

RURAL PLANNING & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT: ISSUES & APPROACHES

Module # 1

Vision of Agriculture and the Rural Community

The “*Rural Planning and Nutrient Management: Issues and Approaches*” workshops will help to provide planners, municipal councilors, farmers and others with an understanding of the key planning considerations in planning for agriculture and large livestock operations. For further information please contact one of the sponsoring organizations:

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Module Objectives

The text, exercise and other resource material have been designed to enable the participant to:

- Understand what a vision statement is and why it is important
- Understand how a vision statement relates to the activities and decisions of the municipality
- Be able to participate in a visioning process and create a vision

Your Learning Objectives

Adult learners are goal oriented. What are your objectives for this workshop? Please jot these down in the space below and review them at the conclusion of the workshop and let us know if your objectives were met.



Introduction

"A vision is little more than an empty dream until it is widely shared and accepted. Only then does it acquire the force necessary to change an organization and move it in the intended direction."

Burt Nanus, Visionary Leadership

This module provides an introduction to vision statements. These are appropriate for individuals, organizations and communities. The importance of visioning is explained in reference to the future of agriculture and the rural community.

Participants are encouraged to write their own vision statement and relate it to the decisions and planning they are involved in within their communities. The material is presented with a visioning exercise that will be referred to in later modules.

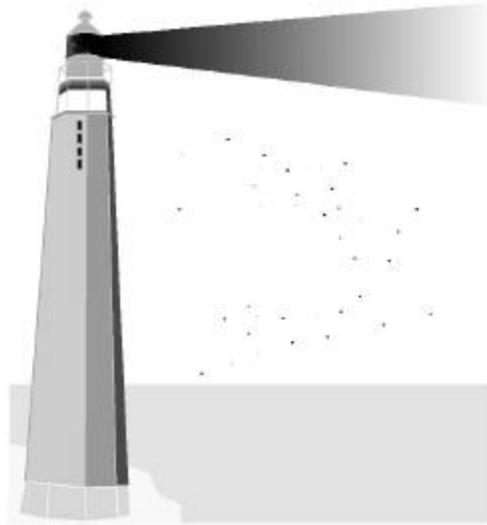
Visioning is a useful tool in taking a proactive approach to community decision making and planning. It is one of the first stages that an organization or group can take to bring themselves together and determine the direction they are collectively headed in.

Introductory Exercise

In approximately 20 words state what your vision is of the role of agriculture in the rural community.

You will be asked at the end of the session to review your vision statement and reflect on how your vision may have changed after the session.

What is a Vision Statement?



The "vision" is the big picture of what an individual or group desires for the future. The vision becomes a focal point for planning and a standard against which actions and management options can be evaluated.

Goals and objectives evolve from the vision statement. Goals are the specific stages, which must be reached in order to achieve the desired vision. Objectives are the measures or targets that indicate that the goals are being achieved. This implies that monitoring of the progress toward the vision is ongoing. If it is found that the progress is not in line with the vision, the goals and objectives can be changed to reflect those findings. As the group evolves, the knowledge and experience of the group can be reflected in revised goals and objectives.

Visioning is particularly relevant in land use planning because the results of many planning decisions can be seen on the landscape in a tangible way. For example: If the vision of a community is to have a strong agricultural economy, the rural landscape may be a diversity of well maintained farms serviced by outlets located in hamlets located throughout the community.

Why is a Vision Statement Important?

1. The Community must Control its Destiny

The community's best interests are not served by dependency on others. Only the residents can develop the community in ways that provide the quality of life as defined by the community. A vision plots the direction and allocates resources for a vital and vibrant community.

2. Change is Inevitable

Many changes that are occurring on a local scale have an impact on local communities. The way that communities have functioned and responded to change in the past is not likely to be adequate for current changes. Vision addresses new ways of managing community and setting new directions.



3. Focus Energy

Visions define new futures and set the direction for the community's energy to address change and move toward the new desired future.

4. Team Work is Essential

An effective vision statement and the process of reaching a vision helps to provide a foundation for effective team work. The community must work together in order to co-ordinate the efficient allocation of scarce resources.

5. Opportunity and Threat Management

A vision sets the guidelines and framework for decision-makers. This improves their ability to respond to opportunities, which are compatible with the community vision or manage the threats.

6. Strategic Alliances and Partnerships

A vision provides direction and purpose. This will build confidence with potential partners in the community's ability to direct and manage change. Strategic alliances and partnerships can result with the outcome of mobilizing more resources.

7. Leadership Transfer with Continuity

Communities will undergo leadership changes so the need for a vision becomes more apparent with the benefit of continuing in the same direction through the transition.

8. Know What Success Looks Like

A vision enables people to see what success looks like and target to work toward and the opportunity to create or invent it. It also helps to separate the desirable actions and outcomes from the undesirable.

Discussion Question:

What are some of the characteristics of a good vision statement?



What makes an Effective Vision Statement?

An effective vision statement must be clear, understandable and powerful to arouse and sustain action. An effective vision statement directs the community actions in ways that always reflect the community's tradition, values and other critical aspects of the community.

Some elements of an effective vision statement follow:

- i. **Compelling and Satisfying** -A vision is not a mere generalization or theory but provides a clear direction. It can bring about confidence that the action an individual or group is making is meaningful and part of a shared direction with other members of the community.
- ii. **Challenging** -The vision must challenge the community to think beyond the current situation and define favourable outcomes for the future. Although the process is very creative it defines and makes explicit what may have been unsaid. If a vision makes sense in terms of real needs and wants it will help to maintain the challenge.

- iii. **Beacons** -During times of disorienting change, visions offer a beacon of light to guide decisions and behaviour.
- iv. **Embody the Past and Future** -The involvement of the community members helps to honour past decisions and actions even though the vision may represent a change from the past.
- v. **Meaningful** -Visions embody values, philosophies and core values. Through a diversity of symbols, actions and words, the vision conveys the purpose and significance of what is desired in the future. In order to gain acceptance and mobilize people to action the vision must address the concern of knowing "why" rather than "how".
- vi. **Stress Potential** -To motivate and improve pride in the community, the vision must portray the positive potential of the community, its purpose and reason for being.
- vii. **Short** -A vision statement should be not much more than three pages and preferably shorter.

Optional Exercise:

- ◆ Several examples of vision statements from municipalities across Ontario have been attached
- ◆ In small groups review one of the vision statements
- ◆ Critique the vision statement based on “Seven Elements of Effective Vision Statements” (above)
- ◆ Discuss your assigned vision statement with the larger group.

1. Regional Municipality of Sudbury

“The Regional Municipality of Sudbury will be a strong, self-reliant northern community which promotes balanced, sustainable growth and development, while enhancing the quality of life for everyone.”

2. City of Kanata

“Kanata, a leading Canadian centre of high technology committed to protecting our natural environment, will, with the active participation of our citizens, grow a complete and diverse city. We will be a city of choice in which to live, work, learn and play, offering an enviable quality of life and distinctive sense of community.”

3. Region of Hamilton-Wentworth

“In the year 2020, Hamilton-Wentworth supports a population consistent with the carrying capacity of the region. People live in a region made up of compact urban core areas, surrounded by a rural landscape that includes productive family farms, hamlets and a continuous network of natural areas.

We are an environmentally conscious community where the existence of all living things is cherished and where all can breathe fresh air, swim in clean streams and lakes and have ample opportunity to observe and experience the wonders of the natural world. We are an economically, socially and culturally diverse community that encourages opportunities for individuals, reduces inequities and ensures full participation for all in community life.

We are a caring community that gives opportunity and support to all its members, including children, the aged, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees. People live longer in good health.

Finally, we are a vibrant, vigorous community, which builds on existing strengths and attracts wealth-producing businesses that work in partnership with government and the community to create a diverse, sustainable economy. Economic growth incorporates non-polluting, energy efficient and environmentally friendly businesses, including traditional manufacturing industries that have been supported and helped to become environmentally sustainable. Business, government, labour and the community have great capacity for innovation in response to global change.”

4. City of Windsor

“Windsor, Canada's southernmost city and international gateway, is a diverse community of safe caring neighbourhoods, with a vibrant economy and a healthy sustainable environment. The City of Windsor, with the involvement of its citizens, will deliver effective and responsive municipal services, and will mobilize innovative community partnerships.”

5. Town of Gravenhurst

“Gravenhurst should be a picturesque town. . . with a quaint and inviting ambience; Capitalizing on the steamship theme and turn-of-the-century flavour; Enjoying attractive areas for shopping and walking; Set in the splendour and easy access to clean water and limitless natural beauty.

It will be recognized throughout the Province as a major tourism centre . . . Offering plentiful varied accommodation in hotels, motels and Bed & Breakfasts; Hosting one or more major international events each year; Proudly boasting a fully developed Gravenhurst Bay area as its centrepiece; With attractions for visitors in all four seasons; and a reputation as a centre for cultural and recreational activities. It will have plentiful and varied shopping. . . . In an active and vital downtown area; Supported by specialty shopping areas on an attractive Highway 11 corridor and in a new shopping centre; All offering variety and service to both Summer and Winter customers.

There will be jobs available for residents. . . In a well-balanced four seasons economy; with numerous light industries; including an industrial node in the Muskoka Airport/Winhara Road area; and A thriving government employment pool. All of this supporting a trend toward a growing population . . . Recognizable by a doubling of the permanent residents to about 20,000 by the 2016 census; With housing options to suit a variety of lifestyles and age groups, including families moving here to work in local jobs, those commuting to jobs in the Barrie/Toronto areas, and those choosing to retire here; Attracted by reasonable and stable taxes, an abundance of cultural and recreational amenities, and by a safe and active way of life”

6. Town of Clarington

“The Municipality of Clarington and the Economic Development Office are committed to the creation of an economic climate that enhances the quality of life on our community. This is achieved by fostering the development of meaningful occupations and competitive economic activity.”

7. County of Grey

"Grey County is a family of distinctive communities which values its heritage, natural beauty, clean, healthy environment and rural lifestyle. We value the freedom of the individual and the security of the "hometown" community. Grey County is committed to sustainable, affordable growth through progressive and well managed planning for the future."

8. Township of Delhi

"Our mission is to encourage sustainable economic and community development while maintaining our unique "rural/small town" quality of life. We are committed to pursuing our vision and continuing to provide quality service at a reasonable cost."

9. Town of Kirkland Lake

"Our mission is to promote a progressive and friendly community by instilling pride and confidence through a partnership of trust and respect among all people. Equally, our mission is to create an environment that stimulates growth and provides well planned and organized services through a commitment to sound management and leadership."

10. Township of North Grenville

"To plan co-operatively for the future in order to meet all challenges and to create employment opportunities for North Grenville while maintaining and enhancing the area's valued lifestyle qualities."

11. City of Mississauga

Mississauga... will be a distinct major Canadian city; The City Centre will be downtown Mississauga; Mississauga will have distinct and recognizable communities; Mississauga will have a dynamic and diverse economic base; Mississauga will have a transportation system which allows for safe and efficient movement within and beyond the city; Mississauga will provide the right services, delivered in a superior way, at a reasonable cost; Mississauga will be an environmentally responsible community; Mississauga will be governed in an open and responsive manner; Mississauga will achieve excellence in public administration; Mississauga will offer a diversity of cultural opportunities

When Should a Municipality Develop a Vision Statement?

A good time to conduct a visioning exercise is after an election and the newly elected council wants direction. The added bonus of choosing to develop a vision statement at this time is that it will be an effective way of getting to know the position of each member of council. Another good time to develop a vision statement and an opportunity to involve the community is during the review of a new Official Plan or while developing a strategic plan.

Who Should be Involved in the Vision Statement?

As much as possible the community should be involved in the vision statement and developing an action plan.

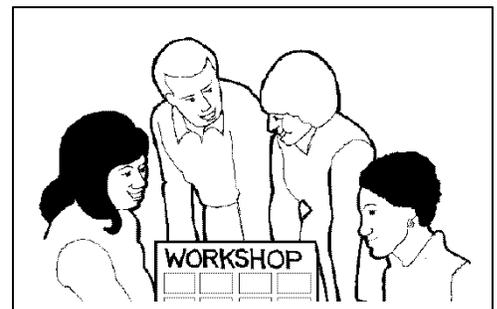
Designing the Visioning Process

1. Bring the group together and state the purpose of the meeting.
2. Provide the group members with a variety of materials to record their vision.
3. Pose the question, which will prompt the group members to think about the context of the vision. The question should be simple and general enough to provide group members sufficient opportunity for creativity.
4. Give sufficient time for the group members to think about the question and record their individual responses.

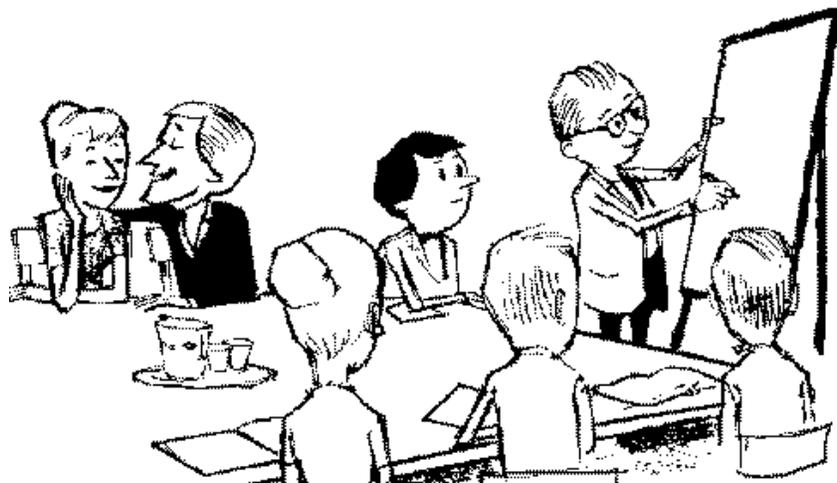
5. Provide the group members the opportunity to discuss their responses and note similarities and differences. Further discussion may clarify and reduce differences.
6. Record the results and make them available to all group members.
7. Share the vision so that it becomes alive and has impact. Leaders help the community to maintain focus and energy by continually positioning the vision in all discussions.
8. Maintain the vision realizing that visions are not static. They are subject to change and elaboration as the community evolves and the outcomes of the actions are evaluated.

Important Things to Remember:

- Visioning among group members works most effectively if done in face-to-face meetings.
- A vision is most valuable if it is recorded. This offers endless opportunities for creativity and self-expression. The vision may be recorded in writing, in a drawing, a song, a skit or many other possibilities or combinations.
- The group members may have different visions. This situation may still be workable provided that the group members base their decisions on their vision and recognize the impact of their decisions on the vision.



- One can not necessarily rely on memory; from time to time the group needs to refer to the vision while making strategic decisions or policies.
- Likewise, an evaluation and monitoring of progress toward the vision is vital to understand if decisions are complimenting the vision or if the vision needs to be reviewed.
- The facilitator leading the visioning process needs to be sensitive to resistance and expect it. Visioning deals with change and this makes many people feel threatened and intimidated. Look for the source of resistance, its form and impact on the visioning process in order to consider how it can be managed by creating an environment or condition for resolving the conflict.
- A visioning process is not designed to solve problems but rather to share a direction and provide a framework of resolving issues.
- The community organizations, leadership and staff must demonstrate a commitment and willingness to use the vision as well as have the capacity or develop the capacity to make it work.



Exercise – Develop a Vision Statement for Rural Ontario

The first three modules of this training manual give introductory information on agriculture and planning in the rural community. This vision exercise is meant to provide the participants with an opportunity to discuss their understanding of rural Ontario as they begin the training and review how their vision changes as they proceed through the course materials.

What is your vision of rural Ontario twenty years from now?



As you answer the question, you may want to record what issues and trends are shaping your vision. You may choose any number of methods or combinations of recording your vision. The options include writing, drawing, mapping, etc. To assist you, sheets have been left blank for you.

As you complete the exercise you will be asked to discuss your vision with the other participants. Remember that their own experiences and values shape each individual's vision – there are no right answers.

Writing

Drawing

Exercise: Match your vision with your decisions

Purpose of Exercise:

- to highlight connections between visions and decisions
- to encourage discussion between seminar participants

Instructions:

- Consider yourself to be advising Council or you are a member of Council that has established the following vision statements listed under Vision column. Review the adjacent decision option and answer *yes* where the decision matches the vision statement or *no* if the decision doesn't match the vision. Discuss your responses with the group.

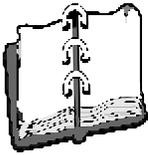
		Vision	Decision
Yes	No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Viable processing industry to build on economic strengths of existing agriculture.	Limit home occupations & home industries.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse farming enterprises.	Limit severances to large acreage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy natural ecosystem.	Allow development on natural hazard lands without environmental review.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Involve community members in implementation of land use planning policies.	Support the formation of advisory groups with specific mandates and delegated decision powers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize heritage features.	Required review of development plans against inventory of designated heritage sites.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Viable rural service centres (towns, villages, and hamlets).	Support economic impact studies of development proposals.

Review

After the session is completed review your vision statement that you completed at the beginning of the session. Has your vision changed after this session? Discuss.



Were the module objectives and your learning objectives for this session met?



Reference

Strategic Planning for Community Economic Development
School of Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph