

Framework for Squeegee Collaborative Community Conversations

Purpose: To provide members of our community an opportunity to give input to and gain information about the work being done to support young people who squeegee.

Resource guide: The following guide is designed to help Community Leaders host sessions in their own neighborhoods in an effort to engage the broader public in this critical work.

Before the Meeting:

Setting Expectations for yourselves and all participants:

When engaging in conversations that are critical to the future of our city, we must all come to the table with good will and an open mind. Reasonable people will disagree, and there is no magic solution that will please everyone. The leaders and organizers of any community conversation must set clear expectations. These are conversations where we seek to better understand one another.

What these conversations are:

- Community sessions that will help us all to better understand one another and to surface needs, desires, and questions that impact our community
- Focused on openness, listening, and gathering input

What these conversations are NOT:

- Forums where we will come to any specific solutions
- A place that needs or even strives for consensus
- About trying to sell or convince others about a specific solution or approach
- A place to air grievances

Suggested invitation template:

At the invitation of the [2022 Squeegee Collaborative](#), we are hosting a Community Conversation at LOCATION from TIMES on DATE. This conversation is one of several happening around the City to help engage us all engage with the development of a

city-wide, public, private and community-based response to the challenges and opportunities squeegee activity presents to the City of Baltimore.

We'll take what we learn from these conversations and share it with the Squeegee Collaborative to help inform the current work happening on behalf of the City. Each individual in our City plays a role in making Baltimore a strong, thriving, growing, and vibrant City. We hope you will consider joining us for this conversation.

Please RSVP/Sign up/ here. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering to support the event please contact NAME at EMAIL/PHONE

Venues:

We suggest a local community space (a church, a neighbor's living room, a community center – anywhere where neighbors gather) that is easily accessible. You will need room for a group to listen to a short presentation and then room to break out into small group discussions (if attendees exceed more than 10).

Conversation Leaders:

It is critical that a Conversation Leader or Facilitator is able to hold and guide a safe, open, and respectful meeting. They do not need to be an expert in this topic, but they must be a skilled facilitator who can outline expectations, hold accountability to guiding principles, and listen deeply.

An effective Conversation Leader:

- Remains neutral about the topic under discussion; is not seen as having his or her own agenda or siding with one group.
- Explores ideas with people; displays a genuine sense of curiosity.
- Listens to people and builds trust.
- Pushes people to consider different perspectives, helping folks to understand why others think in different ways.
- Helps people reconcile conflicting remarks in a non-confrontational manner.
- Has experience leading or facilitating group discussions.
- Stays focused on the goal of the conversation — this is about listening, not solving or promoting.

[If you are hosting a meeting with more than 10 attendees and want to do small group breakouts]

Small Group Leaders:

Small group leaders should be trusted community members who are able to hold a safe space for all participants to share. The role of the Small Group leader is to keep

everyone focused on the conversation and to help remind and hold accountability for the shared Ground Rules and Values. Groups should be about 6-10 people per group.

Outline for the Conversation

Agenda:

- [Welcome](#) (5 minutes)
- [Ground Rules & Expectation Setting](#) (10 minutes)
- [Background & Introduction](#) – Someone with experience and knowledge to lay the context for this conversation (10 minutes)
- [Invitation to small groups](#) (35 minutes)
- [Small group report outs](#) (25 minutes)
- [Closing](#) (5 minutes)

Welcome:

- Host welcomes individuals to the space
- Shares any logistics to help folks feel safe and comfortable (restrooms, masking expectations, general overview of the evening)

Setting the Ground Rules:

The Squeegee Collaborative spent time early in their work developing shared principles to guide conversations. We ask all communities to commit to the same principles and values. **Present these (on paper or projected so everyone can see them):**

Values:

- Empathy: Look at everyone involved
- Responsibility: We are all responsible
- History: Understand what has gotten us to this point
- Humanity: Seeing everyone as human
- Lived Experiences: Learn and embrace the lived experiences of others

Ground Rules:

- Stay present
- Listen generously
- Ask questions to deepen understanding
- Engage in open dialogue about how to serve these young people and our community

- Maintain confidentiality
- Each individual is the expert in their own experience. Speak from your own experience, not on behalf of others.

Expectations: What this is and what it is not (see above)

Ask everyone:

- Is there anything you need further clarified or you have questions about?
 - Respond to questions
- Ask everyone to verbally commit to these guiding principles.
 - Are you able and willing to commit to these principles for the duration of our time together? Please respond out loud.

Background and Introduction

- To be delivered by someone with experience and context. If you would like someone to join for your meetings to serve in this role, please contact squeegeecollaborative@baltimorecity.gov

Background and Context: Since the 1970's Baltimore has attempted to address the issues related to squeegeeing in our city. Each of these efforts have failed. Ultimately, while each of these efforts showed promise, none were successful because:

1. The efforts were about solving a "problem" (squeegeeing). Ultimately, squeegeeing is a symptom of other underlying issues in the city.
 - a. Lesson: Efforts cannot be centered solely on "stopping the squeegeeing," and must be focused more broadly the full picture including: the immediate needs that these young people and their families have, and the behaviors of those who interact with young people who squeegee.
2. Efforts were not sustained. After a period of concern and activity, all efforts invariably ceased.
 - a. Lesson: this effort must be collaborative, span sectors, and persist for years at a time. This work must include both immediate services and interventions and short-, mid-, and long-term goals and processes.
3. Efforts were not comprehensive. Each effort picked a theory that leaders thought would work in their current climate. In the 1980s, that theory was legalization. In the 2010s, that theory was workforce development and entrepreneurship. Most recently, in 2020, it was integrated social service (that

strategy has been implemented with some success but hasn't scaled nor enlisted the broad set of partners necessary to drive significant change).

- a. Lesson: Baltimore's squeegeeing culture results from decades of divestment and systemic racism. A comprehensive solution works towards a place where no young people feel they need or want to squeegee. Outreach must be personal, relational, and rooted in authentic connection. Follow-up and follow-through are imperative. This work must also include preventative measures and a cultural shift in our city.
4. They lacked effective enforcement.
 - a. Lesson: deterrence and diversion must constitute the bulk of "enforcement." Law enforcement must be both rare and effective while avoiding, at all costs, escalation that could result in catastrophic results for the parties directly involved and Baltimore City. Enforcement must also be actively informed by partners and community stakeholders -- it cannot happen in a silo and must be contextualized by the other efforts underway.
5. There was minimal marketing and communication about any efforts underway. The public, and the individuals who squeegee, rarely receive any direct communication outside of sensationalized news about opportunities or interventions available to them. Moreover, the public was rarely informed, contributing to a perception that "nothing was being done about the issue."
 - a. Lesson: any efforts must be widely and broadly communicated to those directly implicated and to the public, more broadly. Opportunities, especially, must be aggressively marketed. And, this must be communicated as a long-term process. We must be able to persevere through iterations and processes as we work to shift the behavior of both all parties involved in the economy of squeegeeing, including drivers, tourists, and businesses downtown.

What is happening: A large group of individuals representing all areas of our city have been meeting weekly since mid-July in a multi week-long process that will ultimately bring about an Implementation Plan. These meetings are led by Joe Jones (Center for Urban Families), John Brothers (T Rowe Price Foundation), and Deputy Mayor Faith Leach, all appointed by Mayor Brandon Scott to lead these efforts.

From Deputy Mayor Leach's letter on July 12, 2022:

"Our approach will be rooted in equity and will work to: (1) tackle the systems that contribute to the challenges faced by squeegee workers, (2) address the safety of squeegee workers and motorists, and (3) bring together community members and squeegee workers to identify and implement an action plan that supports the Scott administration's vision for a safer and better Baltimore."

Small Groups:

- Invite the Small Group leaders to identify themselves.
- Groups should range in size from about 6-10 people.
- Determine how you are going to break folks into groups and where the groups will go to meet (ideally sitting together around a table or in a circle where everyone can see and hear one another.
- Preview what the small group will do.
- Repeat or remind folks of ground rules.
- Once folks are in their groups they will have about 30 minutes for discussion. Remind everyone to 'share the mic' and help let all voices have a chance to speak.
- Each small group needs to identify a note taker who will capture big themes, questions, ideas and suggestions (have pads of paper and pens available for this). Notes do not include names, just key themes.

Small Group guiding questions:

You do not need to use every question. These are listed to help stimulate conversation. Remember this is not a place to air grievances, nor to debate the merits of any specific suggestion. We are here to brainstorm and surface different experiences and ideas. Have these printed out for all small group leaders

- Introduce yourself to one another by sharing
 - Name
 - Viewpoint (what role or roles do you hold in the community, what unique perspective do you have)
 - What brought you to this conversation?
- What do you want to know to better understand the issues when it comes to youth that squeegee?
- Can you think of any examples here in Baltimore or in other communities, where you have seen positive interventions or programs that have helped engage young people in recreation, jobs, community events, health care, or other services they need to thrive?

- What ideas do you have to bring critical services and supports to youth that squeegee?
- What do you wish people knew about Baltimore? How would you like to help craft an affirming and positive narrative about our City?
- What do you feel are the most effective ways to communicate and promote work being done to address issues in Baltimore?

Small Group Report Out

- Bring the group back together
- Manage time based on the number of groups you have
- Ask the note-taker to share 1 or 2 themes or suggestions that surfaced in their group. Then COLLECT the notes from each note-taker
- Thank everyone for their engagement

Closing

- Thank everyone for their time and engagement
- Encourage people to continue to follow the ground rules as they leave
- Give any instructions on how to leave safely
- Collect all notes
- Share: "We will share these notes with the Squeegee Collaborative" and will be in touch with each of you as we receive further information from that group.
- Invite participants to share further thoughts, ideas, questions, or comments to squeegeecollaborative@baltimorecity.gov

After the Meeting:

- Invite Small Group leaders to stay for a debrief if interested:
 - What went well?
 - What, if anything, came up in conversations that we as a community need to be attentive to? Is there anyone we should follow up with further?
 - Any key take-aways you want to amplify? (take notes)
- Share all notes with the Squeegee Collaborative by emailing squeegeecollaborative@baltimorecity.gov