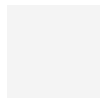


A Neighborhood Planning Process  
That is Created and Implemented  
by Local Residents

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*Neighborhood planning is a process with many different forms, methods and participants.*

Some planning processes use a “needs survey” to gather the primary data from the neighborhood. This information can be generated from existing data sets, e.g., below-code housing, rates of crime, numbers of drop-outs, etc., as well as resident input regarding issues and problems. The result is information regarding neighborhood deficits. The usual planners’ response is to identify the external resources that may correct the deficits, i.e., professional and technical services, agency programs, public funds, etc.

The limit of this process is that it does not elicit residents’ future visions or activate their productive capacities.

Another form of planning involves local residents, in greater or less degrees, envisioning a future for the neighborhood. This is usually done within the constraints of the planners’ protocols and usually results in a plan that is to be implemented by public bodies, not-for-profit agencies and commercial interests. Absent is a productive role for local residents in implementing the plan.

The process described here is one that seeks to create a neighborhood plan with two primary characteristics:

1. The local residents create the neighborhood vision by defining specific activities that will improve the neighborhood.
2. The residents identify those specific activities that can be implemented by people in groups within the neighborhood.

This is an “inside-out planning process.” It creates a specific resident designed plan and assumes the primary producers of the plan are the people living in the neighborhood.

## **THE NEIGHBORS’ PLANNING PROCESS**

Initially, a community-wide meeting can be held by inviting all the neighborhood households to join together to create their own plan. At this meeting, residents can gather at tables of 6-10 people. Each table is asked to make a list of specific activities that they believe will improve the neighborhood. The activities could address any topic from youth to economy to culture, etc.

After this meeting is completed, the specific activities that have been written at each table are grouped under applicable categories such as safety, youth, land use, health, etc. The next page is an example from one neighborhood of the specific activities they defined concerning youth.

## YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Services	"Men for God" - for girls, too
Youth Services	Adults learn to talk to youth
Youth Services	After school programs using local colleges
Youth Services	Better use of community centers
Youth Services	Community leaders tap resources from within
Youth Services	Community networking between parents
Youth Services	Counsel kids with anger management
Youth Services	Crafts, special interests, music outlets
Youth Services	Create database for tutor/mentor programs
Youth Services	Create partnerships between mentoring and athletic programs
Youth Services	Create places for youth entertainment - this will keep them off the street
Youth Services	Create real opportunities for tangible accomplishments
Youth Services	Creating commitment in youth outside of sports
Youth Services	Dances, Play day and block off street
Youth Services	Demonstrate success/caring
Youth Services	Develop more teen social activities
Youth Services	Establish a youth construction training program provide jobs for these "apprentices" for rehab and new construction/ Learn trade related skills through Habitat for Humanity
Youth Services	Expand and improve availability of summer programs or after school programs - parks/schools/etc.
Youth Services	Help parents control their kids/more discipline
Youth Services	Improve speech skills
Youth Services	Involvement of neighborhood churches
Youth Services	Junior Master Gardener program - Orange Ave. Park
Youth Services	Mentorship from within community/Community service-mentorship through college students (reading credits)
Youth Services	More educational opportunities in the local community
Youth Services	More organized sport activities
Youth Services	More programs mixing adults with youth
Youth Services	More tutorial programs after and during school
Youth Services	Music opportunities - recording
Youth Services	Need north county vocational school
Youth Services	Neighborhood organizations adopting areas
Youth Services	New Day in New Town contest (art or music) to get the youth involved in this initiative
Youth Services	New/extended Boys/Girls Club hours
Youth Services	Open schools/youth activities
Youth Services	Parent involvement/Parents need to lead by example - don't send kids, go with them/Parent network (neighborhoods)
Youth Services	Partnership with Ringling College of Art and Design
Youth Services	Police explorer program, job training, life skills, mentoring and tutoring programs
Youth Services	Residents need to take a more active role in the community in addition to the help we receive from outside the community
Youth Services	Safe space/place to hang out with some supervision
Youth Services	Sports programs - affordable
Youth Services	Structured activities - Library and volunteers needed
Youth Services	There are none - create some
Youth Services	Truancy efforts - What do you do when they skip school?
Youth Services	Workshops on self-esteem
Youth Services	Workshops regarding community with youth
Youth Services	Youth camp event during summer, holidays/Schedule events to meet kids' schedules
Youth Services	Youth Center at BAS
Youth Services	Youth summit to lead to their involvement in the solutions

The neighbors who participated in the first session reconvene in a week or so. The tables in the meeting room now have signs indicating one of the planning topics. For example, one table sign reads “Economic Development,” another says, “Health,” etc.

The neighbors then choose to sit at the table with the topic of greatest interest to them. At each table is a planning document like the one on the next page that was used at a table marked “Youth.”

**New Day in New Town  
Small Group Activity #1 - "Sorting of the Action Items"**

Category	Solution/Idea	Implemented by:			PRIORITY L, M, H
		Inside	Together	Outside	
Youth Services	New Day in New Town contest (art or music) to get the youth involved in this initiative				
	New/extended Boys/Girls Club hours				
	Open schools/youth activities				
	Parent involvement/Parents need to lead by example - don't send kids, go with them/Parent network (neighborhoods)				
	Partnership with Ringling College of Art and Design				
	Police explorer program, job training, life skills, mentoring and tutoring programs				
	Residents need to take a more active role in the community in addition to the help we receive from outside the community				
	Safe space/place to hang out with some supervision				
	Structured activities - Library and volunteers needed				
	There are none - create some				
	Truancy efforts - What do you do when they skip school?				
	Workshops on self-esteem				
	Workshops regarding community with youth				
	Youth camp event during summer, holidays/Schedule events to meet kids' schedules				
	Youth Center at BAS				
	Youth summit to lead to their involvement in the solutions				

The participants are asked to discuss each activity on the page and which of the first three columns to check. The choices are:

**Inside** – This is a project that can be done by the neighbors without outside help.

**Together** – This is a project that can be done by neighbors with some outside help.

**Outside** – This is a project that an outside organization will have to do without neighbors' assistance.

When all the topics have been reviewed and the appropriate implementer designated, the tables are then asked to prioritize the projects in the fourth column. They can designate one of three choices for each project: High priority, medium priority, or low priority.

Then each table is asked to identify the high priority projects that they have said can be done by neighbors (inside). The residents at each table are then asked whether they will commit to being on a neighbor's task force to begin implementing these high priority activities. They can choose a convener and they should be encouraged to invite other neighbors or local clubs and associations to join in their effort.

As the task force progresses, the conveners can meet together to share information and decide on any joint task force activity that is useful and appropriate.

In addition to the initial projects, each task force can arrange meetings to initiate action on those priority projects 1) where outside groups are needed to assist and 2) where outside groups are the sole implementers.

The continuity for this process will usually require some administrative support for arrangements, materials production, documentation, etc.

It is important to keep information flowing between the task forces and sharing the successes in implementing each plan. In all their relationships, the task forces can make clear that every resident can and should participate in any task force or activity it generates.

To initiate this planning process, a group of local residents and/or members of the local neighborhood organization can be convened. If they are interested in this approach, it should be emphasized that this is not a "model." Rather, an approach that should be adapted and revised in order to fit the local neighborhood.

Basically, this process is an approach to creating an opportunity for neighbors to design and implement their own vision for their neighborhood's future.