise not be able to afford or organize. Building this "emotional capital" in our communities will pay immense dividends to our cash strapped cities and provide fuel for future grassroots efforts.

What Does This Cost?

Fee for each city would be \$4000 plus share of expenses. Each community would pay one third of the travel expenses (economy airfare for two, ground transport, parking). Each city would be responsible for providing us with a hotel room while in town. Note Michelle and I are life partners as well as partners in this process so one room is sufficient.

Description for Each City	Fee
Speaking, Facilitation for each city	\$4000
Supplies – paper, markers, post its, etc.	\$100 (Estimated)
Travel expenses (economy class + hotel)	\$800 (Estimated)
Total	\$4,900 each

This is based on three cities over that outlined week.

Other Possible Expenses

- Facility rental (ideally donated as part of the venue's support of program and listing as a sponsor)
- Technology and AV rental (if venue does not have equipment)
- Food and beverage for the two sessions. (Keep it simple; water, coffee)
- Suggest a small amount of project funding for the workshop as the \$500 Project.

Possible Dates: We would look into 2013 for dates at this point. I already have a few key dates reserved for engagements but broadly speaking the calendar is pretty flexible at this time. Note that February is being held for Michelle and I to return to New Zealand and do a lot of what we outlined here!

Next Steps: If three of your communities can agree in principle to move forward, we can start the scheduling and contract phase with each of you.