Skill Builders: Defining Goals And Objectives - Wishes And Worries Exercise

This meeting technique clarifies and brings to the forefront people's concerns of how a byway might affect the community or the quality of life of residents. The result of this effort should be a set of byway goals and an outline of what special qualities the byway should protect and what potential problem(s) it should solve or avoid. You may also gain a sense of promising directions for the byway's story.

Use A Flip Chart

• Title the first page, "Special Places." Ask people to share the names of places they would take a visitor to see or places that are special to them. Tape the page up on a wall. Leave plenty of room to put up more pages.
• Title the next six pages, "Byway Wishes," and subtitle each page with one of the following headings: Archaeological, Cultural, Historic, Natural, Recreational, and Scenic. Go through each intrinsic quality one at a time. Ask people to share the special people, events, places, views and bits of history that relate to each topic. These should all be issues that are positive, reflecting people's hopes for how each resource might be positively used, conserved, and appreciated.
• Label another set of pages, "Byway Worries." Ask people to share their fears associated with the byway for each intrinsic quality. For instance, "Tourism would bring too many people to the waterfalls."

The above tasks can also be done using a large map of the byway and red and green stickers. Ask people to place red stickers on the map at the locations that indicate their worries, and to place green stickers for their wishes. People should also write on the map to record the nature of their wishes and worries.

Refine Ideas

Now refine the ideas expressed above and set some priorities. Still using a flip chart:
• Label a page, "Byway Priorities." Ask people to identify the most important wishes and worries. Which wishes and worries will have the most immediate impact on the byway? Which are longer term? Which issues can be corrected or changed? Which are irreversible? Sift through the issues to find the most critical wishes and worries.

Create Goals & Objectives

Once you have established wishes-and-worry priorities with the group, the next step is to translate those issues into a set of goals and objectives for the byway.
> • Goals should be seen as broad statements of the general direction that you want to pursue.
> • Objectives should narrow the goal and provide a sense of how you will move in the desired direction.

Goals are important because they express a consensus view on where the byway is headed. Even if people don't agree on how to reach the goal, they should at least agree on the goal's intention.

Goals can sometimes be too broad or vague. Test your goal statements by asking: Is there another course we might take? If the statement is so broad or obvious that there would be no other possible course of action, then refine the statement to be somewhat more specific.

Some of the wishes and worries may easily lend themselves to becoming goal statements. For instance, the worry, "If they build houses all along that road, it will ruin its character forever" can be translated to the goal, "Protect the roadside character of the byway." Its objective might read, "Carefully manage all development along the byway so as to protect the sensitive landscape of this corridor."

Other wishes or worries may be more difficult to translate. For example, the wish, "Oh, I just hope it doesn't change forever" poses a difficult wish. Some change is likely unless all the land along the corridor is purchased for preservation, and even then, the natural processes will alter the landscape. In these instances, work with people to specify what it is about the landscape or the character of the corridor that is most important to protect and manage. From there, more realistic goals can be framed.

Once you have a set of goal and objective statements, go back to your priority wishes and worries and check to be sure that you have addressed each priority issue.