

Cornell Institute for Public Affairs
Professional Report
Client Agreement

This **Client Agreement** is designed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of

The Lake Placid/North Elba Development Commission _____ (client),

Dean Dietrich _____ (client contact)

Katherine Long _____ (student), and

Laurie Miller _____ (instructor),

Rebecca Morgenstern Brenner _____ (advisor)

related to the completion of a Professional Report to meet the professional writing requirements for the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA) MPA degree through PADM 5930 Professional Report Proseminar.

Description of Professional Project (completed by agency and student):

Project Start Date: November 2019

Project Completion Date: March 2020

Student will conduct research on:

The best practices and uses of technology and innovations to help the Lake Placid/North Elba governments connect and interact with the public. The research will focus on improving government transparency and openness with constituents. Methods of interest to Lake Placid/North Elba include social media, written publications, meeting streaming/video conferencing, and notification systems.

Research methods will include:

A survey and focus group aimed at Lake Placid/North Elba residents, and government officials to determine needs and wants in increasing transparency. Primary research will be conducted to identify gaps in the government's ability to connect with the citizens through various methods including stakeholder interviews with village and town board members, IT professionals, and members of the regional tourism office. Additional surveys will be sent to residents of Lake Placid and North Elba to further the research goals.

A literature detailing best practice case studies, with scalable opportunities for Lake Placid/North Elba will be identified, as well as a detailed analysis of the current perspective of residents and government officials regarding communication and transparency in local government in Lake Placid and North Elba.

Prospectus

1. Description of Lake Placid/North Elba Development Commission/Town Government

Lake Placid, New York is a small village located in the Adirondack Mountains, with a population of 2,386¹. The village is known for hosting the 1932, and 1980 Winter Olympic Games, among other winter sports championships. The Lake Placid/North Elba Development Commission was created in August 2014 by the municipal boards of the Village of Lake Placid, and Town of North Elba. The Village of Lake Placid is within the greater Town of North Elba, whose total population is just below 9,000 as of 2010. The Commission's purpose is to "facilitate the implementation of the Lake Placid/North Elba Comprehensive Plan," and serve in an advisory capacity to the municipal boards². The 2014 Comprehensive Plan was put forth to update and replace the previous 1996 Plan, with a focus on the new needs of the aging and retiree population, as well as focus on new technological advancements for the area, and an emphasis on environmental awareness.

As part of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan, a sub-committee report on Government Structure and Function was created to define a vision, and goals, objectives and implementation measures for the future of Lake Placid and North Elba. The vision created by the sub-committee is to increase government efficiency at all levels to reduce costs, and to become a leader in smart growth and sustainable living by increasing the role of alternative, renewable, and self-sufficient energy sources. The first goal of the sub-committee is to improve the operation of all village and town government departments to optimize efficiency. The last objective to reach this goal is to enhance efficiency, transparency, and access to municipal information and records. The identified implementation measures to achieve this objective are to increase transparency in government by providing IT capabilities at town hall for various activities, and to redesign the meeting rooms with presentation technology.

¹ <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/lake-placid-ny-population/>

² <https://www.futurelakeplacid.com/2014-comprehensive-plan/>

2. Deliverables and Timeline

Date	Activity	Point Person	Status
11/10	Prospectus Given to Client	Kate	Complete
11/15-18	Client/Development Commission to Review Prospectus	Dean	Complete
Week of 11/25	Begin Literature Review/Research	Kate	In-Progress
12/9	Check-in: 4:30pm	Kate/Dean	
12/12	Development Commission Meeting	Dean	
Week of 12/16	Design Research/Send Survey/Interview Invitations	Kate	
1/16 - TBD	Kate Travel to LP for Interviews	Kate/Dean	
Week of 1/27	Analysis Completion	Kate	
Week of 1/27	Check In	Kate/Dean	
Week of 2/10	Check In	Kate/Dean	
2/29	Report Finalization	Kate	
March TBD	Travel to LP to present findings – to coincide with Rebecca’s Consulting Class	Kate	

3. Extent of Supervision Expected: Bi-weekly Check-Ins with Client, and as-needed Check-Ins with Advisor – Kate to send Meeting Minutes after meetings to both Client and Advisor.

4. Problem Definition:

The Village of Lake Placid and the Town of North Elba are looking to increase public awareness of and promote increased transparency within public meetings through the incorporation of technology. Lake Placid/North Elba wants to focus on public awareness within the government and improve access and streaming capabilities of public hearings.

5. Topic Proposal:

The topic of this report will broadly be government transparency and efficiency. The report will focus on the use of technology within the government to improve engagement and involvement of citizens with the government. Examples of participatory government, citizen engagement, and e-government will be examined to determine the viability and scalability of the practices into the context of Lake Placid/North Elba. Social media engagement strategies for governments will be analyzed to improve knowledge sharing of government proceedings. Additionally, the feasibility of web streaming town meetings will be discussed. As additional implementation measures are identified throughout the research and project development

process, they will be included to create a full picture for increasing government transparency in the area.

The guiding research question for this report will be to define the best practices in government transparency using technology, and to discuss policies needed to improve the effectiveness of citizen engagement in the Lake Placid/North Elba, New York area.

This report will benefit the Lake Placid/North Elba community by connecting residents with their elected and appointed officials to be better informed. In addition, the report will help to seek and add to the implementation strategy identified in the 2014 Lake Placid/North Elba Comprehensive Plan. The need for improved government transparency has been identified and this report will seek to provide specific methods and tools to municipal leaders to follow through with the implementation plan. Government transparency is crucial for improving citizen's trust in government and to create a well-informed public. Transparency creates greater accountability for leaders and improves performance. Improvements to the flow of information from leaders to the people adds clarity and allows for a system of feedback that is critical in the functionality of a democratic system.