

Community Visioning

Education, economic and other sectors around the State of Delaware—such as *First State Innovation* and education’s *Vision 2015*—have already engaged in the important step of identifying their common vision, but physical communities can also benefit substantially from engaging in this type of effort. Whether carried out at the county or municipal level, visioning can help to solidify and protect the values and beliefs of a community as growth occurs.

A series of workshops are held in various locations in the community to ask citizens what they like about their community, what they dislike, what they want to make sure they keep, what they want to change, and what they want to see happen in the future.

Between workshops, the responses are reviewed by a steering committee of local officials and certain experts, so that ideas may be presented at the next meeting to see whether appropriate and desirable solutions can be found to fulfill the community’s goals and priorities.

People are typically excited to be involved; the participants range from elected officials and land-use planners, to neighborhood shop owners and school children. The input of long-time residents regarding how and why certain things occur in the manner that they do is invaluable, and the results should reflect community desires and character rather than generic desires associated with many growth management efforts.

“A result of the vision process is this community driven document that reflects the priorities of those county residents that participated in the meetings. Along with creating more awareness and empowerment in the community, one of the goals of the vision process was to match emerging citizen priorities with potential funding sources. Once resident priorities had been identified, community leaders could look for sources that would fund programs and projects that address those priorities. That process of identifying funding sources has already begun and will continue.”

(Exec. Summary, Visioning Process, Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative)



Purpose of Community Visioning Services:

To work with small and rural communities to help them design a community vision by developing a visioning plan, which includes facilitating visioning workshops for citizens, analyzing information, and implementing the seven steps of the community visioning model through on-going citizen work teams. The seven steps are:

- Getting Together
- Building Partnerships
- Organizing the Process
- Gaining Support
- Conducting Meetings
- Bringing It All Together
- Implementing Community Vision

(Florida Department of Community Affairs, Division of Community Planning, Community Visioning Services)

The visioning processes seek to:

- Identify what residents treasure in their county and what they want for the future of their county.
- Seek to clarify and resolve any differences in what people want.
- Build broad commitment among citizens and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors for a set of county priorities.

Additional Resources:

National Civic League. 2000. *Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook*. Denver, CO: NCL Press. Also available from: www.cpn.org/tools/manuals/Community/pdfs/VSPHandbook.pdf

Ames, Steven. 1993. *Guide to Community Visioning: Hands-On Information for Local Communities*. APA Planners Press.

National Park Service, Philadelphia Office. *Vision Creating*. Available from: nps.gov/phso/rctoolbox/dec_vision.htm

Sustainable Communities Network. *Community Visioning & Implementation*. Available from: www.sustainable.org/creating/vision.html

Sample steering committee of stakeholders:

- Administrator
- Grants and Special Projects
- City Manager or Mayor
- Local Major Business/Agricultural Interests
- Economic Development Council
- Public Works

Sample Results: Housing that is Affordable

Need

Glades County has approximately 758 families that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. The lack of quality, affordable housing is a major obstacle to attracting public service workers and new businesses that need housing for their workers.

Vision Priorities

Increase availability of affordable housing for the workforce, seniors, young families, veterans, etc.

Current Activities that Address Vision Priorities

Approximately 28 families receive federal rental assistance, and there are programs available to assist low- and moderate-income homebuyers. The County will consider including provisions in the comprehensive plan, currently being updated, to allow higher-density housing in existing communities and require affordable housing as a part of large developments.

New Initiatives

The County and City of Moore Haven and FHREDI will encourage and support private and nonprofit groups develop affordable housing with assistance from the State Housing Improvement Program (SHIP), the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and others.

(Vision Report 2006, Glades County, FL Visioning)

