

15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative
(condensed version—8 pages)
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Approximate Time Required: 1 year and 6 months (18 months)

Approximate Cost (for one Community Visioning Initiative): 10 million dollars

Introduction

The following “15 Step Outline” is an example of collaborative problem solving at the local community level. This kind of collaborative problem solving encourages all residents (or at least all participating residents) to “actualize in our own lives” practices and processes which turn polarizing circumstances into collaborative efforts (and thus which make best use of the knowledge and skills each one of us has). There are difficult challenges ahead. We will need the best efforts we can make at working together to overcome such challenges.

This writer realizes that there will be many people who read this outline who will have suggestions for how to improve the steps, or know of approaches to collaborative problem solving which might work better for maximizing citizen participation. The primary goal of this document is to provide one kind of model to illustrate that there are ways of maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activities. Thus, this model can be a starting point for discussion, and the development of other models, on how to achieve such goals.

[Note: This is a condensed outline derived from an 18 page outline, which includes much more detail about each of the steps (see [“15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative”](#) (without the “condensed version” added))]

Step 1

Description: Steering Committee Selection, Administrative Assistant Selection (and Securing Volunteers for Advisory Board)

Approximate Time Required: 8 weeks

Primary Goals: 5 people selected for steering committee; 5 people selected for administrative assistants; Development of Advisory Board (50+ volunteers)

Step 2

Description: Initial Preparation

Approximate Time Required: 6 weeks

Primary Goals: Identifying Volunteer Resources; Establishing Neighborhood Learning Centers; Outreach to community to communicate benefits of Community Visioning Initiative, and describe process; Consulting; Development of Preliminary Surveys

Step 3

Description: Preliminary Surveys

Approximate Time Required: 8 weeks

Primary Goal: Preliminary Surveys to 150 key leaders from a significant variety of fields of activity in the community; Summary of responses to Preliminary Survey, to be published in newspapers, posted on official Community Visioning Initiative website, and made accessible in Neighborhood Learning Centers

Hoped for Outcomes: Responses from the preliminary surveys can residents appreciate the need for time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives, and the need for many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers

Step 4

Description: Secondary Preparation

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goals: Additional Neighborhood Learning Centers opened; Announcements for workshops already scheduled; Announcements for “voting” times already scheduled

Step 5

Description: Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” associated with the question:

What are the most critical challenges for our community—the challenges which our community needs to give the most time, energy, and money to resolving in the coming months and years? (Or...What are the challenges with the greatest potential to de-stabilize economic systems, community life, and basic survival in community, regional, national, and international settings?)

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goal: A List (compiled and summarized through a transparent, well-documented, and fair process) of all Challenges mentioned by participating residents, which will be published in local newspapers, posted on the official Community Visioning Initiative website, and made available in Neighborhood Learning Centers

Step 6

Description: Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Prioritizing the List of Challenges Identified created in Step 5

(Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks)

Primary Goal: Prioritized lists properly submitted by residents are compiled and summarized through a transparent, well-documented, and fair process—and the summary is published in local newspapers, posted on the Community Visioning Initiative website, and made available in Neighborhood Learning Centers

Step 7

Description: Interval for public comment, public discussion, public debate

Approximate Time Required: 2 weeks

Primary Goals: Raise awareness of the prioritized list of identified challenges; encourage evaluation of list by key local commentators

Step 8

Description: Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” to brainstorm solutions to the Challenges Prioritized Summary List

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goal: A List (compiled and summarized through a transparent, well-documented, and fair process) of all the Solution Options mentioned by participating residents (in response to the “Challenges Prioritized Summary List”), which will be published in local newspapers, posted on the Community Visioning Initiative website, and made available in local Neighborhood Learning Centers

Step 9

Description: Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Prioritizing the List of Solutions Identified created in Step 8

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goal: Prioritized lists properly submitted by residents are compiled and summarized through a transparent, well-documented, and fair process—and the summary is published in local newspapers, posted on the Community Visioning Initiative website, and made available in Neighborhood Learning Centers

Special Commentary: Unequal life experiences, but equal say in the process

Some residents may feel uneasy concerning the problem of residents who are less educated and less informed having as much of a say in the process as those who have spent years working on these issues. This is a fundamental problem, which is not confined to Community Visioning Initiative processes like this, as people who are not sufficiently informed about critical issues are everywhere, and they are investing their time, energy, and money—“voting”—all the time. If we are honest with ourselves about this issue, we must admit that there are very few people who have successfully aligned all of their investments of time, energy, and money with all of the values of the religious, spiritual, or moral tradition they feel closest to. This writer believes that there are many serious challenges before us now, and that we will need to invest our time, energy, and money very wisely to overcome these challenges. How can we do it? We must help each other. The Community Visioning Initiative outlined on these pages is time-intensive so that community residents will have time to learn much more than they know now about how to encourage and support each other in community building processes like Community Visioning Initiatives.

Step 10

Description: Workshops, Meetings, and “Voting” Associated with Developing Action Plans to Implement Prioritizing Solutions

Approximate Time Required: 6 weeks

Primary Goal: Outlines for implementing solutions which identify preferred lead organizations; suggest relevant, practical and doable steps for implementing solutions (so that as many residents as possible can understand how to use their time, energy, and money in ways that will resolve the challenges they have identified as priority challenges); and suggest indicators which will provide information to the public about whether the desired results are being achieved, or not

Suggestions:

1) Residents are encouraged to work at home, in informal groups, and/or through meetings, workshops etc. at the Neighborhood Learning Centers, to arrive at point by point answers to the following questions:

- a) Who would they like to see as the lead organization, agency, institution,, etc.for implementing which solutions?
- b) How would they like that organization, etc. to proceed?
- c) What are the most practical and doable steps in such an action plan, and how can they be clearly stated so that they can be understood by as many people as possible?
- d) How will the general public know if the desired results are being achieved?

2) Workshops, resources, informal meetings, etc. will be offered in the Neighborhood Learning Centers to help residents discover tools and resources useful to developing these kind of action plans

3) Residents are encouraged to submit one (1) “Final Version” document for this step. The document for this step should include a list with “Solution#” and associated responses (per above questions), and must be limited to 8 well-organized and easily read pages (to help with the compilation and summary process). Examples will be provided, and copies of documents submitted during the early part of this step will be available for participants to consider as they prepare their “vote”. Some evidence supporting the suggestions mentioned, or some clarifying comments, may be included to help identify the action plans listed, but citing extensive evidence is unnecessary and discouraged. References to resources of any length can be suggested to local Neighborhood Learning Center Coordinators—and entered into the Neighborhood Learning Center “Community Journal”.

Special Commentary: The “voting” process in this version of a Community Visioning Initiative

#2 and #3 above are an example of how the Neighborhood Learning Centers can support the Community Visioning Initiative process—and an example of the process by which residents would arrive at, and submit, their responses to steps #5, #6, and #8--#10.]

To summarize: 1) the “voting” process consists of properly submitted documents in response to identifying challenges and solutions, prioritizing challenges and solutions, and identifying action plans related to priority solutions 2) properly submitted documents are compiled and summarized through a transparent, well-documented, and fair process; and the summary is published in local newspapers, posted on the Community Visioning Initiative website, and made available in Neighborhood Learning Centers

There is much more detail provided in the complete (not condensed) version of this [“15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative”](#).

Special Commentary: reliability and integrity in the compilation and summarizing process

In steps #5, #6, and #8-#10, residents are asked to contribute input/responses. One of the challenges of compiling and summarizing input by residents is the need for reliability and integrity in the compiling and summarizing process.

If these kind of stakeholder engagement/collaborative problem solving processes are going to be successful in maximizing citizen participation, they need to be processes which citizens from every variety of circumstances (every variety of differences in language, cultural background, economic circumstances, and belief systems) can trust, and believe in... (i.e. trust and believe that such processes will make best use of the knowledge and skills each person has to contribute). Thus, even when the compilation and summarizing process is being carried out by experienced practitioners from a most trustworthy organization, the process will be monitored by local Neighborhood Learning Center Coordinators, and independently reported on by journalists and neutral parties such as ombudpersons (who will also observe the process to evaluate transparency, thoroughness of documentation, and fairness).

Special Commentary: An Important Note About Community Building

This kind of time-intensive collaborative problem solving is community building in a most comprehensive and deliberate form. Many of us will have experienced community building in a comprehensive and deliberate form in the past. Ideas about what would assist us in realizing our visions about quality of life were brought forward—and some attracted the time, energy, and money of many people, and some not.

What is different here is that although many decision making processes in the world are now very complex, it is possible for participants in these kind of intensive Community Visioning Initiatives to become keenly aware of how each and every one of the residents in their community has—by their “investments” of time, energy, and money—funded what has come before... and how each resident is a fundamental and critical part of the funding for the action plans and doable steps which will determine what will come next.

Participants in time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives (up to 18 months long) similar to the kind outlined here (which are preceded by preliminary surveys to 150 key local leaders, and supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers), will have a multitude of opportunities to increase their awareness of

- a) what patterns of investment they would like to move away from
- b) what patterns of investment they would like to affirm or continue to affirm and
- c) how cooperation with other residents in their community will help them do both.

Step 11

Description: A Six Week Interval for the Summary List relating to Step 10 to be Published—and commented on-- and Completion of Summary Reports for Upcoming Presentations in Step 12

Approximate Time Required: 6 weeks

Primary Goal: To allow for public discussion of Summary List from Step 10 (and further discussion of other parts of the Community Visioning Initiative process), and to allow the people chosen to make presentations in Step 12 to complete their summary reports.

Step 12

Description: Summary Presentations and Job Fairs

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goals:

- 1) Steering Committee members-- and key community leaders who were very much involved in the Community Visioning Initiative process—will make presentations summarizing both the Community Visioning process, and the challenges, solutions, and action plans which received the highest priority by the residents who participated in the process

- 2) Job Fairs will provide a forum for organizations and businesses working in solution oriented fields of activity to describe employment opportunities and future prospects, to discover local talent, to hire qualified prospects, and to build knowledge bases and skill sets for the future

Special Commentary: Job Fairs

By now, there will have been sufficient public discourse for those people with understanding about high level shifts in investment portfolios to have learned something about what directions future shifts will be leaning towards. The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community (businesses, organizations, institutions, government, etc.) to demonstrate their upgraded awareness—and their interest in the welfare of the community—by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities... and thus helping with a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which in many ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges.

One possible element of this just transition can be that people who do deliberately focus their investments of time, energy, and money towards solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative being carried out in their community may receive, as encouragement, local currency. *And then such local currency can, in its turn, be redeemed in ways which will be particularly helpful to people transitioning from less solution-oriented employment to more solution-oriented employment.*

Step 13

Description: Evaluating the Process

Approximate Time Required: 4 weeks

Primary Goal: Provide evaluation surveys for as many residents as possible, and encourage residents to answer as many questions in the survey as possible, with as much careful attention to detail as possible

Step 14

Description: An 8 week interval for compiling and summarizing the evaluation surveys—and for completing Final Community Visioning Initiative Summary Reports

Approximate Time Required: 8 weeks

Primary Goal: Complete report summarizing goals, outcome, and residents input/responses to evaluation survey

Step 15

Description: Sharing the Lessons, Carrying the Lessons into the Future

Primary Goal: Special emphasis will be given to making copies of the Final Community Visioning Initiative Summary Report accessible to other communities, and organizations working along similar lines

Special Commentary: Repeating the Community Visioning Initiative process at intervals in the future

This kind of Community Visioning Initiative process may be repeated at intervals into the future until new patterns of responding to the challenges of our times become such a natural part of everyday community life that the transition to an economically stable, environmentally sustainable and peaceful way of life featuring widespread compassion for our fellow human beings seems to be near completion...

or until the transition to “the kind of future a majority of the residents in any particular community prefers” seems to be near completion.

Appendix—Cost of 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives

Many of the supporting documents for the Tipping Point Action Campaign advocate for 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives, in communities around the world, as a way of exponentially accelerating solution-oriented activity at this critical time.

A rough estimate by this writer for a time-intensive (year or more) Community Visioning Initiative (preceded by Preliminary Surveys, and supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers) is \$10 million (10 million in U.S. dollars).

Thus, 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives, in communities around the world, would cost \$10 billion.

How can 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives be funded? Below are some selected observations (source references in the key CPCS document [“Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors”](#) document) which may help readers to see how such funding is possible. These observations will illustrate that wisely directed, the way each of us “votes” with our time, energy, and money can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and to also (at the same time) mitigate many other related challenges.

- 1) \$10 billion is only .005% of the \$207 trillion in personal wealth held by the richest 10 percent.
- 2) \$10 billion is only .57% (a little more than half of 1%) of \$1,750 billion in military expenditures in 2012.
- 3) \$10 billion is 1.8% of (est.) \$557 billion in worldwide advertising spending in 2012.
- 4) \$10 billion is 2.4% of the \$419 billion of worldwide gambling in 2011.
- 5) \$10 billion is 6% of the \$162 billion people in the United States spent on beer, wine, and liquor in 2011.
- 6) If 18% of cable TV subscribers in the United States unsubscribed from cable TV, they could re-direct that money to finance 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives.
- 7) Companies marketing cigarettes in the United States could use that \$10 billion per year to fund the costs of implementing 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives.
- 8) “Many hands make much work light.”—The result can be that there are countless “ways to earn a living” which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.