The Community Visioning Process

Description

This tool is a process that enables citizens to realize their vision for the future of the site as it relates to all aspects of community life. This process encourages the full participation of all community members in goal development, action planning, and implementation. By considering a community's vision of future land uses for Superfund sites, EPA can tailor cleanup options to fit community goals.

Required Activity?

No.

Making it Work

When to Use

The visioning process should be implemented before decisions are made. A visioning process can last one day, several days, or months depending on the complexity of issues facing the community. Visioning is best used when addressing large areas of land, such as federal facilities, watersheds, and mining sites. It is vital to help communities think of long-term strategies for future land use. EPA should begin the process in the earliest stages, most likely as a set of questions during the ***Community Interviews.***

See Community Interviews, Tab 5

How to Use

Community involvement is the key to a successful visioning project. Through early involvement of those who must implement the vision, a CIC can motivate citizens to work actively towards the future they desire, while demonstrating EPA's willingness to work with the community. The overall goal of the visioning process is to empower communities and provide a method of comprehensive goal-setting. To reach this goal, the Office of Sustainable Ecosystems and Communities (OSEC) has developed a series of publications to assist communities in the community visioning process. The four steps of the visioning process, as defined by OSEC, are:

- Step 1: Community Brainstorming and Suggestions;
- Step 2: Establishing Goals, Developing a Vision;
- Step 3: Bringing Commitment to the Vision; and
- Step 4: Implementing the Vision.

Tips

- Select an independent facilitator to help the community implement the visioning process. Your ***Superfund Regional Public Liaison*** can help identify options for selecting a facilitator.
- Before kickoff, invite media representatives, key community leaders, and the public to a 30- to 45-minute presentation on the cleanup.
- For project kickoff, conduct a public meeting to introduce the visioning initiative.
- During the project, conduct surveys and focus groups to gather feedback from community members to refine the process.

See Superfund Regional Public Liaison, Tab 40

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See Community Involvement Impact Analysis, Tab 6

See Media, Tab 25

- Consider volunteering the site to be part of the ***Community Involvement Impact Analysis*** project to obtain unbiased data and feedback from the community.
- Provide for neighborhood or town meetings at which planners can inform the public about the project and receive feedback.
- Use accurate and succinct press releases to maintain contact with the ***Media***. Press releases should be delivered to pre-developed contacts at each news organization, and followed up with a phone call to answer questions and lobby for coverage.
- Use flyers to advertise upcoming events.

Related Tools/Resources in the Toolkit

- Community Interviews, Tab 5
- Facilitation/Conflict Resolution, Tab 14

Outside Sources of Information

- *Pathways: Building a Local Initiative for Compatible Economic Development*. A community workbook that details the tasks needed to complete a broadly-based, collaborative local plan for compatible economic development. Can be ordered from the Center for Compatible Economic Development, 7 East Market Street, Suite 210, Leesburg, VA 20176 (703) 779-1728
- *Community-Based Environmental Protection: A Resource Book for Protecting Ecosystems and Communities*. U.S. EPA, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation. EPA 230-B-96-003 (available on OSEC home page in PDF format)
- For more information on the community visioning process, the following papers are available from OSEC in Washington:
  - *The Visioning Process as a Tool for CBEP: An Annotated Bibliography of Visioning Resources,* OSEC Community Visioning Paper #3
  - *The Visioning Process as a Tool for CBEP: Visioning Resources on the World Wide Web,* OSEC Community Visioning Paper #4
- ***Internet*** resources for community visioning process information and community-based environmental protection:
  - The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook Web site: *www.cpn.org/tools/manuals/Community/pdfs/VSPHandbook.pdf*