

Hear Every Voice

Case Study: SPOTLIGHT on 2030 Visioning Process



Six-month community-based visioning process for a Twin Cities community.

Lino Lakes, Minnesota

City of Lino Lakes, Carl Neu (consultant), Decision Resources (consultant), and DSU/Bonestroo (consultant)

Context: The City of Lino Lakes is mid-sized community located in the northeastern edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan region. In light of the population growth Lino Lakes was experiencing, and in response to the Metropolitan Council's mandate for communities to extend their planning horizon to the year 2030, Lino Lakes initiated a three-part planning process in 2006. The process began with "an extensive, scientifically valid public survey," continued with an "all-community" visioning effort called *SPOTLIGHT on 2030*, and concluded with a thorough comprehensive plan update (City of Lino Lakes 2007).

This case study focuses on the visioning process and creative ways to encourage new participants to get involved in the visioning and planning process.

Public Involvement: Prior to the visioning process, the City conducted a public survey to better understand citizens' views about their quality of life (City of Lino Lakes 2007). Participants responded to questions on a variety of topics such as neighborhood appearance, recreational and open space opportunities, city service ratings, tax policy, governance, and general likes or dislikes about the City (Decision Resources Ltd 2006). The community survey was described as "Quality of Life Survey - a balanced representation of citizen perceptions about Lino Lakes" to the Vision Committee. The survey results were presented by Decision Resources, and were discussed at the first meeting of the Citizen Visioning Committee.

The visioning process began in September of 2006 and concluded in February of 2007 with the creation of *2030 Vision Plan: A Guide to Lino Lakes' Future*. The document outlines the City's need for a vision, the four key vision elements, and how the vision will be used in future efforts.

The visioning process provided the opportunity for interested residents to look ahead to the future and define the city they desire in 2030 (City of Lino Lakes 2007, 5).

From the beginning of the visioning process, the public was encouraged to participate. The City provided multiple ways to get involved and was particularly interested in increasing participation from community members who often do not engage in planning processes (Schlichting, personal communication, 2011). To help engage these individuals, the City worked with consultant, Decision Resources, to randomly select community members, contact them, and ask for their participation during the visioning process. Community members needed to reside in the City of Lino Lakes and were selected at random from the phone book

Project Details

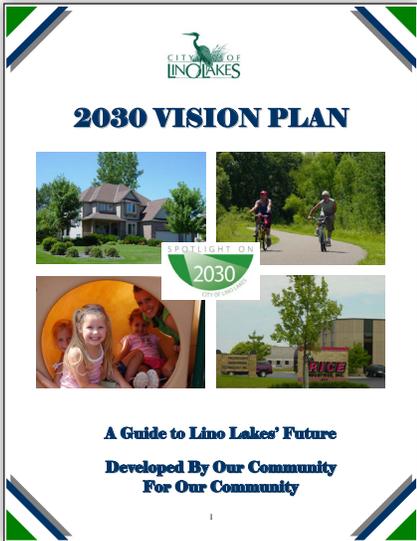
Location

Organizations

Case Summary

(Schlichting, personal communication, 2011). Seventeen community members agreed to serve as volunteers in this effort, and the group was formally known as the Citizen Visioning Committee. These members “both guided and participated in the citizen-driven process” (City of Lino Lakes 2007, 6).

In October 2006, Community Forums were held in effort to gather additional public input. Attendees of these forums identified issues of primary importance and helped identify the core elements that are addressed in the vision document, the *SPOTLIGHT on 2030 Vision Plan* (City of Lino Lakes 2007). After the Community Forums, additional opportunities were presented to continue the engagement efforts. Issue Project Teams were created in association with each of the four core vision elements: (1) Community, Residential, and Neighborhood Development; (2) Economic and Commercial Development; (3) Roads and Transportation; and (4) Community Amenities and Natural Resources. People interested in serving on the Issue Project Teams could contact city staff and indicate what issue was of most interest to them. These self-identified community members were assigned to Issue Project Teams along with members of the Citizen Visioning Committee. City staff and consultants provided insight and additional factual information on key topics. Issue Project Teams “addressed each core vision element and prepared a vision statement, goals, rationale and proposed strategies for inclusion in the *SPOTLIGHT on 2030 Vision Plan*” (City of Lino Lakes 2007, 6).



In February 2007, the final document, *SPOTLIGHT on 2030 Vision Plan*, was presented for acceptance to the City Council by the Citizen Visioning Committee and the Issue Project Teams. The document was intended to serve as “a guide to Lino Lakes’ journey to the year 2030 and as citizen input to those involved in the successive effort to create the Comprehensive and Resource Management Plans” (City of Lino Lakes 2007, 6-7).

These efforts were successful in creating a vision with substantial City staff and community support, encouraging participation by those who are often not part of the process, and fostering continued public participation in planning efforts. As a result of engaging new people in the process, new ideas were presented and considered. For example, a number of Citizen Visioning Committee members described a need for a variety of options in order to encourage young residents entering the housing market to stay in the area, as well as providing an opportunity for older populations to remain in the community. Additionally, the Citizen Visioning Committee was designated as the Advisory Panel for the subsequent comprehensive planning effort and members were encouraged to continue to serve; fifteen members did volunteer for this effort. Another unique outcome was that one Citizen Visioning Committee member enjoyed the experience so much that she ran for and won a seat on the City Council. Her initial engagement and continued service, would likely not have happened had she not been randomly selected to serve in the visioning process.

References

City of Lino Lakes. 2007. 2030 Vision plan: A guide to Lino Lakes' future. Retrieved from http://www.ci.lino-lakes.mn.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={F6B2A72B-E466-442A-8E74-B197DF40D180}.

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Schlichting, C. 8 July 2011. Personal communication.

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