**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes Introduction & Ground Rules**

**Purpose: Seek common ground and foster a different kind of talk**

* This is not a debate; we’re not here to “win.”
* This is a conversation guided by an exploration and sharing of what we value most.
* We will carefully weigh trade-offs of each option by coming to terms with what we must give up in order to get something we want.
* Speak from your own experience – you are the expert of your own experience.
* This process is like working out. Going to the gym one time will not get you in shape, but a commitment to the practice and consistent effort will lead to change.

**My Role: Serve as an impartial facilitator**

* I’m here to push the group to be as deliberative as possible.
  + Introduce empty chair-- represent voices of those not in the room
* This is your conversation; I’m just here to guide us through the process.

**Structure: Personal Stake, Option 1, Option 2, Option 3, Reflection**

* We’ll start talking about how we relate to this issue personally and then move into a discussion about each option, giving equal time to each, before wrapping up with a brief reflection.

**Ground Rules**

* Everyone has a voice.
  + Given the limited amount of time we have, shorter responses allow for more responses.
  + If I don’t call on you right away, I’m not ignoring you; I just want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to share.
* We’re all experts in our own experiences.
* Step out of your comfort zone.
  + If you are usually an overactive participant, push yourself to listen more. If you usually struggle to participate, try to speak up.
* Be respectful.
  + We can disagree without being disagreeable.
* Listen harder if you disagree.
  + If you find yourself disagreeing with what someone is saying, listen harder. Try to better understand what she/he is saying and what values she/he is speaking to.
* Consider each option fairly; creativity is encouraged.
  + We will spend equal time considering each option, but the issue guide is only meant to help start the conversation. Don’t feel limited by the options or actions listed.
* Are there additional ground rules we would like add?
* Do we all agree to follow these ground rules and hold one another accountable to them?

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes**  **Personal Stake**

* On the top of your issue guide, please write a number 1-10 (low to high) ranking how important this issue is to you. (Folks don’t have to share their responses now)
* Does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have any effect on you or people you know?
* Is this a real problem in your life?
* Do you hear people talking about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in your community?

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes Option 1**

* Brief recap of the key points in option one
* Lead-in question/ask initial reactions to option one

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes Option 2**

* Brief recap of the key points in option two
* Lead-in question/ask for initial reactions to option two

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes Option 3**

* Brief recap of the key points in option three
* Lead-in question/ask for initial reactions to option three

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes Reflection**

* On the top of your issue guide, please re-rank how important this issue is to you now that you have had the opportunity to deliberate with each other.
  + Did the number change? Why or why not?
* Are you thinking about this issue differently than before we began?
* Did we discover any common ground or build a possible foundation for it?
* What were the trade-offs the group was or was not willing to make?
* Were there moments where someone said something that gave you pause or changed your thinking?
* What are some of your takeaways about this process?
* How do you feel about the process overall as a way to talk about these issues?

**Other Things to Keep in Mind:**

* Always return to the tradeoffs
  + What are people of different views “willing to live with” in order to make progress on important issues?
* Firmly emphasize the importance of brevity and conciseness in the ground rules
  + If people continue to go on, politely interrupt them and remind them of the agreed upon ground rules and move the conversation forward.
* Be aware of people who bring in outside data.  This often used by those who seek to be seen as "experts," making their view(s) more credible.
  + If you're not sure whether or not the information is accurate, you might respond with "I'm not sure about the accuracy of that data" and then ask something like "If this data is accurate, how would that affect your view?  Suppose it's not accurate?"
* Place off-topic contributions in the “bike rack” for later resolution and further inquiry if necessary
* Invite individuals who have not yet spoken to join the conversation
  + “Can we invite any of you who have not yet had the chance to offer views or comment?”
  + Don’t be scared to call on folks directly by name in an inviting way.
* Stay focused on the topic of the issue guide
  + Intersectionality is key to a lot of major public policy issues, but try to continue to bring the conversation back to the main issue.