

**Insights From  
Civic Strategies, Inc.**

## **How Visioning Can Benefit Your Community**

Civic Strategies' Community Visioning Initiatives are citizen-led planning projects that establish long-term goals for communities and show how to achieve them. They help unite communities, build leadership and reveal the things that make places distinctive and important.

What does your community get for its investment in a Civic Strategies Community Visioning Initiative? You get community consensus: a visionary and detailed set of citizen-designed projects that will set your community apart. You also get a database of your community's most committed stakeholders, along with new ways of staying in touch with the stakeholders – and drawing on their support – as you move to implementation.

Specifically, Civic Strategies' Community Visioning Initiatives include:

1. A community vision statement, written by the citizens, that will establish a clear direction for the community.
2. A set of strategic objectives: major community goals that the citizens would like to see achieved over the next 20 to 30 years. Think of this as your community's long-range "to-do" list.
3. Action steps for each strategic objective, including specific projects – again, drafted by the citizens.
4. A sophisticated communications infrastructure, including a web site, e-mail newsletter, news media contacts, PowerPoint presentations and database of citizens who are interested in the visioning initiative – which can be used to involve residents in future civic projects.



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How is Civic Strategies' visioning process different from others?

- We have a deep understanding of communities. Civic Strategies has some of the nation's best-known leadership analysts, large-group facilitators, writers and community organization experts. When we work for your community, you get decades of experience and a national perspective on local issues.
- We help you organize the fund-raising effort. Many communities want to undertake a visioning process but fear they can't raise the money needed. Don't worry. We can help you put together a short-term fund-raising campaign, including forms for identifying prospects and talking points for potential donors.
- It's comprehensive. Citizens feel passionately about a lot of things, from growth issues to economic development, green space to public school improvements. We invite dialogue on any important issue. Result: Our visioning process connects with citizen concerns.
- We begin with the citizens. The first phase of a Civic Strategies visioning process is a series of citizen vision meetings . . . with an open agenda. The citizens come to neighborhood meetings and talk about the kind of community they'd like to see in 20 or 30 years. By starting this way, we generate energy, dispel suspicions about the process and create an authentic citizen vision for the community.
- We keep the citizens involved throughout the process. If you want to build a vision that's accepted by the community, you have to put the citizens in charge. And we do just that, from the beginning to end.
- We communicate with the community. We explore every avenue for keeping the community informed and enthusiastic about visioning. That includes a sophisticated, highly interactive web site, a monthly e-mail newsletter that keeps citizens updated, local media relations, PowerPoint presentations for volunteers, and much more. All of these assets are turned over to our community partners, to use in civic projects for years to come.
- We've taught the course on visioning. We've managed numerous successful community visioning and strategic planning projects over the years, from Augusta, GA to Springboro, Ohio. And not just managed them – we've written widely about citizen-led planning and taught others to do this work. So when you hire Civic Strategies, you're not hiring students of community visioning. You're hiring their teachers.

