

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Neighborhoods Housing and Safety 2-05-07
3pm-5pm

Summary Statements

- **Factors of a sense of community in neighborhoods**
 - Support of an ongoing dialog
 - Identification of a central common purpose
 - Level of stability/transience of the residents
 - Sense of safety as experienced by the residents
 - Availability of a neutral gathering space
 - Event-driven gatherings (e.g. clean-up, traditional block parties)
- **Facilitating ownership of neighborhoods by neighbors**
 - Simple facilitation and organization skills
 - Structured interface with city and larger system groups
 - Developing a unified 'voice' regarding important issues
 - Seed money to support initial gathering processes
- **Affordable Housing**
 - Owner/Renter Balance
 - Mixed income levels of residents
 - Housing rehabilitation programs
 - There is a great need for more affordable housing
 - Recognition that some landlords do not keep properties to minimal standards of decency and safety -
- **Supporting Youth**
 - Recognize the impact of poverty on youth's opportunities
 - Recognize the complexity of the challenges youth face
 - Invest in building relationships with youth to offer them a vision for breaking out of the cycle of poverty
 - Youth need a place to belong
 - Middle School years as critical time to invest in youth
 - Mentoring and role modeling opportunities
 - Alternative opportunities for entering social life
- **Neighborhood improvement projects & initiatives**
 - Kirkwood Blvd Beautification
 - LeClaire Neighborhood
 - Voter Registration
 - PUNCH - ecumenical collaboration
 - Youth Build

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Health and Society

2-05-07 8am-10am

Summary Statements

- **Strategies to engage individuals and families in making healthier lifestyle choices.**
 - Create healthy environments through institutional policies that reach large numbers of people (e.g., state tax on tobacco; city ordinance on smoke-free restaurants; school policy on vending machines and school lunches)
 - Recognize and address barriers to healthy choices, such as time and cost (e.g., times that people can participate in activities and learning opportunities).
 - Target efforts according to issues (e.g., tobacco) & population (e.g., youth).
 - Targets identified by focus group
 - Youth and Mental Health
 - Youth and Physical Health
 - Seniors and Access to Services
 - Increase public's health knowledge (e.g., aspects of heart health) and highlight effects of choices (e.g., direct consequences of behaviors)
 - Increase utilization of outreach and extension programs
 - Identify and address the impact of cultural diversity on initiatives to improve community health.
 - Link people to service delivery "homes" in order to promote consistency of preventive care.
- **Accessibility Factors**
 - Transportation - Location of services in a bi-state, multi-city community
 - Consider both functional and recreational opportunities for bike & walking paths
 - Promote a more unified communications plan that includes use of web sites, media coverage, Info Link, etc.
 - Increase public 'health literacy' regarding health insurance, prevention opportunities, and treatment directions.
 - Differentiate between issues we can address directly (e.g., community communications and awareness) and issues that are mediated through state and federal governments (e.g., health insurance issues).
 - Amplify current community strengths and assets (e.g., prevalence of free and sliding scale fees, QCHI initiatives)

- Bridge life span issues - engage citizenry's resources/volunteerism
- **Issues that Require Collaborative Efforts**
 - Assure basic health care and promoting preventative services to diverse populations, including those in poverty.
 - Advocating and guiding the public through the health insurance maze.
 - Expanding the continuum of services for youth with mental health needs (e.g., day treatment).
 - Developing a unified source of information for both the public and for professionals about both available services and needs for volunteer efforts.

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Focus Group Summary: Belonging and Leaderships 2-05-07 11am-1pm

Summary Statements

- **Civic engagement is a developmental process that needs to be supported and mentored.**
 - Marginalization as a learned behavior - people need encouragement, support, invitations, and training to contribute to civic life.
 - Active engagement may begin with being informed and the advance through stages towards ownership and leadership.
 - Communities need mechanisms to connect people to the opportunities for service in which they will find a passion.
 - There are many types of services opportunities, some brief and some sustained, that are valued in a community - including board membership, communications, advisory, implementation, supportive roles to other volunteers, etc.
 - The social dialog on many issues benefits from inclusion of diverse 'voices'.
- **Expanding of the pool of people that are available for and interested in service and civic leadership depends on many factors.**
 - Promote the unique benefits of living in the Quad Cities.
 - Act as ambassadors for own organizations by inviting others to learn about the organization and then mentoring their development (e.g., "grow your own")
 - Develop "alumni networks" and stay connected about 'hometown' events and benefits.
 - Identify strategies for engaging with specific populations (e.g., students, seniors, service recipients, etc.).

- An idea was offered that life's work can be composed of three stages; 1) education and preparation; 2) career; and 3) giving back.
- Find ways to invite, welcome, and engage with innovation.
- **Communicate to employers the benefits of supporting volunteerism among their employees, who gain experience, skills, and networking opportunities.**
- **Schools are important delivery systems for ideas and values associated with civic engagement.**
- **Good Ideas**
 - United Way: Community Investment Panels; Day of Caring
 - Young Professionals Network: Non-profit connections; Emerging professionals program for college students
 - Teens for Tomorrow
 - City government forums
 - QCHI initiatives
 - Student Hunger Drive
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Living Lands Living Waters - extreme clean-ups
 - Progressive Action
 - Study Action Circles
 - MLK Service Dedication Events
 - Celebrations of Diverse Populations
 - Linking Non-Profit Opportunity Fairs with major community events
 - Legislative Luncheons
 - Parents as Teachers program
 - Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA)
 - Clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities
 - Partnering with media to increase publicity, value, and recognition of volunteer opportunities and commitments.
- **Group Summaries of Important Ideas**
 - Form ideas about how to be 'ambassadors' of organizations and their missions by opening doors, expanding types of volunteer opportunities, facilitate the growth of interest and commitment of new people.
 - Develop strategy to identify and utilize existing resources and organizations in order to limit duplication and 'reinventing the wheel'.
 - Encourage employers to promote volunteerism from own employees by educating on the benefits.
 - Grow your own community support and leadership.

- Understand the engagement and belonging are learned behaviors, and thus, that becoming more inclusive of marginalized populations may entail finding ways to educate about civic engagement and its benefits.
- Track, report, recognize, and celebrate volunteer hours - but also consider that doing this at the employer level may promote volunteerism.
- Work towards evolving the culture of the community towards higher value of volunteerism.
- Consider ways to incorporate the ideas about the 40 Developmental Assets into new parent education.

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Education and Learning 1-31-07 3pm-5pm

Summary Statements

o Accessibility

- Accessibility to educational resources differs for several distinct at-risk populations, including: English Language Learners, racial minority students (emphasis stated for African American students - especially boys), Special Education students, students with social emotional disorders, students from single-headed households - dual income households, and effects of poverty.
- Access issues look different at the pre-school, primary schools, secondary schools, and higher education facilitates.
- Strategies to improve access to educational resources should account for the variables of demographic and system level differences.
- Specifically address the gaps that are identified.

○ **Community Commitment to Investing into Children, Youth, and Young Adults**

- Education as an economic engine for the community
- Value of a quality education system in drawing people to live in the QCA
- Community's perception/satisfaction with quality of educational institutions
- Recognize the impact of soft grant money on innovation sustainability
- Identify how community volunteers and organizations can contribute to improving development of children, youth, and young adults.
- Recognize international competition factors

○ **Parent Involvement**

- Expand perception of what it means for schools to involve parents (e.g., include in school decision teams).
- Expand perception of what it means for parents to be involved in supporting their children's education (e.g., conferences & help with homework at home)
- Barriers to involvement include:
 - Times that schools/teachers are available - parents' work may interfere
 - Parents may feel inadequate in their relationships with schools for many reasons.
- Increase parent knowledge and skills related to child development and school readiness
- General concern that parenting philosophy has changed, so that a sense of accountability for children and youth has lessened.

○ **Indicators of Academic Achievement**

- Retention
- Graduation
- Completed higher degrees
- Standardized test scores
- No Child Left Behind standards/indicators are misleading and emphasizes academic progress without accounting for the impact of social emotional development on academic learning.
 - ⇒ School status for NCLB is dependent on performance of sub populations of students
 - ⇒ Impact on building scores of high mobility families - where students may attend multiple schools in a single academic year.

- Become clearer, at a macro level, what do parents and the community expect from schools - develop clarity of measures that demonstrate meeting those expectations - which could foster a greater sense of satisfaction.
- **Impact of Social Emotional Disorders on Academic Achievement**
 - A general sense that social emotional disorders are not adequately addressed in schools and in the community.
 - Examples given of current resources, such as the Vera French Community Mental Health Center School-Based Therapy program and consultants available on in Illinois to meet with teachers about mental health issues.
 - Sense of increasing needs related to social emotional development of students - and that social emotional development has a direct impact on academic achievement.
- **Children, Youth, Young Adult Roles in the School and Community**
 - Students need to belong, to have a valued role in the school and community.
 - Promote student responsibility for own learning (e.g., student led conferences)
 - Consider importance of transition times for students (e.g., middle school to high school)
- **Innovative Approaches**
 - Kalamazoo Promise - Program to cover cost of college education
 - Lighted School House - expanded use of school as a community center
 - Adopt-a-School Program
 - Current restructuring efforts (e.g., High Schools that Work, Smaller Learning Communities)
 - State level 'career strands'
 - Parent Web-Portal to promote involvement, connection, and communication
 - Increase numbers of community partnerships
 - Library Tutor supports
 - Job/Career Fairs at schools to put school success in context of value

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Arts, Culture, and Recreation
31-07 8am-10am

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Summary Statements

- **The culture of board membership is shaped by several factors, including:**
 - Specificity of the Role (Management, Fund Raising, Innovation)
 - The required commitment serves as barrier to younger/busier people
 - Attitudes towards succession planning that involves mentoring new members who can lead and take ownership of an organization's mission
- **The current status of leadership in these fields is shaped by several factors, including:**
 - Attractiveness of the Quad City area
 - "Some of the current leadership may have been a little ahead of what the public was ready for."
 - Fragmentation and parochialism of organizational missions as they relate to community enrichment factors
 - Transitional nature of some organizations
- **A regionally orientated "cultural plan" involves recognition of and addressing the dynamics that relate to:**
 - Generating an overall interest in arts, culture, and recreation
 - Identifying and promoting the distinct benefits associated with arts, culture, and recreation involvement
 - Taking advantage of economies of scale
 - Facilitating non-duplication (however, this is just one function)
 - Developing a unified source of information for tourism consumers
 - Developing a unified source of information for tourism planners & leaders
 - Facilitating a common approach to engaging our community's educational systems
 - Addressing the common tension between offering programs that increase attendance and programs that expand thinking or offer unique perspectives
- **Several factors impact consumer behavior and engagement with the arts, culture, and recreational offerings**
 - Competition for time and resources

- Attitudes, stigma associated with the value of arts, culture, recreation
 - Cost factor, especially for low income people and families
 - A perceived distinction between entertainment and cultural enrichment
 - Children and youth have to focus their development efforts early on in order to be competitive in an activity
 - Access issues such as transportation, hours of operation, parking
- **Focus Group Member Vision/Dream for the Future**
- Event promotion through a "hot tix" idea to promote and increase exposure to the diversity of events already occurring
 - Thoroughly consider how changing demography should impact program and event offering (e.g., time, location, etc.)
 - Re-examine how missions of each organization contribute to an overall sense of increasing the value of arts, culture, and recreation in the Quad Cities.
 - Initiate new or strengthen current coordinating efforts, such as the CVB and current arts collaboratives, to support functions such as HR, financials, and other aspects of organizational functioning.
 - Strategize and collaborate on reaching and engaging school-aged children, especially middle and high school students.
 - Convene to more clearly articulate the value and benefits associated with arts, culture, and recreational activities in community life.

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Economic Development 1-12-07 8am-10am

I. Summary Statements

- A. Recognize a balance between the advantages of promoting a unified QCA identity and the interests that distinct local communities have in advancing individual agendas and identity.
- B. Develop a strong and clearly focused 'outreach' component of marketing strategy that communicates the QCA's strengths that are beyond the typical 'selection criteria' used to locate communities for new businesses.
- C. Develop an active matching process to link job opportunities with skilled workers, especially among young adults (e.g., mentoring mechanism & targeting boomerang of 30 year olds who want to raise families).
- D. Create pride and excitement in specified employment sectors.
- E. Frame the task of developing a strong work force as a 20-year commitment to raising our own children. This commitment, and the results, may be a strong draw for young families to locate in the QCA.
- F. Identify a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate progress in these areas.

II. Notations from Focus Group Discussions

- A. Recognize a balance between the advantages of promoting a unified QCA identity and the interests that distinct local communities have in advancing individual agendas and identity.
 - a. Regionally oriented
 - b. Leverage two-state region
 - c. Image of QC: Unified vs specified (drill down)

- d. Competing externally requires unified identity and competitiveness on site selection criteria
 - e. Also a political processing
 - f. Statewide agenda to address early development
 - g. State perspective (Urban- investment for growth/Rural - economic viability of smaller areas)
 - h. Local identity vs. regional
 - i. Fragmented dollars
 - j. Components of "Product" the development groups are to market
 - k. Half dozen suburbs with no core (e.g. river front, urban core, ?"supercity"?)
 - l. Since not combining...work as one unified plan
 - m. Functions identified and assigned
 - n. Private sector developers - big developers missing
- B. Develop a strong and clearly focused 'outreach' component of marketing strategy that communicates the QCA's strengths that are beyond the typical 'selection criteria' used to locate communities for new businesses.
- a. Quality of location factors - site selector (computerized)
 - b. Goal of identifying site selection factors
 - c. Profile of criteria that draws economic development
 - d. Get a handle on what makes area competitive
 - e. Marketing (role of) efforts focus on strengths
 - f. Selection criteria vs. outreach strategy
 - g. Transportation system
 - h. Economic dollars come from results
 - i. Show benefits - legitimize
 - j. Demonstrate strengths and growth of QC area
 - k. Context for success - Components of investing/adding value to QC
- C. Develop an active matching process to link job opportunities with skilled workers, especially among young adults (e.g., mentoring mechanism & targeting boomerang of 30 year olds who want to raise families).
- a. Focus areas - educational focus: manufacturing, food, financial, logistics, Arsenal (volume of business)
 - b. Help explore options out there
 - c. Some are looking and can't find mechanism
 - d. Target population to retain (not 22 to 28/30)

- e. Matching jobs available and skill set
 - f. Mentoring function
 - g. Career pathways
- D. Create pride and excitement in specified employment sectors.
- a. Role of growing economy
 - b. Draw of having the jobs
 - c. What are the meaningful job opportunities, housing, etc
 - d. Focus on creating an exciting employment market so people with drive and skills stay or come back
 - e. Target what we can actually obtain (I.T. vs. logistics)
 - f. What is first - workforce or job (both simultaneous) we know what attracts both
 - g. Types of employment opportunities
 - h. Drive for vocation? How to create?
 - i. What can we create that they can do?
 - j. Wanted: Diverse, welcoming to young persons involvement in civic, leader, hands on
 - k. Career pathways
- E. Frame the task of developing a strong work force as a 20-year commitment to raising our own children. This commitment, and the results, may be a strong draw for young families to locate in the QCA.
- a. Statistics of students graduating with skill sets
 - b. Educational attainment
 - c. Beyond childcare and K12, include after childcare, 0-5 (early development impact on parents as workers), continuum of development starts with 0-5 year olds, 20 year commitment
 - d. Enhanced pre-school/daycare
 - e. Ready for interactive component of educational experience
 - f. Involvement of parents
 - g. 90% two income family
 - h. Number of grads - R/T grads leaving
 - i. Childcare and supported development: develop young people and attract young families
 - j. Accelerated need to ready for successful school experience
 - k. Grandparents raising and implications(values and technology)

1. Work within the system - ability
- F. Identify a set of indicators that can be used to demonstrate progress in these areas.
- a. Number of grads - R/T grads leaving
 - b. Grandparents raising and implications (values and technology)
 - c. Divorce and marriage rates
 - d. Educational attainment data
 - e. Developmental assets
 - f. Americas promise
 - g. Central location for all education systems (data pool) who educates and what sectors matching drive and opportunity
 - h. Broad career selection - test sectors
 - i. Supporting diversity
 - j. Access to technology (digital divide)
 - k. Measure levels of diversity: economic, racial, etc.

Quad Cities Community Vitality Scan - Focus Group Summaries

Focus Group Summary: Environment and Resources 1-29-07 3pm-5pm

Summary Statements

- o **Environmental Ethic**
 - Competes with capitalist values
 - Role of Collective Voice (e.g., influence building developers through consumer demands)
 - Frame green practices as amenities for individuals
 - Facilitate connections between people and the environment (e.g., introduce children and youth to the environment through field trips)
 - Cost Factors - recognize cost as an issue through incentives

- Community recognition of businesses that consider environment in decisions
 - Compare Household to Industrial contribution to pollution
 - Promote awareness of the benefits and consequences to quality of life related to environmental behaviors
 - Parents have to demand that environmentalism is part of the school experience
- **Environmental Behavior**
 - Define types of behaviors for household, businesses, cities, etc.
 - Recycling - city provided service vs. burden on individuals
 - Handling toxic materials/old electronics disposal
 - Compare to Industrial Pollution
 - Simple household actions - compact fluorescent light bulbs, insulation, etc
- **Good Ideas/Current Practices**
 - Living Lands Living Waters (clean-up, tree planting, education, involve leaders of corps)
 - River Action (Retain the Rain, access to resources to go "green", '6 simple things to save the Mississippi, permeable parking lots, Nyhant Marsh education)
 - Sierra Club (vol. opps, broad range of issues, Bald Eagle Days, large scale outreach)
 - Teaching kits to support volunteers in educating children and youth
 - Rain Gardens/Rain Barrels/Permeable parking lots/Green roofs and buildings
 - Event Based Activities - such as neighborhood clean-ups
 - Dedicated bicycle lanes
 - Kirkwood Blvd: Re-beautification
 - Use vacant lots as instructional and productive opportunities for residents
 - Utilizing schools as environmental outreach centers
 - Agricultural Environmental Practice Tiers - reward advancement through more environmentally sound practices
 - Create a QC Green Website; database of contacts within the environmental movement; promote volunteerism and advocacy
 - Emulate Chicago's Green Community Initiative
 - Create incentives for families to be "green"
 - Create "smart" building codes require builders to make environmentally sound decisions

○ **Dimensions of Fragmentation**

- Lateral collaboration is better than vertical collaboration
- Information related to opportunities to volunteer and communication among organizations
- Differences between urban and rural settings and needs
- Done the best job about educating on recycling and litter, need to do a better job of educating about the whole environment
- Community collaborative can help by creating pilot projects and through cost-sharing (financially subsidizing projects)

○ **Indicators**

- Toxic Release Inventory
- Air quality