City of Saginaw

American Rescue Plan Strategy Session

September 17, 2021

PSC

PSC PUBLIC SECTOR CONSULTANTS

Prepared by

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Background

The City of Saginaw hired Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to facilitate a strategy session focused on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. The City is receiving just over $52 million in ARPA funds and dedicated this strategy session to identify priority investment opportunities. The session served as a starting point for the city council's discussion of how to utilize this once-in-a-generation money. Prior to PSC's facilitation, Dr. Eric Scorsone from Michigan State University presented background information on ARPA, including outlining eligible expense categories and examples of how other communities across the country are expending their ARPA funds.

Process

To set the stage, PSC presented results from the city's online survey and are included in Exhibit 1. The top categories identified by respondents located within the city included crime and fire prevention (25 percent), housing (22), and public infrastructure (18). In addition, these same categories scored the highest in terms of importance (1 being least important, 5 most important): public infrastructure (4.2), crime and fire prevention (4.1), and housing (3.8) (city beautification also scored 3.8).

EXHIBIT 1. City Survey: City-based Respondents[1] Top Priorities

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Importance Scoring
Crime and fire prevention	197	25%	4.1
Housing (neighborhood revitalization)	171	22%	3.8
Public infrastructure	142	18%	4.2
Economic development opportunities	69	9%	3.4
Social programs and nonprofit agencies	63	8%	3.1
Parks and trails	61	8%	3.3
City beautification	57	7%	3.8
Healthcare access	19	2%	3.4
Others	5	1%	
Unspecified	2	0%	
Total	**786**	**100%**	

Source: City of Saginaw online and paper survey August 19, 2021, to September 7, 2021; 1,000 total respondents

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[1] City respondents included anyone who took the survey from a location identified within city boundaries. This included residents as well as anyone else at a city location, e.g., from a business location.

After presenting the survey results, PSC utilized a consensus-based facilitation method to gather and categorize ideas from the city council. City council was divided into three groups to answer the focus question of "What strategic investments of American Rescue Plan funding will increase the prosperity and quality of life for Saginaw residents?" This process included the following steps:

- **Context**: City council members were introduced to the issues surrounding ARPA funding and asked to identify and share their number one wish for the city.
- **Brainstorm**: Council members individually brainstormed responses to the focus question and then worked in groups to identify and share their top ten ideas for consideration. The entire council collectively worked to identify and pair ideas with clear relationships, then added additional ideas as pairs were exhausted.
- **Cluster**: Council members collectively took the paired ideas and clustered them into groups to help identify the broad categories.
- **Name**: Council members collectively named each of the clustered groups.
- **Resolve**: Council members identified glaring omissions from the list as well as provided initial reactions to the ideas generated during the session.

Results

Exhibit 2 highlights the results of the session, with the broad categories organized according to those with the most individual ideas. This ordering does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the categories, but instead reflects the volume of ideas in each category. City council identified five primary categories of expenses:

- Youth and family
- Neighborhood preservation and beautification
- Health
- Economic development
- Housing

In addition to the five categories, city council identified collaboration as a theme that applies to all five categories. Crime prevention and applying a diversity and equity analysis (lens) were ideas also seen as part of the overarching theme of collaboration.

EXHIBIT 2. Expenditure Ideas and Categories

Overarching Themes:

Collaboration

- Crime prevention
- Diversity and equity analysis

Focus Areas:

Youth and Family	Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification	Health	Economic Development	Housing
Family programs	Community centers	Pandemic relief: healthcare, etc.	Employment	Money towards affordable housing programs (Saginaw County Land Bank)
Education stipends for low-income residents	Neighborhood programming	Funding for utility assistance to homeowners and renters	Funding for programs supported by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Housing
Invest in city/county/school liaison activities	Parks and recreation	Mental health services	Manufacturing	
New and expanded childcare	Public relations/marketing specialist	Mobile medical stations	Small businesses	
Programs for youth: skills trades/apprenticeships	Revitalization	Program start-ups: local food co-op	Increase funding for technology improvements and water infrastructure	
Stimulus payments for citizens	Revitalization of fairgrounds			
Youth programs after school	Self-funded program funds for city programs			
Youth programs and family				

Source: Saginaw City Council facilitation session, September 17, 2021

Next Steps

At the conclusion of the event, city manager Tim Morales shared with city council that this process was the first step in assessing ARPA funding. He indicated that additional public engagement and discussions with city council would continue in the coming weeks and months.