



Crossroads Resource Center

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Tools for Community Self-determination

Notes from:

Minneapolis Sustainability Roundtable

Clarifying Vision and Indicators meeting
May 12, 2004

Two small groups were convened at this meeting to review the draft long-term vision for the City of Minneapolis, and accompanying sustainability indicators. Notes from the two small groups follow.

Small group A:
Cindy Lukas, facilitator
Moira Heffron, recorder

Some of these suggestions by people in our group are contradictory. Some are the beginning of a new stage of thinking.

People generally were excited and engaged.

Reflections on the vision statement, its strengths and other thoughts:

- This vision is comprehensive, interrelated, and integrated. It shows an effort to be inclusive.
- Appreciate the importance of including social justice, arts and culture.
- Some think a statement needs to be made about the media, education and providing timely information to communities within the larger community. Perhaps this is part of the vision statement, and perhaps an indicator. To what extent do media in various communities communicate progress? How are changes communicated closer to home? Neighborhood coverage varies at present.
- There was concern about how the environment is addressed: good job in Vision section, but less so in indicators (water quality will be a problem, for instance). We should anticipate the obstacles that will arise from vested interests when collecting and reporting on some indicators like water quality—examine the linkage between environment & development. For example, consider the impact of stadium-building and parking on the environment.
- Addressing education is good—more attention is needed than simply measuring the graduation rate. Additional statement and/or indicators about child welfare wanted, such as child care, after school programs, etc...The integration of this vision into the school curriculum will *itself* be an indicator.

- The vision statement is generally ambitious—it is good to conceive of Minneapolis as leading in these areas.

Concerns about the vision statement & other related reflections

- Some found it confusing to connect the vision statements to the indicators (perhaps a reflection of learning style)—wanted more of a one-to-one connection
- Concern about idealistic benchmarks. Will you get buy-in from some sectors if our indicators are hyper-optimistic—is there not a need to provide short-range goals, clarify what the ideal is, and what progress toward it will look like? Need baselines as well. Want policy-makers to move in the direction of the vision.
- Big issue is monitoring.
- How “sell” the vision? Review language to make it as inclusive as possible. For example, phrasing about eliminating wealth disparity may be a politically divisive statement. Reconsider that one and look for others of that sort.
- The Council will have to reflect on the actions that will be coupled with the goal (if no cars, then what about parking...).
- Document could be more concise without losing the story-telling. How long should a vision be? Identify core values without losing the concrete imagery. Should the vision document show the *process* by which goals and alternative actions will be developed?

Comments on Indicators

- Want to see one good indicator for each environmental area—air, water and land (including soil health, presently not monitored sufficiently beyond the absence of lead)...possibly noise.
- Concern for more health and health disparity measures, such as infant mortality, birth weights, etc. Consider using linked indicators, but also indicators that might be used in other communities and compared to them.
- Indicators need to be clearly related to the area of concern—have subcategories of specificity...for example, we don't have anything tracking the waste stream.
- Consider what might be leverage indicators—things from which we can infer other things, rather than having a multiplicity of indicators.
- Address what kinds of new indicators or data collection would need to be done. Incorporate data collection into education by planning partnerships with educational institutions (high schools, colleges) to gather data, assist in research. Overall capability to gather information and communicate it has accelerated.
- Examine more how to get clear on leverage points within the system or process rather than only indicators themselves.

Small group B:

Linda Alton, facilitator

Phil Muessig, recorder

Very interesting group with a diverse mix of not-the-usual suspects. Fantastic handouts! Overall I saw support for the 15 indicators but many suggestions of 'why not' ...one specific indicator or another.

Vision:

- We're so far away from them now, yet ...they are really common sense.
- Like the personalization statements: "my children will be able to..."
- Much discussion on this: would like less focus on "problem people" (people of color, poor people), but tracking disparities (health, wealth, crime) makes sense
- So hard to think in terms of "wholes".
- Comprehensive.
- Much discussion: not sure Native Americans and poor people will see themselves or their lives in these.

Indicators:

- Tree canopy good, but is the canopy strong ecologically? What about song birds, animals?
- Measure diversity/extent of block clubs.
- Measure investment/infrastructure spending.
- Perhaps we should be more interested in wealth disparities within individual neighborhoods vs. across entire city.
- Much discussion: can we also track wealth disparities that are not financial wealth? Look at personal/community assets?
- Much discussion: measure individual/family/neighborhood/communities-of-interest stability, values, support networks, belonging, goals, identity.
- Do we really want to suggest that the current "white" level of attainment is the level other communities should aspire to reach in 50 years?
- Some (e.g., incarceration) read like 10-20 year indicators.
- Some "common good" measure would be nice.
- Can we measure livability?
- Include "affluenza" in health disparities list!
- Organize the 15 into the "3E's" diagram to show which are ecology-focused, economy-focused, and equity-focused, to summarize the list and to drive home their linked nature. Then maybe could also list the more program-level indicators that the city staff are working on (this would show these are less linked, since they'd probably show no overlaps in the circles).