**Health in All Policies GROUP ACTIVITY: NEGOTIATION ROLE PLAY**

**Washington DC, WHO Workshop June 2018**

**The Scenario**

The mayor of the City of Healthyville is considering a new housing development proposal. The mayor is asking the city planning commission to consider 3 options, and present a recommendation back to the mayor and city council for their final consideration. The options for consideration are: 1) approve the proposal as is, 2) reject the proposal and seek a new developer, or 3) accept the proposal conditionally, providing the developer with a list of requirements that would need to be met in order for the city to approve and support financing the project. Healthyville is bordered by three other cities, and a major highway. There is a freeway that runs through the City with transit that runs parallel to the freeway.

The developer’s proposal is for an 8 story building with 250 units of market-rate housing located on an existing parking lot adjacent to a freeway. There is a major transit stop across the street from the proposed development, and it is also located 3 blocks from the downtown district, 2 blocks from a grocery store, and there are a number of schools within a 1 mile radius. The developer has included plans for a row of trees and a vegetated sound-wall to run alongside the freeway as well as inclusion of an upgraded indoor ventilation system and air filtration system and double pain windows to address air and noise concerns.

Aware of the diverse struggles and issues of the population of the City of Happyville, the mayor has asked the planning commission to convene relevant stakeholders, to contribute to selecting a recommended course of action. The mayor expects inclusive and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders in the process of assessment, discussion, and decision-making.

**Role Play Characters**

1. **Mayor:**

As city mayor, you are an invited participant to this meeting, but are really looking forward to the planning commission director facilitating the discussion so you can participate in the dialogue. You are currently in the middle of your five-year term as mayor and a member of a centre-left political party. You are concerned about the poor health of many children in the city and also view building more housing as an economic driver as an opportunity to gain popular support for when you stand as candidate in national elections in two years. This is not something you speak about openly. You interject that you would like to see an affordability component built into the developers proposal. You also just read an article about the impact of air pollution on children’s lung development and disease, and insist on the inequality between children’s exposure from high socioeconomic neighborhoods and schools, and the much higher exposure of children from low socioeconomic neighborhoods and schools. The mayor is responsible for recording any agreements that are reached. You are expecting the stakeholders to present you with a recommendation so that you can prepare for the upcoming city council meeting.

1. **County Health Department:**

The head of your department just retired and was replaced by a well-respected deputy-head who has a reputation for publicly opposing vested interests counter to public health. You have recently been tasked with coordinating the development of a strategic plan on addressing the inequality in the outdoor air pollution exposure of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds at home and at school. The Parents Association has been complaining as children are more sensitive to air pollution. You are expected to push for a strong and comprehensive strategic plan that has the support of as many sectors as possible. As a chief program manager for the health department, you are responsible for promoting the highest standard of health for the inhabitants of the city. Your department defines health broadly as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It advocates for a HiAP approach to health challenges such as exposure to air pollution since it is caused by social, environmental and commercial determinants of health. You are aware that housing is a key social determinant of health and housing affordability and location are incredibly important and are greatly concerned how close this housing proposal is to the freeway and the cumulative exposure of the residents to air pollution and noise pollution. You are also concerned that the housing proposal includes no provisions related to affordability.

1. **County Office of Education:**

As assistant superintendent for the County Office of Education, you have been invited to attend the planning commission meeting. This is the first meeting you have attended on a housing or planning issue and you are not clear about the repercussions of a new large scale housing development or how the education sector can play a role. You do not want others to think you are ignorant so you will not reveal this to any of the other stakeholders. You are aware that many of your teachers are now living outside the city due to lack of housing that is affordable for them and spending a lot of time commuting to work. You are also aware that almost 20% of the student body in the county suffers from asthma, about 5% of your students are homeless or living in shelters/transitional housing, and that both of these factors contribute to these students missing too many days of school. One of your offices priorities is reducing the number of missed school days. You have education meetings to attend later and you do not believe that you will be affected whether an agreement is reached or not. You have some contributions to make regarding your understanding of regional air pollution exposure and its impact on your students as well as exposure to mobile source pollution from freeways and high-volume roadways adjacent to some of your schools. However, you will need to be actively convinced by other parties before you will adopt any position.

**4. Housing Department:**

You are an experienced architect and the director of development in the housing department. You have been invited to attend a meeting of the planning commission to provide an update on demographic trends driving housing needs, housing costs and affordable housing gap analysis, and barriers to accessing affordable housing in the city. You are aware that: 1) housing supplies in the city are not keeping pace with demand and in particular low-income households have a great unmet need for affordable housing options; 2) funding for housing has been unstable and has stalled building in the city, 3) there is a small but vocal community group resistant to new affordable housing; 4) the downtown area just attracted 2 large employers; 5) developers are resistant to additional constraints. One of the current priorities of your department is increasing the affordable housing stock in the city, located in areas of opportunity with easy access to jobs. Your department has a culture of working cooperatively with others.

1. **Planning Commission**

As the planning commission director, you are responsible for providing a recommendation to the mayor that has the support of key stakeholders. You would really like to just approve the proposal as is – the city really needs new housing and the economic development opportunity this brings. It’s nice to have developers brining housing proposals into the city again. You would be really upset if you had to recommend rejecting the proposal and seeking a new developer, this project has been in the works for over 8 years (4 years in planning and design, and 4 years of negotiations to secure financing). You are open to proposing that the mayor accept the proposal conditionally, however you are really concerned that requiring any changes of the developer is going to cause the developer to take the project elsewhere. You know that this plot of land is in a prime location near jobs and transit. You also know that while the city has yet to adopt an inclusionary zoning program, requiring a percentage of all newly built housing units to meet an affordability threshold, that is something that the mayor and majority of council members are in support of. You are responsible for the smooth running of the meeting and managing time. You should ensure that all stakeholders listen to each other and take turns presenting their views.

1. **Air Quality Management District:**

You recently received an invite about a housing development proposal that supports infill development and transit oriented development strategies. You are excited and also cautious as these types of proposals can often trigger resistance from community members wanting a certain aesthetic or the maintenance of existing community character. The head of your department has asked you to attend to “keep an eye on things”. For the past three years, your regional air quality has been staying steady and projects like this could contribute to increased regional air quality gains as less folks drive into downtown from the suburbs and more folks utilize public transit. You are also really happy to see that developer will be deploying vegetation mitigations and high efficiency filtration. Although, you note that the high efficiency filtration systems require regular maintenance and filter changes that require action from the residents. In your experience, residents have been most compliant with those activities when they are provided with filters, and education on their value, and reminders for filter replacement. Additionally, in previous projects proposing vegetation mitigation, when total project costs end up being higher than anticipated, those enhancements are the first thing developers ditch to make up for their losses. The priority of your department is to reduce and manage regional air pollution. Your head of department has publicly stated that the city needs to build more location efficient housing that reduces vehicle miles travelled. You are looking forward to an opportunity to meet the health department and housing department staff – you have never worked with them before.

1. **Parents’ Association:**

You are the spokesperson for your local Parents’ Association. The group is comprised of parents of students attending schools in areas of varying socioeconomic statuses (including private and public schools). Data on levels of air pollution in different parts of the city have been released and came to the attention of your association when it was noted that levels increased as the socioeconomic status of the area decreased. The association has been complaining to the health department about this issue as parents are worried about their children’s exposure. This is because children are sensitive to air pollution. You are expecting your local government to take serious action in reducing the levels in the air and in bringing about equality. You are looking for solutions with immediate effects. Despite this, you need to remember that you are representing all of the parents of your association - including those with higher socioeconomic backgrounds who are far less affected by this issue.

1. **Private transport company:**

You are the CEO of a local transport company, which provides the public transport services. Your only real competition in the city is not with other businesses but with residents who drive their own cars rather than using your services. You are supportive of the development proposal because it is located so closely to the transit hub and the transit that runs parallel to the freeway. You really like this because you are happy to see the city take actions against climate change because you expect to receive more clients as people abandon their cars. On the other hand, you are worried that changes will be drastic and end up affecting your business (such as an increase in use of non-motor vehicles or in prices for gas and diesel).