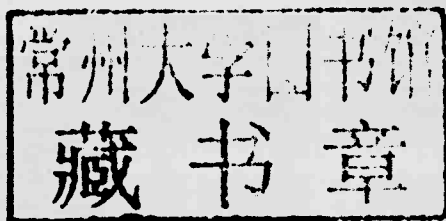# COMMUNITY VISIONING PROGRAMS

Processes and Outcomes

EDITED BY
NORMAN WALZER AND GISELE F. HAMM

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROGRAMS

Processes and Outcomes

*Edited by Norman Walzer
and Gisele F. Hamm*

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COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
SOCIETY

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROGRAMS

Community visioning is key in helping local public officials and community leaders create a flourishing future for their cities, and is essential for the effective planning and implementation of these strategies. Visioning involves collaborative goal-setting to motivate actions – of planners, citizens, and officials – in order to design and carry out a strategic planning process for the successful development of the community.

The use of visioning since the 1980s has led to a wealth of information on the productivity of the paths it has taken. The contributors, all with experience working in the area, review the successes and failures of the strategies, and look at new innovations which are pushing the frontiers of community visioning.

This review of the development of visioning focuses on small and medium-sized communities in North America. It aims to guide citizens, local leaders, and planners on what strategies are best to help them revitalize their communities and ensure a prosperous future.

Norman Walzer, Ph.D., is Senior Research Scholar in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University where he specializes in regional economic development issues. He has published extensively on local development, entrepreneurship, public finance, and infrastructure issues. He is currently researching determinants of successful community change programs and the effects of governmental structure on local public finance.

Gisele F. Hamm, M.A., manages the MAPPING the Future of Your Community program, a unit of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University. MAPPING (Management and Planning Programs in Non-metropolitan Groups) is a community-driven strategic visioning, planning, and doing process whereby local residents create a vision and action plan for their community. The program has been conducted in more than 120 Illinois municipalities.

The Community Development Research and Practice Series
Volume 1

Series editor:
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National University of Ireland

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Northern Illinois University, USA

This series serves community developers, planners, public administrators, and others involved in practice and policymaking in the realm of community development. Providing timely, useful and applied information for researchers, students, practitioners and policymakers, it is designed to integrate the latest thinking on tools, strategies, and experiences of community developers around the world. Building on 40 years of publishing the Community Development Society's journal *Community Development*, the series is especially well suited for bridging the gap between theory, research and practice and contributes to a growing and rapidly changing knowledge base. For additional information please see the series page at www.routledge.com

The Community Development Society is a professional association viewing community development as a profession integrating knowledge from many disciplines with theory, research, teaching, and practice as important and interdependent functions. The organization adheres to the core Principles of Good Practice: to promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives; to engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action; to incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process, and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community; to work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community; and to be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well being of the community. See www.comm-dev.org for more details.

To Nicholas, Reagan, Francesca, and Solomon
That they will have a clear vision as future leaders

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ryan Allen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Community and Economic Development in the Urban and Regional Planning area of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. In this position he serves as Head of the Housing and Community Development Concentration for Urban and Regional Planning Students. He holds a joint appointment with the University of Minnesota Extension in the Center for Community Vitality, where he conducts research on social capital, leadership and civic engagement. His research has examined social capital in immigrant communities, with a particular focus on the relationship between social capital and labor market outcomes for refugees as well as the role that religious institutions play in creating bonding and bridging social ties for refugees. His other recent research has focused on the effect of leadership development programs on rural poverty.

Janet Ayres, Ph.D., is Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. She has more than 30 years of experience in research and program development to assist rural communities in dealing with change. Her work focuses primarily on building community leadership capacity to address controversial public issues. She co-authored *Take Charge,* a community visioning program that was implemented in Indiana and several other states in the 1990s. She has worked in over 200 rural communities and has trained over 100,000 citizens on various community processes. Among her publications are book chapters on essential elements of strategic visioning programs in N. Walzer (Ed.), *Community Strategic Visioning Programs* (New York: Praeger, 1996) and principles of working together in community development initiatives with Anne Silvis in J. Robinson and G. Green (Eds.), *Community Development: Theory, Practice, and Service Learning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press, 2010).

Scott Chazdon, Ph.D., is Evaluation and Research Coordinator for the Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota Extension. He develops and strengthens performance management, evaluation, and applied research for Community Vitality programs. His research with Extension has focused on community social capital assessments, community readiness, as well as use of the community capitals framework to conduct impact studies of Extension programs. Previously, he worked at the Minnesota Department of Human Services where he managed research and evaluation projects concerning Minnesota's public assistance programs. He has expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; participatory evaluation strategies; and in conducting evaluation and research with diverse cultures.

Mary Emery, Ph.D., is Department Head, Sociology and Rural Studies at South Dakota State University. She conducts research related to community change, climate change, rural development and community approaches to wellness. She also co-chairs the Great Plains IDEA multi-university online Master's degree in Community Development. An active practitioner in community and economic development, her experience includes evaluation, research, training, and planning work in many states and native communities in the US. She has also worked on several international assignments, particularly related to women and development and using Appreciative Inquiry in community settings. Currently, she is working with a variety of projects related to rural development and community change including co-managing a Coaching for Community Change Initiative. Her recent publications focus on visioning, leadership and community betterment, climate change, native education approaches, and community coaching. An experienced facilitator, she has facilitated training, planning and design processes in a variety of settings.

Cornelia B. Flora, Ph.D., is the Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Sociology at Iowa State University. She served for 15 years as the Director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, covering the 12 Midwestern States. She is a past president of the Rural Sociological Society, the Society for Food and Human Values, and the Community Development Society. She has served on a number of governing boards, including that of Winrock, International and CONDESAN (Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Region). She consults with the World Bank, USAID, and UNIFEM on issues of sustainability in the face of climate change. Her recent books include *Communities and Agroecosystems* and *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change,* 4th edition. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Charlie French, Ph.D., is Extension Associate Professor of Community Development with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. As leader of Extension's Community Development Program, he helps communities to

engage public stakeholders in local decision-making around a range of issues, including land use, economic development and civic agriculture. He brings experience into the classroom as a faculty member in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in community development and planning. He also serves as a Faculty Fellow with the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Engagement and Academic Outreach at the University of New Hampshire and co-chairs a team of faculty who are drafting a book on university–community partnerships. His recent research, published in *Community Development*, the Journal of the Community Development Society, focuses on measuring both tangible and intangible outcomes of community visioning in New Hampshire communities.

Lori Garkovich received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1976 from the University of Missouri-Columbia. At the University of Kentucky since 1976, her research focuses on: farm family/household and rural community change. Her professional publications are found in a wide variety of rural sociology and community development outlets and include books, book chapters, and article. Her extension work focuses on strategic planning, community/economic development, and community visioning. She has facilitated strategic planning related to economic development, land use and growth management, tourism development, and general community development, and conducted visioning processes in nearly 30 Kentucky communities. She has provided training on strategic planning and community development for a variety of national and regional organizations (e.g., Southern Rural Development Center's Community Development Institute; the National Foundations of Community Development webinar series).

Gisele F. Hamm, M.A., is Research Associate in the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, where she directs the Management and Planning Programs Involving Non-metropolitan Governments (MAPPING) program. MAPPING has been recognized nationally for its work on community visioning initiatives. She is past president of the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association, served on the Board of the Community Development Society, and recently co-edited (with Norman Walzer) a special issue of *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society (CDS)* on successful community visioning practices. She has published on innovative approaches to Brownfields, local economic development strategies, and other issues related to community and economic development.

Jeff Jones, B.S., currently serves as CenturyLink's Market Development Manager for Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Mississippi with responsibilities for public relations, customer communications, community development, strategic planning and media relations. He has worked in various public relations and marketing capacities for telecommunications companies during the last 21 years. A founding partner of VISION 2010/Breakthrough Solutions, he has been instrumental in

raising awareness of the opportunities for communities and regions to harness the power of broadband connectivity. He has been directly involved in several initiatives that had state-wide impact, including the Development Information Network of Arkansas, the Arkansas Broadband Initiative (which led to the establishment of Connect Arkansas), and Breakthrough Solutions, with an annual conference and work with communities and regions in Arkansas.

Paul Lachapelle, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Montana State University-Bozeman and serves as the Extension community development specialist. Working in partnership with the Local Government Center, his responsibilities involve providing research, technical assistance and training in many areas including community strategic visioning, local governance, and leadership development. He worked on the Montana Horizons Program, a community leadership capacity building program to reduce poverty in 35 communities across Montana. Concurrent with these visioning programs, he has designed and implemented various curricula and training materials on the topic of good governance and civic engagement for local government officials and citizens to promote better decision-making and policy implementation. He has published widely on the topic of community planning and visioning in both domestic and international settings including articles on community forestry in Nepal as a US Fulbright Scholar, on tourism planning in several arctic national parks with Parks Canada in the Canadian Territory of Nunavut, and on community development with the US Forest Service International Programs in Guinea, West Africa and Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Ed Levy, Bachelor of Architecture, Auburn University, is a principal at Cromwell Architects Engineers in Little Rock, AR. Established in 1885, his company's recent architectural work includes projects in 38 states and 10 foreign countries. He is a LEED Accredited Architect with extensive experience using the charrette process for architectural planning and design around the world. He has conducted charrettes in Singapore, Japan, Korea, Italy, Belgium and Germany. In the US he has conducted charrettes in California, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Texas, Alabama, Colorado and Arkansas. He is active in community development through his work on the Breakthrough Solutions Advisory Board and has been instrumental in bringing the creativity and energy of the charrette process to the Breakthrough Solutions approach to Community Development. Most recently he led two design charrettes in the Breakthrough Solutions pilot community of Harrison, Arkansas.

Ed Morrison, J.D., is Economic Policy Advisor to the Purdue Center for Regional Development. For the past 10 years he has been developing new approaches to strategy for open networks. This work emphasizes the strategic value of focused regional collaborations and open innovation in today's global economy. He started his professional career on Capitol Hill as a legislative assistant and staff member to

the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. He began his career in economic development after working at a corporate strategy consulting firm, where he evaluated global manufacturing networks for multinational clients. The American Economic Development Council (the predecessor to the International Economic Development Council) awarded his work the first Arthur D. Little Award for Economic Development Excellence. He has advised a number of clients, including Oklahoma City; Charleston, South Carolina; and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. He authored the 1998 Commission on the Future of the South for the Southern Growth Policies Board.

Mark Peterson, Ph.D., is Professor of Community Development with the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas. He is known for his effectiveness in teaching leadership principles and skills to community leaders which lead to effective community action. He is the author of *Harnessing the Power of Vision: Ten Steps to Creating a Strategic Vision and Action Plan*, which has been utilized in communities in Arkansas and several other states. He has taught workshops in Canada, Peru, Italy, Germany, and Ukraine. Mark is the coordinator of the Breakthrough Solutions Program, an internationally-recognized partnership initiative committed to building healthy, sustainable communities and regions for the twenty-first century. Asset-based, community-driven, and technology-enabled, Breakthrough Solutions provides a systematic approach to community transformation by leveraging local assets to create breakthrough solutions in the twenty-first-century economy. Breakthrough Solutions and its predecessor, VISION 2010, has 17 partner organizations and has worked with 28 communities and the NCARED region, involving over 9,000 citizens in shaping the future of their communities.

Barbara Radke, J.D., is Assistant Extension Professor with the Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota Extension. In her role as scholar practitioner, she has the opportunity to work at both the local and regional level. Her experience includes design and implementation of community initiatives on poverty, social capital and sustainable growth in communities with a civic engagement focus. She has provided leadership in the development of a civic engagement model for Extension and practitioners of civic engagement. Her applied research efforts focus on civic engagement and collaboration for decision-making and community action. She has provided education on leadership development, work team development, civic engagement process and facilitation skill building. She had presented at regional, state, national and international conferences on these topics.

Tobias (Toby) Spanier, M.S., is Associate Extension Professor with the Center for Community Vitality at the University of Minnesota Extension. He has spent the last 20 years working to make improvements in communities through educational experiences. His professional educational experiences include the United States Peace Corps, nonprofit organizations, public schools in Minnesota and Maryland, Maryknoll Mission Association in South America, and the University of Minnesota

Extension. In Extension, he has contributed to the Community Youth Development Program Area by providing youth development research, education and strategic advice to individuals and organizations. Currently, his work focuses on creating educational experiences in leadership development, civic engagement and facilitation with a particular emphasis on working in ethnically diverse communities.

Tatchalerm (Top) Sudhipongpracha, Ph.D., is Policy Analyst in Thailand's Department of Social Welfare. He is currently researching changes in Illinois governmental structure, the impact of governmental structure on local public finance and employment, public administrative ethics in Thai and Illinois municipalities, and municipal government budgeting in post-decentralization Thailand. He has published innovative practices used by small rural governments, community economic development issues, local public finance in the US, government reforms and decentralization in Thailand and Southeast Asia. He recently participated in a collaborative research project between Northern Illinois University and Thailand's National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). Based on this collaborative research, he is examining factors that influence Thai municipal managers' perceptions of public accountability.

Norman Walzer, Ph.D., is Senior Research Scholar in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University and is director emeritus, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University which he directed for 15 years. He is past president of the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association and the Community Development Society. He has published extensively on rural public policy issues, local economic development, public finance, governmental structure, and transportation. His most recent book is *Entrepreneurship and Local Development* published by Lexington Books in 2007. His current research is on the Midwest economy with special interest in factors affecting entrepreneurship, business starts, and expansions in rural areas. He recently co-edited (with Gisele F. Hamm) a special issue of *Community Development: Journal of the CDS* on successful community visioning practices and is currently co-editing (with Sam Cordes) a special issue on innovative community change programs.

SERIES EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Community development as reflected in both theory and practice is continually evolving. This comes as no surprise as our communities and regions constantly change. As a practice focused discipline, change is the only constant in the community development realm. The need to integrate theory, practice, research, teaching and training is even more pressing now than ever given uncertain and rapidly transforming economic, social, environmental and cultural climates. Current and applicable information and insights about effective community development research and practice are needed.

In partnership with Routledge, the Community Development Society is delighted to present this new book series serving community developers, planners, public administrators, citizen activists and others involved in community development practice, research and policymaking. The series is designed to integrate innovative thinking on tools, strategies and experiences as a resource especially well suited for bridging the gaps between theory, research, and practice. It is our intent that the series will provide timely and useful information for responding to the rapidly changing environment in which community development researchers and practitioners operate. The Community Development Society was formed in 1970 as a professional association to serve the needs of both researchers and practitioners. That same year, the Society began publishing *Community Development*, its journal promoting exchange of ideas, experiences and approaches between practice and research. *Community Development Research and Practice* builds on this rich legacy of scholarship by offering contributions to the growing knowledge base.

The Community Development Society actively promotes the continued advancement of the practice and theory of community development. Fundamental to this mission is adherence to the following core Principles of Good Practice. This new book series is a reflection of many of these core principles.

- Promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action.
- Incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process; and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community.
- Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.
- Be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well being of the community.

It is fitting that the first volume of the series is *Community Visioning Programs*. Without vision, communities cannot effectively respond to the ever-changing conditions prevalent in today's environment. The process of visioning, and the creation of a guiding vision sets the tone and direction for current and future decisions and is essential for successful planning and action. Visioning is essential to help communities coalesce around ideas, values, and translate that into positive action. If shared values form the basis for the vision, then subsequent planning and action linked to the vision is better received and supported. Further, the visioning process is inclusive by nature, and engaging community members in decision-making is central to the tenets of good practice principles in community development. Visioning can also serve to bring people together and in these troubling times, coming together for effective and positive action is crucial.

Norman Walzer and Gisele F. Hamm present this volume along two main themes. The first is an exploration of the community visioning process itself, and how it has evolved over time to adapt to changing conditions. Second, the types of outcomes and key factors of effectiveness of community visioning programs and approaches are considered, in terms of effectiveness and impacts. It is not presented as a "how to" manual, but rather a collection to advance the state of knowledge about the community visioning process. It aims to guide citizens, local leaders and planners on the most effective strategies to help them revitalize their communities towards a flourishing future guided by positive, collective action.

On behalf of the Community Development Society, and the editorial board of the series, I invite you to explore this volume. Further, continue to explore the series as new volumes are added, and we do hope you will find it a valuable resource for supporting community development research and practice.

Rhonda Phillips

Editor, *Community Development Research and Practice Series*

PREFACE

Population shifts and long-term economic changes pose serious issues for local public officials and leaders, especially in Midwestern communities. Competition from off-shore locations and regional discount centers has seriously eroded local economies. Decision-makers struggle to find ways to attract and/or retain young adults when they graduate. Local leaders continue to try new ways to revitalize their communities through business attraction, retention, and entrepreneurship efforts. In particular, they focus on improving quality of life in these communities, important in attracting creative residents likely to start businesses.

Community leaders and public officials have participated in a variety of programs that examine past trends and evaluate innovative new avenues for the future. Many, if not most, of these programs incorporate a process where participants form a consensus regarding the community's desired future. An action plan is then created to reach that vision.

Visioning programs have existed for a long time with relatively little attention paid to the outcomes that resulted. This book presents the findings of a national survey of community visioning efforts across the US and examines six programs in greater detail to illustrate how they have led to positive outcomes. The programs vary in techniques but they all are participative and include a visioning element.

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