

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY COMMUNITY VISIONING PROJECT

C H A R T E R

August 11, 2005

Almost 30 years have passed since the people of Champaign County have considered, collectively, what their future should be. While many public and private organizations have adopted comprehensive and strategic plans of their own, the County, as a community, has not. Many concerns cross lines of function or legal jurisdiction and many opportunities can only be realized by concerted action. The people of Champaign County will be best served if we come together to mutually chart a course toward a common future reflecting our shared values. To enable this we have joined together to organize and undertake a Community Visioning Project on behalf of the people of Champaign County. This charter describes the nature of the project and the way it will be conducted.

1. PURPOSE

- A. The Community Visioning Project is intended to look beyond Champaign County's immediate concerns to create a positive vision of a shared future reflecting common aspirations and building on our strengths and unique opportunities.
- B. The purpose of the community visioning project is to foster unity and clarity of purpose among the people of Champaign County so that we can take effective action in furtherance of shared community goals. The community visioning project will do this by:
 - i) promoting mutual understanding of the circumstances and concerns of different demographic groups in the community;
 - ii) developing an appreciation of the strategic environment confronting the county and of the community's strengths and weaknesses;
 - iii) overcoming collective ambivalence and hesitancy in the pursuit of community goals;
 - iv) constructing a compelling vision of a future reflecting shared community values together with an action plan to achieve the desired future; and
 - v) strengthening community leadership and fostering the emergence of a new generation of community leaders.
- C. The Community Visioning Project will address conditions within a time span of 20 years.

2. APPROACH

- A. The community visioning project is a community initiative and is not intended to be tied to the organizational capacity or legal authority of any unit of government or other organization. It will succeed not by force of law but by developing a broad-based commitment within the community.
- B. The project is conceived as a public-private collaboration supported by contributions from public, private and non-profit sectors.

- C. The community visioning project will be an open and inclusive process conducted by a representative assembly and will include special efforts to solicit public comment and understand public opinion in a balanced and impartial manner.
- D. The project will be accomplished by working within existing institutional structures. No formal incorporation or contractual arrangements are required.

3. OUTCOMES

- A. The Community Visioning Project is, by design, open-ended with respect to the specific form and content of the work of the Community Assembly. We expect that the project will result in the following outcomes:
 - i) an assessment of the strategic environment confronting the County over the next 20 years including an assessment of the County's competitive position and of its strengths and weaknesses;
 - ii) a written and graphic vision document depicting the preferred future condition of the County and addressing key policy choices;
 - iii) an action plan laying out specific concrete actions to be taken by identified parties to realize the community vision; and
 - iv) recommendations regarding means by which implementation of the action plan can be monitored and promoted.
- B. The most important outcome of the Community Visioning Project will be agreement on an action plan and commitment to its implementation. Physical products will be generated in various media and will be widely distributed to all participants and the general public but these are not, in themselves, the object of this initiative.

4. GOVERNANCE GENERALLY

- A. The sponsoring organizations that we represent, pledge to provide material resources to the effort. In our individual capacities we will use our best efforts to encourage participation and support for the project.
- B. The effort will be organized and governed as follows.
 - 1) A Sponsors Council will be formed of representatives from sponsoring organizations to oversee the project's process and ensure fiscal accountability.
 - 2) A Community Assembly will be established to make substantive decisions including adoption of a vision statement and an action plan.
 - 3) A Steering Committee will be established to oversee project design and operation of the project and provide leadership to the Community Assembly.

- 4) A Project Coordination Committee will be created to provide technical expertise and extend staff resources by undertaking appropriate tasks.
- 5) The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission will receive contributions to the effort and provide professional, technical and clerical staff to support the project.

C. The roles of the various groups are further outlined below.

5. SPONSORS COUNCIL

- A.
 - 1. The Sponsors Council will be comprised of the elected executive or comparable elected or executive official of each signatory sponsoring organization and of any qualifying organization that subsequently signs this charter and makes a financial contribution to the visioning project as specified in Subparagraph 2.
 - 2. Organizations that make contributions to the Community Visioning Project that meet or exceed the amounts listed below are guaranteed representation on the Sponsors Council.

a. County and municipal governments with populations greater than 20,000	\$20,000
b. Municipal governments with populations less than 20,000.	\$10,000
c. Other government entities	\$20,000
d. Private and not-for-profit organizations	\$10,000
 - 3. The representatives designated under Subparagraph 1 may also appoint up to four additional persons in their individual capacities as demonstrated community leaders to serve on the Sponsors Council.
- B. Each signatory sponsoring organization may also designate their chief executive or chief administrative officer as an additional advisory member of the Sponsors Council.
- C. The Sponsors Council will make most decisions by consensus but may, when required, make decisions by majority vote and may rely on *Roberts Rules of Order* if necessary to resolve any procedural question.
- D. Powers and Duties

The Sponsors Council will:

- i) approve the project work plan, schedule, and budget;
- B. select members and Chairs of the Community Assembly, Steering Committee and Project Coordination Committee;
- iii) approve contracts and expenditures in excess of \$10,000.00; and

iv) ensure that the project proceeds on schedule and within budget.

- E. The individual members of the Sponsors Council will act as spokespersons for the project and will to promote the project within their respective organizations and to the public at large.
- F. The Sponsors Council will elect its own chair and may designate other officers and adopt its own bylaws if it chooses.

6. COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

- A. The Community Assembly will be convened as a broad-based group representative of all significant sectors and demographic groups within the community. It will include members recommended by the Steering Committee and selected by the Sponsors Council to ensure its representative character.
- B. The community assembly will be a deliberative body. By necessity the community assembly will strive to make all decisions by consensus. Special efforts will be made to reach agreement on substantive matters.
- C. Powers and Duties

The community assembly will:

- i) address questions it deems significant in a positive and constructive manner;
 - ii) develop and adopt an assessment of the strategic environment affecting the County in the next 20 years and identify the community's strengths and weaknesses;
 - iii) develop and adopt a written and graphic depiction of a community vision describing the desired conditions of the County in the year 2025;
 - iv) develop and adopt an action plan including specific steps to achieve the conditions described in the community vision;
 - v) recommend means for tracking accomplishment of the action plan; and
 - vi) conduct public meetings to incorporate the views and concerns of the general public in its deliberations and to promote broad-based support for the vision and action plan.
- D. The Community Assembly will be chaired by one or more individuals selected by the Sponsors Council.
- E. The community assembly will decide its own procedures and organization. The community assembly may establish various committees to address specific topics.

7. STEERING COMMITTEE

- A. A Steering Committee will be created to operate the project and provide guidance to paid staff. It will include designated staff of sponsoring organizations and representatives of public, private and non-profit organizations and key interest groups appointed by the Sponsors Council.
- B. The Steering Committee will be chaired by one or more individuals selected by the Sponsors Council.
- C. The Steering Committee will make most decisions by consensus but may, when required, make decisions by majority vote and may rely on *Roberts Rules of Order* if necessary to resolve any procedural question.
- D. Members of the Steering Committee will be, *ex officio*, members of the Community Assembly.
- E. Powers and Duties

The Steering Committee will:

- i) design the project in conjunction with staff including selection of project components, design of surveys, workshops, etc.;
- ii) provide contacts with potential in-kind contributors, volunteers, and other sources of expertise or material support;
- iii) maintain liaison with interest groups, consultants, etc.;
- iv) assist in arranging events, media coverage, public presentations, etc.;
- v) review staff work products; and
- vi) recruit and recommend to the Sponsors Council members of the Community Assembly.

8. PROJECT COORDINATION COMMITTEE

- A. A Project Coordination Committee will be established to work closely with staff in the design and operation of the project.
- B. The committee is a working committee and will meet frequently and informally.
- C. The Project Coordination Committee will include designated staff of sponsoring organizations along with others recommended by the designated staff members of the Project Coordination Committee and approved by the Sponsors Council.
- D. The Project Coordination Committee will be chaired by an individual selected by the Sponsors Council.

9. CHAMPAIGN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

- A. The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission will provide administrative support to the Community Visioning Project. The CCRPC will:
- i) receive, hold and account for financial contributions made to the project;
 - ii) make disbursements as required pursuant to the approved budget or other approval by the Sponsors Council;
 - iii) maintain correspondence and records related to the project; and
 - iv) provide professional, technical and clerical staff and other support to the project as required by the work plan and budget approved by the Sponsors Council.
- B. The CCRPC will be the contractual agent for the project and will bear all administrative responsibilities of the project.

10. EFFECT

This document describes only the intentions of those who have signed it. It is not a legal document and it is not meant to be legally binding on the signatories or on the organizations that they represent.

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