



Crossroads Resource Center

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Tools for Community Self-determination

Responses from:

Minneapolis Sustainability Roundtable

Clarifying Vision and Indicators meeting
May 12, 2004

These are all the comments made by participants in response to a draft vision and a draft set of sustainability indicators for the city of Minneapolis

1. 50-year Vision Feedback form—Likes, Dislikes, New Suggestions

14 response forms received from individuals

What do you like best about the draft 50-year vision for Minneapolis?

This is a comprehensive vision (10)

- I love the comprehensiveness of this vision—I'd love to see it in symbols/images and then use it at the neighborhood level.
- Really comprehensive, inclusive and integrative.
- I like that environmental factors are considered on equal footing with economic/equity factors.
- It reflects the emphasis on the three "E's" well. Each is well integrated throughout the vision. It is well developed in the environmental area.
- Comprehensive—integrates ecology, economy, and social justice. Includes arts, government transparency.
- The three "E's"—ecological component, equity, economical.
- Comprehensive.
- I like that it is an option to think about and to present. I like that it includes a number of different variables.

This is a compelling vision for Minneapolis (4)

- The text is really compelling!
- Glimpses of hope.
- Some statements grab you.
- Several great poetic indicators.

This is an integrated vision (4)

- Liked the linked nature of the vision.

This is inspiring (3)

- Makes one dream.
- Inspiring.
- Uplifting.

This is an inclusive vision (2)

- That it is comprehensive and inclusive of all Minneapolis residents.
- Inclusivity shows.

This is a long-term vision (2)

- 50 years is a good reach.
- It's comprehensive! And long-term.

This is an ambitious vision (1)

- That it is ambitious—Minneapolis can and should be a/the leader of the cities in the US and world.

This provides a beginning point (1)

- What I like about the 50-year vision is it provides a place to begin.

What do you dislike about the draft vision? What gaps or shortcomings do you find?

Too idealistic (8)

- Too idealistic?
- Some of the "how will we know when we get there" statements may be too absolute, e.g., "zero pollution."
- The utopian nature of many statements ("zero", "no", etc.) combined with the 50-year horizon will make Council member buy-in difficult.
- I love that this vision statement encourages us to hope, dream, think BIG. However, as a practical optimist, there are some aspects I am not sure are completely attainable, given cultural/political realities. I also have a concern, particularly in the wealth creation section, that goals (such as "eliminating" wealth disparities) may not be politically sellable or may not speak to those of different political persuasions.
- I think there is a lot of language that is optimistic but not realistic.
- The evaluation of where do you want to be seems a bit far out.
- I think this should be framed as "desirable" instead of "ideal" or people will not buy it.
- Will some of the statements be "realistic" enough to be included in a vision statement (e. g., no cars downtown, etc.)

How is this connected to the indicators? (4)

- What is the connection between the vision statement and the indicators?
- How is this connected to three "E's"?
- How is this connected to indicators?
- Vision statement connection to indicators doesn't seem to be clear—does this mean the creation of new data?

Too long (3)

- A bit too long.
- It is quite long.
- It is too long.

What about the shorter-term work? (3)

- Should there be milestones moving toward the 50-year vision?
- Some of these visions may be ten-year visions?!!
- Perhaps the time horizon of 50 years is too far out for language that is tangible.

Specific places where presentation is not clear (3)

- What is the difference between #1, #2, and #3? Maybe collapse these into one or two.
- Write out a more descriptive scenario.
- Need summary up front and/or a "scenario."

How do we frame an implementation plan? (2)

- How do we implement changes, more toward changes, not just measures—an implementation plan.
- More on process, change strategies.

Place more emphasis on education (2)

- Does not adequately highlight importance of education mentioned in presentation.
- Educational progress should not be limited to graduation rates. Needs to be some other indicators of progress. Some way to measure student engagement.

Focus more on transportation changes (1)

- Focus on transforming transportation (more prominent in presentation than in text)

Add a statement of values (1)

- I understand how it was constructed and I see an opportunity to take it to another level of analysis. Articulating the values that are implicit in each of the statements as well as principles that guide our shared conduct that impacts the 3 "E's."

Focus more on youth and next generations (1)

- Youth focus on all factors--literacy, truancy, health

Add more emphasis on economic issues (1)

- Thin on economics, though good text in vision number 4

Getting there will be a challenge (1)

- We have a long way to go to get to this vision.

Please offer any further comments below:

(For example):

What new elements would you suggest be added to this draft vision, and why?

What elements you think should be altered, and why?

What elements you think should be deleted, and why?

- My suggestion is that you attempt to cluster them into three to five areas that may then have subpoints.
- Set achievable 5-10 year objectives as well as a long-term vision.
- Need to set reasonable goals/distinguish utopian ideal visions from shorter term goals.
- A bit more about the status of children.
- Public health, literacy, quality child care, in the vision.
- The process as fractal -- could be done by subunits, even families within the city.
- Run this past some thoughtful business types to ascertain level of support/resistance.
- Bring in more of a human ecology/cultural ecology perspective—how the cultures are an integral part of the ecology.
- Reminds me of Sam Myers' "trend analysis" for the racism project—he, too, works on indicators.
- Define semi-permeable.
- This is a windy place! Is that a good option to capture in the narrative?
- Role of media needs to be recognized as important cohesive-building resource. Articles in press, including community papers, as examples of indicators.
- The city as an ecological system.
- Is hydrogen fuel really a good option? Just a question.
- How long will the final vision document be?

2. Indicators Feedback form—Likes, Dislikes, New Suggestions

What do you like best about the draft list of indicators?

That it is a short list (4)

- Small in number
- 15 indicators is about right
- That this list is only 15 indicators
- That it is a relatively short list. I think we can focus on outcome indicators that truly measure progress and success.

This is a new way of thinking (4)

- This is way beyond what we measure now.
- A glimpse of how a city could plan.
- A potentially effective tool.
- This addresses quality of life, not just an analysis of the network of materialism.

Like the environmental indicators (4)

- #1 and #2 look good.
- I very much like the permeable soil and leaf canopy indicators! For their links to water quality, air quality & transportation.
- The environmental ones (#1,2,3, parts of 6, and 11).

Like the use of linked and "leverage" indicators (2)

- I like that the first two ecology indicators are "leverage indicators" showing progress not just on soil and leaf canopy, but also gains in soil quality, water quality, etc.
- Like the attempt to create linkages between the emphasis areas. For the most part it appears these can all be measured.

Good beginning (1)

- This is a good place to start

Measurable (1)

- Measurable and clear

What do you dislike about the draft list of indicators? (gaps or shortcomings)?

How do these connect to the Vision statement? (4)

- How do these look to the 3 "E's" and to vision statements?
- Didn't clearly and directly connect to vision statements -- would be stronger if they did.
- Indicators should be connected to vision.
- Connection to vision.

Need to consider all audiences (2)

- How do citizens get involved? Who is the audience - just city planners, policy makers?
- Need indicators for general public, professionals in fields that need to use the data.

We need to define additional "leverage" indicators? (1)

- I like that the first two ecology indicators are "leverage indicators" showing progress not just on soil and leaf canopy, but also gains in soil quality, water quality, etc. I don't feel the same about the indicators concerning educational attainment, crime/safety, health. This is hard to express in writing in a brief period of time, so I will e-mail/talk to you about it.

Nest these indicators with others: neighborhood, region, state, national, global levels (1)

- Nest the lower level, pragmatic indicators into the 15 for those who need to see "air quality", etc.

Focus on centrality of change in transportation (1)

- Can the centrality of transportation in vision statement be made more prominent in indicators?

Are these good indicators? (1)

- Indicator 5: Arrest/incarceration rates are not good indicators.

These represent primarily a White set of concerns (1)

- Far too white/Caucasian so far?

This is all too abstract/not specific enough (2)

- Tend to be abstract—need to be complementary supplemental.
- The indicators lack the specificity needed to inform public policy, program design. We need more, not less, indicators.

Additional issues should be addressed (1)

- There need to be specific indicators for air, water, soil.

We need to measure distribution across the city (1)

- No measures of city-wide balance.

Other comments (2)

- All of these indicators exist--are you creating new ones or new ways of collecting?
- Flush out some indicators.

What new indicators would you suggest we add to or remove from this list?

(Use of the back of this sheet or additional pages if needed).

- Air
- Water
- Change in water volume through storm sewers.
- Water runoff volume retained.
- Soil health
- Noise reduction
- I would develop one or two that focus on the status of children exclusively.
- An indicator related to infant health—birth weight? Immunization?
- Available, quality child care
- Third grade reading scores for all schools in Minneapolis
- Number of children in child protection system
- Birth weights of kids born in city.
- Expand education (grad rates) to include non-public schools.
- Add number of merit scholars/ACT scores.
- Percent of residents who have and use health coverage.
- 15. Percent of school children (and their parents) actively engaged in creative arts and cultural activities.
- No arts-related measures.
- Add to health indicators: low birth weights, immunization rates.
- How to show reduced racism?
- #14: more diversity in block clubs.
- Why not measure crime rates in general?

Other comments:

- It would be good to end up with a one-page version of both vision & indicators (as well as longer version) since the short version will get displayed more.
- Use dashboards for different areas as a way to summarize multiple indicators.
- Does the list have to be short?
- How many indicators will ultimately be developed?
- Maybe do levels of indicators -- one key, multiple others for actual managing/working within areas.
- What do you start with—indicators or plans? (both built upon vision).
- How to link "plans" to "indicators" (a feedback loop).
- Are the questions this poses (the process) more powerful than the answers, at least until various subcultures have had time to work through this?
- State more human values—less technocratic.
- I would consider de-emphasizing those which are readily available from others, for example incarceration rates for minorities and concentrate on the more difficult ones (e.g., water quality or asthma) which could be worked on by the group of "shepherds."
- Need to look at picking indicators.