

Group Discussion Activities

Creating a vision for the future

Materials needed:

Crayons or magic markers
Large sheets of butcher paper or flip chart paper
(If desired) paste or glue and copies of old magazines that can be cut up for pictures/headlines

Purpose:

To create the front page of your newspaper as you hope the headlines will read in 10 years.

To create an overview picture of your community as you want it to be in 10 years.

Process:

Divide participants into groups of no more than 6 persons

Each group has 20 minutes to discuss the following questions:

What do you cherish most about this community and want to see preserved for the next generation?

Think about your community today. Are there places in the community that you think are not suitable for development? Are there places in the community that you think should be where future growth occurs?

Imagine this community as you hope it will be in 10 years.....

What do you hope that the community have and what will people be able to do here?

What do you want the physical landscape of the community to look like in 20 years?

Next, have each group design the front page of the local newspaper that they hope to see in 10 years by writing the headlines of the key stories they hope will be highlighted in the newspaper given their vision for the future.

Each group should post their front page and have a spokesperson explain how their front page reflects their vision for the future.

Questions for general discussion by a group of persons who have watched the film

Begin by taping up several pieces of paper on the wall in order to create a community time line that starts in 1930 through the present. Leave enough room for people in the group to go up and mark the date on which they began living in the community.

Cluster people by the decade in which they began living in the community and have each group identify the key changes that have occurred in the community since they began living there. Each group should write these on a flip chart sheet and post these underneath their decade and share these with the others.

Reform new groups and have them discuss some of the following questions. After allowing 3-5 minutes for small group discussion, reconvene and have a spokesperson from each group share the highlights of their discussions

What aspects of this community do you cherish most and hope will be preserved for future generations?

When you think about the future of this community, what are your greatest hopes for how this community will look and function?

When you think about the future of this community, what are your greatest fears for how this community will look and function?

What, if any, are the development pressures on your community?

What, if any, might be the values or benefits associated with green space, open land or agricultural land in your community?

What might be your community's interests in how a particular parcel of land is used?

How might your community best balance individual land owner's private interests in their land with the interests of the community that you have just described?

What do you believe drives the debates about how land in the community ought to be used or managed?

Do residential uses affect agricultural operations?

What are the effects? Are the effects proximity dependent, in other words,

do they occur only because the residential use is adjacent to the farm or will they occur regardless of how close/far the residential and farm uses are from each other?

How severe are the effects? Can they be managed or minimized by other regulations (e.g., garbage, dogs, trespass laws) - or by other capital improvements (e.g., widening roads installing sewers)?