



## Cautions

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A collective vision can provide a powerful force that closely binds together the different and disparate forces found in neighborhoods, causing them to work together to develop and implement an array of strategies designed to raise the Quality of Life for all. However, for this to work the convening organization and its partners must adhere to a critical set of values:

- Diversity is valued, and assuming the responsibility of engaging and bringing ALL local constituencies into the process, at the beginning, is critical. It is imperative that these constituencies come into the process to “speak for themselves” and not be represented by others (no matter how good the intentions of those who would represent them might be.)
- More involvement and participation is always better – there can not be too many people and/or interests participating.
- Developing and honoring leadership from among local residents, agencies, organizations, & institutions is essential. Encouraging them to assume leadership roles early in the process, and supporting them as they assume leadership positions is a fundamental responsibility of the convening organization.

When these values and the actions they call for are not present the process is bound to encounter a number of pitfalls:

- The convening organization doesn't have the right connections to get local residents and stakeholders to the table (or is not seen as invested in the neighborhood). *Result: Key individuals or groups that need to participate are not invited (or worse, excluded) to the process.*
- The convening organization believes the information collected in the one-on-one interviews is sufficient to develop a vision statement without further resident and stakeholder input. *Result: limited buy-in from residents and stakeholders, seen as convener or consultant vision.*
- The convening organization has an agenda to advance regardless of the neighborhood consensus. *Result: process/plan is not viewed as legitimate and has limited buy-in.*
- The community builder and/or the convening organization is not consistent with the neighborhood demographics. *Result: Lack of legitimacy, difficulty in getting deeply engaged in issues, difficult to build relationships for implementation.*
- The convening organization is not seen as an “insider” in the neighborhood. *Result: suspicion of the process, limited participation, limited buy-in.*
- Marketing of the process and meetings is insufficient or poorly conceived. *Result: limited participation, limited press coverage, limited buy-in.*



# Community Builder

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## Roles

- Recruit, support, encourage
- Build capacity, train and model
- Make the playing field level between formal and informal leadership

## Recruiting

- Those involved in the planning are most likely to implement, but not everyone will move from planning to implementation. Need to continually recruit the right people for the right place in the process.
- A sustainable process requires the participation of a broad spectrum of neighborhood stakeholders – residents, business owners, neighborhood employers, service providers and organizational leaders in the planning.
- This process must include significant participation by individuals representing the varied economic, social, ethnic and racial demographics of the neighborhood. Sometimes this will take a lot of recruiting effort.
- The world changes swiftly. People come and go. Organizations gain or lose capacity. There must be a clearly identified set of exit and entrance ramps for people, ideas and organizations.
- If a new resident or partner must pass through multiple gatekeepers or systemic barriers to contribute or participate, the plan will eventually become insular and irrelevant.

## Building Capacity

- If someone else can do it, you shouldn't.
- If others could do it and won't, it is not yet a priority.
- If no one else can do it, you should do it with one or more persons.
- If you do something by yourself, even if it is wonderful, it is not sustainable.
- The success of a plan requires that residents and partners share a common language, training and vision. Consider the Legacy trainings to be "train the trainer" sessions which will be presented again to community builders in selected neighborhoods.

## Formal Leadership

- Though resident ownership is vital to a successful plan, much of the implementation capacity and resource resides in neighborhood groups and institutions. Without the buy-in and tangible commitment of these institutions, a plan cannot succeed.

## Informal Leadership

- Both residents and neighborhood partners (businesses, institutions and organizations) are necessary to sustain a plan. When residents or partners have unequal power or responsibility, the plan will fail.

*Credit to Jim Mulholland*



## Sample Vision Statements

Community development in South Central Elkhart will be shaped by broad participation and the leadership of those most impacted. Ours will be a vibrant neighborhood where youth have quality P-12 educational experiences and graduate from high school with opportunities to go to college. Empowered residents will have access to employment, neighborhood green spaces and recreation, a local farmer's market, as well as a variety of restaurants, retail choices, and financial services.

The neighborhood will celebrate its many cultures through art, cultural activities, and food – and organizations providing services will strengthen their relevance through growing intercultural competency.

The farmer's market and neighborhood art and cultural activities will provide opportunities for job training and entrepreneurship, while exposing youth and adults to cultural foods and local foods.

### *South Central Elkhart*

Near northwest neighborhood is a thriving, diverse, and attractive neighborhood with vibrant business districts and corridors providing local opportunities to work and build wealth, active parks and open spaces connected to the river, and numerous neighborhood and community events. It is a beautiful neighborhood that values and celebrates everyone, is walkable with strong connections between the neighborhood and jobs, and celebrates its rich history with the work of local craftsmen and entrepreneurs. Youth are fully engaged in the life of the neighborhood, as are institutional neighbors like Memorial Hospital and Notre Dame. Near northwest is a neighborhood of choice and seen as a highly desirable place to live, work, and play.

### *Near Northwest Neighborhood – South Bend*

Jacobsville will be a model neighborhood for Evansville, the state, and the country. The neighborhood will be vibrant and considered “hip and cool.” Relationships will be the foundation of the neighborhood and there will be ample opportunities to build relationships through festivals, block parties, and community center activities. These relationships will help foster strong families and encourage people to establish “roots” in the neighborhood. From this pride comes well-maintained homes and businesses, new and exciting retail and restaurants, and safe and attractive public spaces. Transportation choice is a hallmark of the neighborhood with ample, safe opportunities to walk, bike, or use transit for employment, shopping, school, recreation, or worship. The thriving neighborhood will offer educational opportunities for children and adults to reach their educational goals and there will be quality opportunities for meaningful work that supports individuals and families. We are Jacobsville. Join In.

### *Jacobsville – Evansville*



# Visioning

You are a journalist for the local newspaper and covering a celebration banquet for the neighborhood. The year is 2024 and you are writing a feature about the neighborhood and what has been done in the past 10 years to transform it.

As a table group discuss the following questions. Have someone from the group take notes on the provided sheets and someone else should be ready to report out to the larger group at the end of the discussion.

Your job is to report the following information (in the form of journalist's notes).

1. What accomplishments are being recognized?
2. Who is being recognized for their contributions? Who played a major role? Who benefitted?
3. When have these changes occurred? Was it all at once, or slowly over time?
4. Where in the neighborhood (or outside the neighborhood) did change happen?
5. How did the changes happen?
6. Why did the changes happen? What was the reasoning behind the change?

Note taking recommendations:

- Write neatly/legibly so that someone else can type the notes accurately later
- Only write down the key words or phrases that capture the idea of what is being said
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand something that was said
- Make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard
- Move on to the next question when there is a lull in the conversation, you may always come back to a question if someone has another idea

Spokesperson recommendations:

- Take a few minutes to review the comment sheet for your group
- Reflect on what items had the most discussion or energy around them
- Present the responses to all the questions