Community Disaster Resilience Planning Guide Resources

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Creating a Community Vision

Completing a Community Vision provides your community with a goal, a sense of purpose, and a strategy to become a resilient community. Decisions about what is important for your community are often made outside the community. These decisions may not be supported by the community. However without a community vision on the direction it wishes to take there may be little ability to influence those decisions. Every community is unique and must determine its own needs. A Community Vision helps a community identify the direction it wishes to follow.

Why is a Community Vision Important?

People are usually busy, but residents need to be involved. If people don't think about and plan for the future, they risk living in a community that is not the type of community they want it to be. A Community Vision is very important and helps to keep community planning and action on a course its residents have chosen.

All decisions can be viewed from the perspective of the Community Vision.
- Is this decision helping the community reach its objectives or goals?
- Does this decision support what the community wants?

There a number of ways in which communities can set about developing a Community Vision. All of them require community participation. Everyone has some interest in their community and everyone should have an opportunity to contribute and share their ideas at some point in the process. Don't forget that "everyone" includes children and youth. In many small communities young people leave the community when they graduate because they feel that their community doesn't provide them with the options that they feel they need. While it is clear that small communities will never provide all of the opportunities that cities can provide – there are tradeoffs that are not always evident. Involving young people in developing your community profile may help make the community more appealing for younger residents.

Visioning Exercises

The process to develop a Vision Statement can be more important than the actual statement itself. The process helps residents take a realistic look at their community; not to assign blame but to establish an honest appraisal of what their community is. A Community Visioning process will not be completed in one day; it will likely take several sessions to complete. It is important to first review information on the community to gain a good understanding of the Community Visioning process. With more in-depth knowledge of the community, it can be easier to determine what method will work best. Then it is important to invite all stakeholders in the community who should be involved, encourage everyone attend, and seek contributions from all.

Things You Should Know

You should plan for several planning sessions to complete a community vision– each approximately three to four hours long. In addition, you may want to have a preliminary meeting and final meeting to present the results. There are a number of different approaches you could take in developing a Community Vision (or re-visiting it if you already have one).

Creating a vision of a disaster resilient community needs to be a collective process. You may want to draw from techniques and tips developed by others who specialize in undertaking "visioning exercises" in both large and small group settings. This process allows you to collectively identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
This process also helps you develop:

a. a Vision Statement;
b. an Action Plan; and
c. implementation of an Action Plan.

Two different approaches are presented here: the more traditional Community Visioning approach and the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Planning Steps

Step One: Establishing a Working Group

No matter which approach you choose, both approaches begin with forming a Working Group to help organize the planning process. "Getting Community Buy-In" will be helpful in providing you with some ideas as who to invite to work with your Community-Based Research Team.

Remember that it is important to:
- Reach out to various organizations and community residents
- Don't avoid including people because they may have a different opinion from yours
- Don't focus on what happened in the past – you are planning for the future

Step Two: Deciding on an Approach

When the Working Group is established, you need to consider which approach is most appropriate to use. As mentioned, two different approaches are presented but other approaches may be more feasible given local circumstances.

Step Three: Choosing a Location, Dates, Times and Food

Regardless of the approach you choose for a visioning exercise, a location must be identified for holding the planning sessions at the predetermined dates and times. Choose a facility that people are familiar with and comfortable using. It may be a fire hall, school, religious organization, community hall or hotel. Choosing a date for a community workshop can require some consensus building.

- Evening sessions may work well – have people come after dinner or offer a pot-luck and start early.
- Weekends may work well - Saturday morning or an all-day session may attract community residents.
- Be careful with weekday daytime meetings – people who are working and youths in school will not be able to attend. Determine that no other community group has an event scheduled at the same time and be sure to give sufficient notice.
- Decide how many meetings will be held as part of the overall process.
- Provide some form of refreshments. At the least, try to provide cookies and coffee, tea and some hot chocolate (or cold drinks if it is in the summer). If a longer meeting is anticipated, offer lunch or dinner if at all possible. Perhaps you could host a pot-luck or perhaps a local business or organization can assist in funding food and refreshments.

Step Four: Establish Agendas

Setting an agenda sets the framework for what you want to accomplish. Posting or mailing out the agenda will let residents know what to expect. For the first meeting, you will want to consider:

- Welcoming remarks and a statement regarding the purpose of the planning session; (Why are we here and what do we want to accomplish);
- An overview of the visioning approach you have chosen;
- A reasonable amount of time for small group discussions, questions and answers; and
- Concluding remarks and a discussion of what comes next.

In addition you may want to consider having a guest speaker if someone is available who can excite and motivate community residents. One possible choice for a guest speaker would be someone from a community of similar size which has completed a visioning exercise and benefited from it. After the first meeting, the agenda will vary depending upon the approach chosen.

Step Five: Promote the Meetings

It is important to promote the initial meeting to encourage good participation from the community. First, you need to inform residents that there will be a meeting. Second, you will need to create an interest in attending. Both of these objectives can be addressed by producing a flyer. This flyer can be posted on bulletin boards, in the grocery store, circulated through schools, and distributed to other local stakeholder organizations to distribute to their members. If there is a local newsletter or newspaper, it is an opportunity to involve media in helping advertise the meeting.

After every planning session you should ensure to keep the community informed about the work that is being done and that residents are invited to participate in all sessions. You will need to ensure people know that their opinions are valued and wanted; those taking part will want to hear that their contributions are recognized. Those who have not yet taken part should be welcomed to contribute whenever they can.

Community Visioning

What are the Issues?

The first meeting should be an opportunity to list issues facing the community. It is important that the issues are not just focused on one aspect (e.g., economic issues) but rather the focus should be all of the potential issues facing the community as it strives to become more disaster resilient.

What needs to happen before the issues meeting?

The Working Group should determine how many members of the community will attend. Ideally you should have a meeting place of sufficient size for all participants and provide space for a number of small tables for in-depth discussion purposes. A member of the Working Group should facilitate discussion at each table and this should be determined ahead of time. You will need paper, flip charts and felt pens for note taking and recording results. It is also important to have a sufficient number of copies of relevant worksheets with highlighted questions for everyone. You may wish to distribute the Worksheets prior to the meeting and have participants complete them and bring them to the meeting. You may also choose to have people complete them at the meeting.

Issues at the Meeting

At each table, the facilitator should ask participants to complete the worksheets if they have not done so. The facilitator may wish to have participants complete the first worksheet, then discuss it before moving on to the second worksheet. Alternatively participants can complete and discuss both worksheets at the same time.

Everyone should have an opportunity to state what they see as the important issues facing their community. These comments should be written on a flip chart or on paper at the table. When all comments are listed, participants should be asked to "vote" on their top five issues. It will be important for the facilitator to stop people from making negative comments about others' choices. Participants should be discouraged from using this opportunity to promote their own selections too vigorously or to lecture others on their choices.

The purpose of the exercise is not to have participants identify every possible resilience issue but rather to identify the most important issues facing their community. Depending upon the time available, each table can present their top five issues to the other tables. The Working Group members should check to see which issues are shared with other groups and which ones are not. Issues which are jointly shared by tables will become the focus of the next step. If there is not time for each table to present their key issues, then Working Group members need to review the various sheets from each table and identify consensus issues from multiple lists. Those issues which have been identified by most participants as being the highest priority will be used to develop local Task Forces.

Establishing Task Forces

The job of the Task Forces is to complete a SWOT Analysis for each of the key issues. "SWOT" stands for:

- **Strengths** – What is going well – or what is right or positive about this?
- **Weaknesses** – What is not going well – or what is wrong or what are the problems?
- **Opportunities** – What can be done to improve the situation?
- **Threats** – What are the threats – both internal and external?

For example, if the issue identified was the community is threatened by wildland interface fires then the analysis could be as follows:

Strengths

- The community has a committed Fire Chief
- Fire Department equipment is in good condition
- Community fire hall is functional

Weaknesses

- Too many homes are located in the interface zone and there are no firebreaks between homes and the forest
- Forests have not been cleared of fuel build-up and diseased wood
- The fire hall needs repairs
- The community does not have an effective public warning system

Opportunities

- A neighbourhood work party could be arranged to clean some of the debris
- Applications could be made for assistance from higher levels of government
- Diseased wood and deadfall could be harvested and used for certain wood products

Threats

- Climate change has resulted in increased risk to the community
- Diseased wood and deadfall is more combustible

Many of the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be based on the skills and abilities of community members which will be identified through other Community Disaster Resilience processes. Task Forces created at this meeting will have a strong role in developing the Action Plan once the vision statement has been accepted by the community.

What Needs to Happen Before the Task Force Meeting

Once the key themes from the first meeting have been identified, each Working Group member should identify one topic that is of particular interest to them; they will then become the leader for the Task Force for that topic. The Working Group then needs to review the Community Profile, the risk and resiliency tools and resources, and should make themselves familiar with the findings as they apply them to the topic which is of greatest interest to them. The Working Group should also promote the work undertaken during this meeting in the community and encourage those who did not participate in the first session to attend the second.

At the Task Force Meeting

After a review of the visioning exercise and the findings of the first meeting, each Task Force Leader should inform the community of their chosen topic and invite residents to participate in their discussion group. Each discussion group should not be more than eight to ten members. The Task Force Leader should then guide discussion within their group through the SWOT analysis. The analysis may be completed at this session or continue for several more sessions. Task Forces should be encouraged to meet again to review the process and add to their work. Discussion group members should then discuss issues and SWOT analysis with other residents who had not participated to gain additional information which can be added to the analysis.

Visioning Exercise

Based on the previous work and SWOT analysis, the Working Group should invite residents to another meeting to develop potential outcomes or scenarios. Ensure there are copies of the community profile available for this meeting. People should be encouraged to think about and write or draw what they consider to be probable scenarios relating to what the community could become. Scenarios may be best case or worst case; all are legitimate scenarios.

Participants should be encouraged to draw pictures or write to describe what these scenarios are like. They will also be asked to think through the various options for their scenarios with a series

of questions to help identify key ideas or concepts to add to the analysis. When these scenarios have been discussed, participants should look for the "best" outcomes. The team may choose one scenario or decide to create a new scenario that brings together a number of positive outcomes. The negative scenarios (if there are any) will serve to remind people of what their community could become if they don't take action! Once everyone has a scenario in mind, the next step is to write a visioning statement.

A vision statement can be one sentence, but is usually one or two paragraphs that describe that scenario – where the community wants to be. Usually a vision statement is set for five to ten years into the future. It will be important, at this stage, to avoid the questions about "how" this will be accomplished, or "who" will pay for it. Those issues will come up later when a strategic Action Plan is developed.

Visioning Exercise: Before the Meeting

Each discussion group requires a pre-assigned facilitator, so Working Group members should determine how many groups there will be. Each Working Group member should be a facilitator for this meeting. The facilitator will be leading the group through the development of probable scenarios and also prompt the creation of the scenarios by asking questions. The facilitator will also lead groups through the development of a vision statement. The Working Group should invite other members of the community to attend, even if they have not attended previously.

Visioning Exercise: At the Meeting

Set up tables with note paper and flip charts for each facilitator. Once you have reviewed the process to date and the findings of the Task Forces from the previous meeting, each facilitator should take a group of between eight to ten members. Participants need to consider a time in the future (usually about five to ten years ahead) and imagine what they think their community could look like. Participants should be encouraged to use their imaginations through drawings or written comments.

Participants can work on a single group scenario or individual scenarios and then come together to discuss and present all scenarios. The strategy you use may depend on who is in the group and whether or not the group is generally in agreement with their vision. If there are differences, then participants should work on them individually.

Here are some possible questions to prompt participants when developing their scenarios (note that these questions should relate to the previous work done and the findings from the various meetings):

- What features (physical, social, cultural) do residents use to identify their community?
- What are the community's principle values?
- What defines a "good" quality of life in the community?
- What are the community's opportunities?
- What things in the community should be preserved? What things should be changed?
- What five things would really improve the community?
- What should the community physically look like in the future?
- How fast should changes occur?

Once the inventory is completed and the probable scenarios are developed, the next step is to allow participants to select one scenario and further define it. They should review and discuss the information and select the scenario they believe best reflects their community's desires for the future. Residents should also be encouraged to change or modify all scenarios. Afterwards, participants should spend the rest of the community workshop developing a simple two-to-three paragraph statement that captures the chosen scenario. This statement is the vision statement.

Explain that wording will be adjusted later, so choosing exactly the right word is not as important as capturing the key concepts or ideas. Each table will then present their vision statement to the other groups. Key phrases or statements that are reflected in more than one group should be

highlighted. This is a time when more people involved does not necessarily lead to a better product. Explain to the group that the Working Group will consult with others to further refine the vision statement and then bring it back to larger group for review.

Refining the Vision Statement

The main Working Group task is to take the small group statements and combine them into a single statement. The Working Group may wish to involve someone from the community who is known for his/her writing skills to assist. Here's a sample Vision Statement:

The citizens of our community envision:
- Sustainable development that while enhancing and supporting our natural-based industries, including our agricultural, eco-tourism and forestry industries will not put future homes and businesses at risk and enhances our community's quality of life
- A community that takes proactive steps to reduce the likelihood of potential disasters occurring and to reduce the potential impacts of disasters
- An economic and educational climate that enables our citizens to find suitable employment within the community and supports adequate housing that fulfills the housing needs of all segments of the population
- Recreational open spaces and opportunities, including along the rivers and streams, to preserve the community's rural character, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, and increase access to natural resource lands and water, and maintenance and development of parks, sports fields and facilities
- Protection of the environment and maintenance of the community's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water

Once the Working Group has a statement then they should "test" it. Working Group members should take the statement to a few people who have not been part of the visioning exercise and show them the statement. How do they react – is something not clear? It may require some small adjustments. Report on feedback received to those involved in the visioning exercise. Then a final statement should be confirmed by the Working Group based on this feedback received.

Get Buy-in for the Vision Statement

The next step is to publicize and adopt the statement. Community service groups, community government agencies, involved individuals such as the Fire Chief; local businesses and other stakeholders should be asked to adopt the vision statement and use it as a guide when making decisions affecting the community. Official bodies such as community government, or regional or county governments or the Band Council should also be asked to adopt the statement for the community in the form of a resolution. The purpose of this activity is to get as many groups and organizations as possible to adopt the vision statement and participate in putting it to action. The Working Group should get everyone involved in promoting the vision statement from school children to businesses – from articles in local papers to posters in the local grocery store. Be sure to explain how the vision statement got developed – the process and the participants.

Developing an Action Plan

The Action Plan is a detailed plan on how the community will make the vision statement a reality. This is where the work of the Task Forces will be used. The Working Group should review the vision statement and break it into its various parts. Then the Working Group should review the various goals identified by the Task Forces and match them to the various parts of the vision statement. Then it is time to bring back the Task Forces – they and the Working Group should identify potential projects – or opportunities - that arose as part of the work by the Task Force. Some of the projects may not cost a lot, others may be costly. Build on the successes of the smaller projects before starting on the bigger and more expensive projects. Choose one project that is clearly linked to the vision and would be popular with the community to start with. Some projects may require completing applications to receive funding. Contact all levels of government to identify potential funding sources.

Experience has shown that communities with an identified vision and action plan are more successful in securing funds than those communities that seek project funding without knowledge of how these projects will ultimately fit together. It will be important to reach out to community residents, businesses, organizations and local governments to assist in developing and writing an Action Plan. The role of the Working Group and Task Forces is to ensure the projects are completed and activities are coordinated.

Implementation

As the Action Plan is put into practice it is very important to keep community residents and businesses informed on what is taking place. The Working Group should develop a reporting schedule – perhaps one every three months to advise the community on progress being made. Make sure to distribute the progress report widely in the community. Part of honouring all the work that was done during the visioning exercise also means following up and letting people know of the successes and areas where more work is needed. The progress report should always include the vision statement and a summary of the Action Plan. It should also include:

- Any accomplishments to date;
- Recognition of individuals and organizations that made meaningful contributions;
- Highlight the success stories;
- Describe any difficulties encountered; and
- Outline the activities that will take place over the next three months.

Be sure to invite new residents and businesses to get involved in their community action plan.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a process which supports maximizing your time together by developing a clear goal, sense of purpose and strategy for building a disaster resilient community. Rather than 'trouble shooting' it provides an emphasis on what's going well and what community assets can be used to help build a disaster resilient community.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an interesting approach to use. It is a way for discovering, understanding and creating new ideas and ways of doing things. One way in which AI does this is through the gathering of positive stories and images and seeking out the very best of what exists to help residents push their imaginations of what the community could be.

Perspectives

Here are some of the differences between Appreciative Inquiry and a more traditional approach:

Traditional Process	Appreciative Inquiry
Define the problem	Search for solutions that already exist
Fix what is broken	Focus on what is working
Focus on decay	Focus on life-giving forces
What problems are you having?	What is working well around here?

Problem Solving Approach	Appreciative Inquiry
Identify the Problem	Appreciate and value the best of what is
Analyze the cause	Envision what might be
Analyze potential Solutions	Dialogue what should be
Action Planning (treatment)	Innovate what will be
Basic Assumption – Problems to be solved	*Basic Assumption: A mystery to embrace*

There are four phases to an Appreciative Inquiry

Phase	Explanation
Discovery "Appreciate what is." "The best of what is."	Through interviews, surveys or other means creating and collecting personal stories of the best of times within the context discussed.
Dream "Imagine what could be."	Imagining how life could be if more of the best of times happened more of the time: building a positive image based on what is known to be possible in the future (the discovery).
Design "Determine what should be."	Thinking back from the future to what we need to be doing now to increase the possibility of attractive futures unfolding.
Destiny or Delivery "Create what should be." "What will be"	Doing different things or things differently in a coherent and conjoint way, inspired by the work together, energized by the positive energy generated, coordinated by the shared wishes of the community. Focus on delivery and sustaining the vision and desired future.

How does AI translate into a process that would work in your community?

The Discovery

The discovery phase is a time to discover what has worked well in your community. The process starts off looking at what's working well. What has made, in this case, your community a better place? What has contributed to your community's disaster resilience? There are several ways in which you could find out.

What needs to be done before the Discovery Stage takes place?

The first thing to do is to consider what it is that you want to find out about. Here are some examples of questions you might ask as your community moves towards becoming more disaster resilient.

- Tell me about a time when you, or someone you know, did something that contributed towards helping our community become disaster resilient. It could be as simple as creating a family emergency kit or involving a lot more work such as serving as a volunteer firefighter.
- Tell me about a time when you remember someone doing something that improved our community.
- Tell me about a time when you saw someone doing something that made our community a better and stronger community.

These are just some examples of the questions you might want to ask. You should work with the Working Group to determine exactly what it is you want to know. Your question should be clear and simple. It should not be able to be answered with a "yes" or "no." It should be a question that everyone can answer.

When the question has been decided, then you need to decide where to hold the AI. Ideally you want to have as large a place as possible so that all who wish to participate can. You can choose how long the session will be. Some people may choose to have the AI over a period of days or weeks. Some people may decide to hold an all-day session. When you have read through this material and have a good understanding of how the AI process works, and with your knowledge of your community, you can decide what method will work the best. Then you need to invite everyone in the community – the more the better. Here are some ways to collect the information – you may follow more than one method:

- One way is to simply wait until you are at the AI. At the meeting organize those in attendance into pairs – ideally with someone they don't know that well. Give each pair flip chart paper to record their results. Ask one person to interview the other. The person who is asking the question can take notes regarding the answer. Then that person can write the answer (or summarize if it is a long answer) onto the flip chart paper. Then reverse the roles so you should then have the answers on one or two sheets of flip chart paper. This approach is much less work than the others which can require a great deal of work in distributing the question and collecting information for the AI Meeting.
- Have members of the Working Group distribute the question on a piece of paper to each household in the community. Give each household a large piece of paper and ask everyone in the household to answer the question separately and bring it with them when they come to the meeting (or arrange to come back and pick it up).
- Ask the local organizations or schools in the community to ask their members or students to write their answers on large pieces of paper.
- Send out the question through the mail or e-mail to members of the community and ask them to e-mail their responses to the Working Group.

You may come up with other ways as well. The important consideration is to ensure that the AI session has many residents' responses to the question as possible.

Discovery: At the Appreciative Inquiry Meeting

When you have the responses to the questions, you should post them around the room. They may be the responses that have been collected before the AI Meeting or from the interviews held at the meeting. This exercise demonstrates to people that good things do happen and change is possible. But posting them is not enough. The responses need to be read out loud. You can invite people to read their own answers or read out the responses of the person they interviewed. Some people may not wish to read out aloud in front of so many people so a member of the Working Group can read them out loud. Depending on how many people attend the meeting will determine how much time this will take. But each response will further reinforce the message that your community is a place where good things do happen. After each response is read out loud – in appreciation of the contribution, members should clap to show their appreciation.

If a large number of people are in attendance you can break into several large groups and have people go through the same process within their large group. Then all of the responses can be posted on the wall and people can read what others have written.

The Dream

The dream stage is where the community helps to form its vision. At the end of this stage you should have a great sense of what your community could be. The dream stage can directly follow the Discovery Stage. Those that participated in the Discovery Stage will likely be willing to participate in examining what direction the community wants to take. If because of time constraints you are planning to hold the Dream Stage at another time, be sure to keep all posted responses and re-post them before the Dream Stage begins. People will need to see the positive responses to remind themselves of what was said before.

What needs to be done before the Dream stage takes place?

The Working Group needs to consider how to word the question for the Dream Stage. It should be directly linked to the question that was asked during the Discovery Stage. What you want the residents to do is to think ahead to sometime in the future (usually about five years ahead) and imagine what their ideal community would look like. You should let people play with their imaginations, but still be somewhat realistic. Therefore, the preface to the question you will ask generally begins with:

- "Imagine that you left your community next week and for the next five years you had no contact or information about your community. When, five years later, you come back to your community you are amazed.
- The community is as disaster resilient as it could possibly be. Tell us what that would look like. How would you know it was as disaster resilient as it could be?
- The community is as perfect as it could be. Tell us what that would look like. How would you know it was as perfect as it could be?
- All of your dreams for your community have been achieved. "How are those around you behaving, what has happened? What does your community look like?"
- You may, of course, choose other questions – these are simply here as a guide. The question should focus on what the community would look like (drawing is encouraged) – how one would know that the community has achieved its goal?
- You may want to make some simple signs such as: "People," "Play," "Environment," "Homes," "School, "Health," "Hazards," "Disaster and Emergency Preparedness," "Governance," "Resources," "Emergency Response" and "Community Connections" and post them around the room to help people keep the central themes of resilience in mind.

Dream: At the Appreciative Inquiry Meeting

You will need to break into smaller groups – each group should have no more than eight people so that everyone can have a chance to participate. Each group should have a writing paper (the equivalent of two flip chart pages) and a box of coloured markers. Try to mix the makeup of participants so that each group has younger and older persons; female and male, etc. Using the markers and the paper in front on a large table, each group is asked to answer the question

posed using words or drawings. It will be important to ensure groups are cautioned against using words like:

- Better, stronger, larger, more
- Less, fewer, smaller
- Quieter, slower
- Noisier, faster

These words can be interpreted in many different ways – more homes for example might mean three more homes to one person and 50 more homes to another. So you need to ask people to be very specific:

- What does "fewer homes at risk of wildland interface fires mean?" Which homes are at risk? Should any of them be at risk?
- What does "more tourists in the summer mean?" How many? What types of tourists? How would you know when you had sufficient numbers of tourists?
- What does "more jobs for young people mean?" What kinds of jobs? How many jobs? How would you know you didn't have enough jobs?

You will need to make sure your Working Group members continually move around the tables and gently encourage each group to be specific. As well, ensure that people don't state items as "needs." For example, you might have people state:

- Young people <u>should</u> stay in the community after they graduate from high school.
- We <u>need</u> to have an effective volunteer fire department.

These should be reworded to reflect what the community would look like with these items in place:

- High-school graduates are studying and working in our community.
- There is an effective volunteer fire department in our community.

Have people think about what was mentioned in the Discovery Phase. Are these reflected in the work to date? If you have placed signs such as "Resilience" and "Environment" ask people to ensure their vision addresses all of these. Ensure participants consider the risk and resilience assessments. What do they suggest would lead to a disaster resilient community? You may also notice that in some teams, there are differences of opinion – some people may want to see more homes built in the community while others may want to keep things just the way they are. If that's the case, suggest a discussion – where could new homes be built and where shouldn't they be built? If people are still in disagreement then suggest that the two points of view get reflected into two different versions. Once each team has finished, take some time for a break. During the break a member of the Working Group should post all community vision statements on the wall.

After the break, a member of each team should explain to the larger group what contributed to the vision. People should be encouraged to ask questions. While the presentation is taking place, Working Group members should take notes on flip chart paper – highlight repeated themes or items. When all presentations are completed, there should be a long list of items that people agree on. Then a new list can be developed with the items showing the most agreement. The other items should be carefully noted and posted in a "Parking Lot" for later discussion.

Then all participants should review this new list. If all participants, or almost everyone, agree with the item then leave it on the list. This new list will form the foundation for your community vision. If there is disagreement then add the items to the "Parking Lot." Now go through the other items on the "Parking Lot". Even though only one team may have listed the idea, others may also agree but just didn't think about it. See if new items can be added to the main list through this process. For those items that still remain on the "Parking Lot," consider with the group if it would be worthwhile to have further discussion to see if people can come to an agreement. The aim is to come up with as many items as possible where there is community agreement. Remember that

not everyone has to agree, but there should be broad agreement to include an item on the main list. For those items where there was no agreement; respect the work that went into developing the list and let people know that the list will be reviewed in the future. Now you will have a current vision statement of what your community could look like which has broad agreement among residents.

The Design

The Design Phase is where some of the real work begins. Items that have been listed as part of the community's vision get grouped together, or put into a "theme" wherever possible. New community teams will be formed at each table, and each team is given a group or theme to work with. Their job is to put each of the items at the top of a large piece of paper – as a goal. Then the team should decide on what steps need to take place in order to reach that goal. The Community Profile will be useful for each team to refer to as they work through the exercise – to remind them what is in place. For example, if one of the items on the list is:

- "There is an effective volunteer fire department in our community."

The question to the team is "Given where we are now, what do we need to do to make this happens?" The steps could be:

- Meet with Fire Chief and identify how many volunteer fire fighters are needed in order to have an ability to respond to local fires.
- Identify what training is required and when it is offered.
- Identify what qualities or qualifications people need to have in order to become a volunteer fire fighter.
- Ask a local artist to develop a poster to help recruit new volunteer fire fighters. Put up the posters in all areas where people who could qualify for the volunteer fire department are likely to be.
- Ask local organizations to provide time at their meetings to have a current volunteer fire fighter come to talk about recruiting new members.
- Ask a local business to offer some gifts to new recruits who complete the basic training.
- If there is a nearby community, ask them if they are having recruitment problems and if it would be worthwhile to consider combining firefighting teams.

These steps become parts of the Design Phase. Each step will move the community closer to its goal.

What needs to be done before the Design Phase Takes Place?

Looking at your community vision, the Working Group team should see if any themes exist – areas where items could be grouped into one category. For example, if the following items are on the list:

- Our community is pollution-free and air is clean and fresh
- Our community has enough clean, fresh, safe water for everyone to drink
- Our community has enough clean, fresh, safe water to meet all our farmers' needs
- Our streets are litter-free

All of these items could be loosely grouped together under the theme of "Environment." So team members should develop as many themes as possible.

You will have a number of unique or single ideas that don't fit into any other category and those can be handled separately. Each of these themes and the items listed under them should be written onto separate pieces of paper.

Design: At the Appreciative Inquiry Meeting

At the start of the meeting, the number of people present will determine how many "tables" or design teams you will need. Place flip chart paper on each table. Start by posting the "Themes" around the room. Then present the themes to the larger group. You may have a lot of themes and items to present. Clearly no one can do everything. So the first step is to set some priorities. After you have presented all of the themes, hand out some "stars" or other stickers, or simply some markers. Ask people to identify their top three or five priorities. Then identify the top themes or areas and ask people to volunteer to address a particular theme. You should choose at least enough priorities so that each table receives at least one priority to work on.

So, if one theme was "Environment" you would ask for volunteers to work on the design phase for the "Environment." Try to balance out the design teams – ideally each team should have approximately the same number of people. Then ask each design team to complete their priorities and start to work on these. As each team finished an item, post the steps on the wall. If time permits you can give the teams additional themes and/or items to work on. Some steps will be easier to identify than others. If one team is unable to think of how to approach a particular goal, then others can be invited to help with the required steps. Whichever approach is followed, the community will become closer to reaching their goal.

Depending on how much information is developed, you may need to call for another meeting to work on further items. But, when you feel the time is right and enough steps have been developed, have everyone walk around and read all of the lists. People should feel free to add additional suggestions or steps (people can write their suggestions on post-it notes and add them to the paper lists).

Before you finish this session it is very important that you ensure the steps are clearly identified. They need to be clear – when you ask people to commit to completing the various steps (the next phase) they need to know exactly what they are committing to. At the end of the Design Phase you will have many lists of steps to take to achieve their goals.

The Destiny

The Destiny Phase is the last phase. Now we get really practical – who's going to do what and when? You will have a lot of themes and ideas that have been completed. Depending upon the number of people present and the number of items you have, you may want people to go through another round of setting priorities. However, all of the items are important and it may be difficult for people to set even more priorities.

Another option is to simply have those present choose one item and agree to make a commitment for that one item. Then the next month, participants can choose another item and address that item. There may be other options as well. What needs to happen next is for people to take responsibility to complete the various actions. This step requires the participation of as many people as possible. There are various ways in which this step can be accomplished. You can provide people with post-it notes and ask them to put the name of an individual or organization that they feel could accomplish this task. This is helpful in terms of identifying who could do what but it may lead to people putting down the names of others rather than looking at what they could do themselves. This will then require a second round (different colour of post-it notes) for people to add their own name to the list regarding what commitment they are willing to make. The third round is to identify who could be approached to accomplish the items that have not been identified with an individual or group responsible for implementation and determine who will make the request of organizations that are not represented. You can ask people to nominate themselves or an organization that they belong to that they are willing to approach to determine if they are willing to advance the item. The next step is to identify who can be approached to accomplish the items that have not been identified with an individual or organizations responsible for implementation.

You will then need to set up a deadline for when people will report back on their commitment. Others should be invited to contribute as well – copies of the steps and "openings" for volunteers

should be widely distributed in the community. Look for tasks that can be accomplished by youth and suggest that your local school be approached to see if they have youth willing to commit to the tasks. In other cases the community may decide to hire someone to complete a task which no one has the skills to undertake (e.g., geo-technical report). In those cases people should identify sources of funding for the task. The list of community skills and abilities will be useful as people can be approached based on the skills they have listed for themselves. In other cases, people might not agree to undertake the task but will agree to lead a small team or Working Group to address the item. Or they may be willing to explore if their organization will assume the responsibility. This is a good strategy that will usually ensure the work gets done.

What needs to be done before the Destiny Phase Takes Place?

Whether the session immediately follows the Design Phase, or is scheduled at some later date, it is important to ensure all steps are clearly identified; you may need to re-write the steps if a lot of people have added to them. Sometimes the steps will need to be organized in some order, but in other cases the steps can be undertaken in any order; they will all contribute to reaching the desired goals. If the steps are to be completed in a particular order, it will be important to number them accurately.

Destiny: At the Appreciative Inquiry Meeting

Post the lists and ask participants to identify what they can accomplish (or who could accomplish the task – depending upon which method you choose) by writing their names by the item. While participants should be encouraged to take on tasks, don't push people to take on steps which they are reluctant to do. That is when those items won't get accomplished. Once people or organizations have been identified with a particular task, it is important to ensure that the tasks get done! One option is to ask participants when they think they will complete the task and to record the date next to their name. The other option is to set a date for one or two months into the future and commit everyone to that date.

Following-up

There are many things for the Working Group to address after the workshop – the amount of work will depend on how many people have participated and how many commitments have been made. Here are a number of tasks which will have to be carried out:

- Record each of the goals, the tasks, those who have committed to do something about it, and the completion date. Ideally it is available electronically so that it can be distributed and printed easily. It will be easier to get people to meet their commitments if they are posted publicly.
- If there are blanks – then the Working Group should make an effort to find individuals or organizations willing to take on these tasks. This can be done by referring to the Skills and Knowledge Inventory Questionnaires; who has identified a skill that would assist it getting the job done?
- Another option is to circulate the information in a local newspaper or place posters on any bulletin boards in the community.
- Perhaps going to attend various organizational meetings, or talk with individuals from organizations that were not present at the AI would be helpful. One organization may assume responsibility for the task if it fits with their organizational mandate.

Working Group members will also have to ensure people meet their commitments. You will have to follow-up with people to determine if they have completed the task. This can be problematic as people may not have completed a task; it is important not to make people feel embarrassed but it is also important to move ahead.

Do announce publicly anytime that a task has been completed! It will take time, and sometimes patience, but the community will gradually move ahead with achieving their goals.

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