

Community Visioning

Community visioning is the process of developing consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. A vision statement captures what community members most value about their community, and the shared image of what they want their community to become. A thoughtful vision statement is one of the elements needed to form a forward looking strategic framework that gives councils or boards the long-term-comprehensive perspective necessary to make rational and disciplined tactical/incremental decisions on community issues as they arise.

"If you don't know where you are going - you might end up someplace else." - Yogi Berra

Visioning Basics

Initiating the Process

An effective approach to community planning is to initiate a proactive public involvement process before development pressures or land use conflicts become a community-wide issue. This approach allows the community to mitigate potential impacts and consequences of the existing municipal land use policies before the consequences are imminent. This forward-looking approach allows the community to lead the development process.

Community Opinion

The visioning process is conducted to enable the community to influence development within its boundaries. Community visioning is done by the community, for the benefit of the community. The term "community" in this context can mean a municipality, neighborhood, business district, county, several municipalities or any group that shares a common interest; the community visioning principles are constant regardless of the geographic boundaries.

End Product

A community vision is a written statement that reflects the goals and objectives of the community, lists future opportunities, and includes a description of what the community should look and feel like in the future.

The community vision statement guides government, business, and residential entities, among others, in decision-making according to the stated goals and objectives of the community.

Visioning Techniques - Charrette Objective

What kind of community they would like to live in. The objective is to collect as many ideas as possible-- nothing is too small, too big, or too crazy for consideration. Both problem solving, and visioning are important; they are different approaches that should be together.

- **Problem solving** - a group can become mired in technical details and political problems and may even disagree on problem definitions. Simply problem solving rarely results in fundamental change.
 - A problem is something negative to move away from, whereas
- **Visioning** – process generates a common goal offers a possibility for fundamental change; gives a group something to move toward; and generates creative thinking and passion.
 - a vision is something positive to move toward.
 - In moving toward a vision, you will be likely to encounter several problems to solve.

Community Visioning Worksheet

Time frame... 10-30 years. Put yourself in the place of a resident 50 years ago and to try to imagine the likelihood of some of the changes **we know today**.

- Were some changes predictable?
- Were others outside the realm of prediction?

Things that seem impossible now, may become commonplace to future generations.

Geographic scope: Where are you working, and not working – are there specific communities? Regions?

Resources: What kind of abundance is the community enjoying? What does that look like, specifically?

Breakthroughs: In the past 10 years, what is the most significant breakthrough that launched the community into a whole new level of success? How? What happened? Who helped make it happen? What changed?

Attitudes and Values: Identify changes regarding the community or surrounding environment

Standard of Living: Define "progress," related to economic success and comfort

Quality of Life: Define "progress," related to intangible satisfaction with life in general

What would your community be like if you had the power to make it any way you wanted?

- Where would people live?
- Where would they work?
- How would they get to their School / Work?
- On their days off, where would they go?
- On their days off, what would they do?
- What kind of a house would you live in?
- Where would you shop?
- How would you get there?

What else... What else do you notice that's different, or the same, in this successful, deeply satisfying future?