

Facilitation Tool: Group Visioning for Adaptation Success

What does the future we want look like?



Clustered vision elements emerging from a visioning exercise at Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Photo credit: Syverine Bentz

Purpose of Visioning Exercise

Workshop participants brainstorm and refine a vision for the community: What does it look like in 2050? How is its economy thriving? What does a socially, culturally thriving community look like? What defines the community?

Target Audience

Key regional partners involved in community adaptation

When to Use

- Visioning phase, early in an adaptation process.
- Note, if visioning can't be done early in a process, it can be inserted as well at a later stage.

Directions

- **Materials Needed**
 - Sticky notes (at least 5/person)
 - Pens
 - Butcher paper
 - Flip chart markers
- **Step-by-step delivery of exercise**

During participant check-in

- Distribute visioning prompt at check-in/registration.
- Have a powerpoint slide with some initial visioning questions (refer below for ideas) to get people thinking as they walk in.



This facilitation tool was created to serve as a reference for individuals interested in indicators and metrics to help communities define and track progress on their climate adaptation goals. Additional background and resources are available on the website: www.ResilienceMetrics.org. This website was developed in partnership with the National Estuarine Research Reserve System with funding from NOAA.



Introduction (5min)

- Introduce session with a look at the community backward through time. This helps get people comfortable with the idea of ongoing change, even radical change, thinking outside the box.
 - ◇ Show visuals of past changes – pictures/images/drawings of how the community and surrounding area have changed through time (old photographs, paintings/other art, images of maps of how the area looked not just hundreds but thousands of years ago).

Visioning (25min)

- Ask people to now turn toward the future. Think about...
 - ◇ How old they may be in 2050, and if they don't think they will be around then, think about a few loved ones who are likely to be around then (children, grandchildren).
 - ◇ Facilitation tip: You may invite people to close their eyes to imagine the future (ensure they know that they can do this if they feel comfortable).
- Ask people to dream up their ideal vision for their community by themselves, write ideas down on sticky notes (one idea per sticky).
 - ◇ What do they hope will be true about their community and surrounding areas/communities at that time?
 - ◇ Point them toward the best of things: What do you want to see preserved?
 - ◇ Point them also to the things they want to see changed: What do you want to see improved, enhanced or even created if it doesn't exist now?
 - ◇ Foster more elaborate visioning by explaining that a “resilient city/ community” can mean or include a wide range of components or aspects of living here – ecological, social, climatic, physical, cultural, political, psychological, economic.
 - ◇ Ask participants to think about daily life but also particular events throughout the seasons, the year.
- Then bring their “elements of a resilient city/community” to the front and stick them to a large piece of butcher block paper.
- Co-facilitators (maybe with participants' help) then sort sticky notes (by affinity mapping of emerging categories or by the categories listed above).
 - ◇ If someone is good at drawing, they can later draw a bit of the local landscape representing the envisioned future around the stickies... (see photo above)

Full group discussion/reflection and refinement (30min)

- Ask those who grouped the stickies or participants to come look at the clustered vision and share thoughts about observations:
 - ◇ Common threads and ideas
 - ◇ Outliers
- Stimulate reflection and discussion – Ask people to really imagine that future city/community.
 - ◇ Does it hold together? What's contradictory? What's missing? What's most important? What could they NOT live without?
- Conclude by distilling key issues and themes that were heard.



Example Use and Outcomes

The Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR) utilized this exercise to help the community and partner organizations come together around a common vision for the future before discussing how climate change may impact that vision.

The vision played an important role throughout the workshop series as a touchpoint to refer back to through the various stages of thinking about climate change scenarios, adaptation options, decision-making and developing indicators and metrics.