



# The Big Picture: Creating a Vision

## Introduction

Without a vision, a picture of what a person or group wants to achieve, an organization can easily find itself going in circles, frustrated, and accomplishing very little. A vision statement is a starting place for overall direction and guidance for meetings, projects, and other neighborhood association activities. It answers the question what are we trying to accomplish and indicates the why behind the efforts.

A vision statement should be grounded in the organization’s core purpose for existence. For example, *“The Hunter Glen Neighborhood Association exists to nurture and maintain a safe and beautiful community by connecting with neighbors and encouraging property maintenance.”* By combining the purpose for the organization and the vision for the neighborhood, the organization leadership has an opportunity to generate a sense of energy and increase involvement in accomplishing goals.

The following steps provide guidance in developing your vision statement. The steps may be modified to fit your organization’s structure. However, keep at the forefront of your efforts the benefits of a vision statement:

- Provides guiding principles for your neighborhood organization
- Reflects the values of the neighborhood
- Communicates a clear picture of your neighborhood’s desired future
- Helps to create an identity
- Communicates an identity for change or revitalization efforts (*i.e. Working to connect with neighbors block by block*)

With a basic understanding of a vision statement, you and your neighbors are at the starting point for creating a platform for neighborhood action.

Step	Explanation
<b>Getting Started</b>	<p>Develop and communicate to neighbors a clear image or desired image of the neighborhood.</p> <p><b>How to do it...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a topic and engage in a “brainstorming” exercise at a community meeting. Solicit ideas from everyone present. The goal is broad participation from your neighborhood. (<i>See Page 2 for Brainstorming</i>)</li> <li>- This list will likely be very long. Ask for two or three volunteers to consolidate the list into general themes.</li> <li>- Present the themes to group that attended the “brainstorming” session (via e-mail or at another general meeting).</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>



## Neighborhood Management The Big Picture: Creating A Vision

Page 2 of 4

Step	Explanation
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ask if the themes are inclusive of everyone's ideas shared during the "brainstorming" session.</li><li>- Prioritize concepts and direction. Include this information in the minutes of the meeting.</li><li>- Ask a volunteer to draft a vision statement for neighbors to consider at the next meeting and to facilitate the discussion.</li><li>- Present the draft vision statement to the neighbors. People will offer ideas on how to re-word the draft so that it flows. Volunteer should expect this and not take it as a personal offense.</li><li>- Once it appears there is consensus, confirm the vision with a vote.</li></ul>

### Your neighborhood now has a vision statement!

#### Brainstorming Instructions

Use *brainstorming* when you want to draw on a group's collective creative energy. It permits uninhibited participation by each person and often results in surprising ideas and new solutions to old problems. Brainstorming can work with just about any size group. However, it works best if you can break a large group into smaller groups of people.

**Time required:** 5 to 15 minutes plus time for discussion.

**Physical set-up:** All participants (one large group or several small groups) face a chalkboard or flip chart where the recorder(s) write down ideas generated by the group.

**People needed:** A recorder for each group to write down ideas; a facilitator for each group, to keep discussion flowing.

#### The Process:

Display the question or issue so that everyone can read it. Determine if sub-groups are necessary.

Give the following instructions:

During the next \_\_\_\_ (8 to 15 minutes), you are to come up with as many ideas as you can on what makes a great neighborhood. The emphasis is on quantity. Try to generate as many ideas as quickly as you can.

- Any idea is allowed.
- Try to piggy-back. For example, if someone's example reminds you of another, say it, even if it sounds similar.

(continued)



## Neighborhood Management The Big Picture: Creating A Vision

Page 3 of 4

Step	Explanation
<b>Brainstorming Instructions</b> (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Recorders write down participants' contributions on the flip chart or blackboard.</li><li>▪ The group facilitator calls time when the announced time is almost up.</li></ul> <p>The group facilitator reviews the list of ideas with the participants. (If there are multiple groups, all groups report back their results in a large group discussion.) These issues then can be whittled down even further to come up with the plan of action.</p> <p>If you have group members who are highly vocal and tend to dominate the discussions, this may limit participation from less vocal members. In this instance, an alternative method may be necessary. Rather than calling for ideas to be expressed verbally, hand out a pencil and several small slips of paper to each participant to allow both verbal and written participation.</p> <p>Give the following instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ask group members to write one idea on each slip of paper -- as many ideas as they have paper (they can even call for more paper if they want.)</li><li>- Put a limit on the amount of time everyone will spend brainstorming on paper.</li><li>- Collect the pieces of paper at the end of the time period.</li></ul> <p>The facilitator then will read the ideas while the recorder writes them for the group to see.</p> <p>This method allows everyone to participate without the pressure and embarrassment of having to speak before the rest of the group.</p>
<b>Making It Happen</b>	<p>Demonstrate leadership and support the vision.</p> <p><b>How to do it...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Model the behavior or standard communicated in the vision.</li><li>- Share resources, information, and when necessary, lend a helping hand.</li><li>- Demonstrate harmony in leadership.</li><li>- Communicate with neighbors both formally and informally.</li><li>- Tell and sell the vision at meetings, on organization flyers and handouts, on your website, and in your newsletter.</li><li>- Brand your neighborhood and neighborhood efforts.</li><li>- Lead with passion! You can't light a fire with a wet match.</li></ul>



## Neighborhood Management The Big Picture: Creating A Vision

Page 4 of 4

Step	Explanation
<b>Suggestions and Other Considerations</b>	<p>Contact a Neighborhood Planner for guidance in creating a plan for your neighborhood, 972-205-2445.</p> <p>Check the Garland Neighborhood Management Academy Course Schedule often for classes that may assist you in realizing your neighborhood vision, <a href="http://www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.Org">www.GarlandVitalNeighborhoods.Org</a></p>