

# Public Participation Strategies

## Final Plan

### Vigo County Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting for December 2004 November 8, 2004

#### Introduction

Strong public participation throughout the development of the Vigo County Comprehensive Plan is important in getting broad support for the plan's adoption. This discussion paper identifies:

- ◆ Important public meetings in the development of the comprehensive plan;
- ◆ The proposed method included in the draft contract to improve citizen participation throughout the process;
- ◆ Marketing public participation;
- ◆ Other public participation tools;
- ◆ How the Steering Committee and HNTB will collaborate to implement this public participation plan;

#### Key Public Participation Efforts Identified in Draft Scope of Services

##### **Stakeholder Interviews (In-progress)**

A series of up to 40 stakeholder interviews will be conducted early in the process. The steering committee and staff would identify the majority of the stakeholders. These interviews will be one-on-one interviews to discuss key issues and bring the team up to speed on issues and opportunities to be addressed throughout the comprehensive planning process and development of ordinances.

During these meetings, the interviewees will be asked to identify additional individuals to interview. These individuals may be contacted later to further explore planning issues which emerge throughout the process.

##### **Half-Day Site Tour (Completed)**

In order to gain a better understanding of the physical conditions within the project area, the HNTB team recommends a site tour with members of the staff and steering committee. It is recommended that staff develop a route of selected site opportunities, key landmarks and site concerns that need to be pointed out to the team.

##### **Public Open House (December 14, 2004)**

The first important public meeting will be conducted in the form of an open house to present the Elements of a Healthy Community, existing conditions and background policy information. Valuable insight into the social values, concerns and desires are typically gained at the open house. These meetings should be scheduled after the planning analyses have been completed.

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The use of four stations would probably be most appropriate to communicate the issues and existing conditions within the plan. The first station would focus on the planning analysis component and conclusions, and would allow the public to provide input on the plan's goals and objectives. The second station would focus on transportation and infrastructure issues. The third station would focus on land use development and the alternatives, allowing the public to provide input to those components. The final station would be a visual input station. It would provide pictures that represent existing Vigo County characteristics, as well as pictures of potential elements that could be in the community in the future. This would provide an opportunity for the public to provide input on the quality of growth.

### **Elected Officials and Other Key Leaders Survey (To be sent out late December)**

The HNTB team will design a survey instrument to administer to elected officials and key leaders in the community to provide insights into issues and opportunities that they see in their respective jurisdictions. This survey will take place early on in the process.

### **Focus Groups**

The HNTB team will conduct four focus group work sessions with targeted groups such as the Plan Commission, members of governing bodies, adjacent communities, merchant groups, farmers, environmentalist, etc. With input from the Steering Committee, these groups could be organized by group or topical area identified in the elected officials and key leader's survey.

### **Website (To be up and running in December 04)**

Vigo County and Terre Haute maintain a web site that might have space available to use for education and information dissemination throughout the creation of the comprehensive plan. If so, this site will be updated regularly to provide information on upcoming meetings and allow citizens to track the progress of the plan.

### **Steering Committee Charrette**

To create the land use scenarios, the HNTB team will conduct a meeting with the steering committee and limited members of the public to focus on the future land use direction of Vigo County and Terre Haute. This will be accomplished by using predefined pieces to identify the location, type and magnitude of growth that should occur within the County. Additionally, discussions will be held on the character of the development, the future economic climate that can be supported and the potential impact on County infrastructure.

### **Steering Committee Visioning Exercise**

The HNTB team will facilitate an exercise that will bring together the steering committee and staff to establish a common, practical vision regarding the future of the community. The visioning exercises will be structured to establish written statements about the County's goals for the long term.

### **Citizen Involvement Workshop**

HNTB will facilitate four citizen involvement workshops in different locations throughout Vigo County. These workshops will provide the opportunity to hear citizens' input regarding the Vigo County and Terre Haute of the future. Specific items to be covered in these meetings would be the goals and objectives, land use alternatives and policy impacts. An exercise will be conducted with the public to gain feedback on these items. These meetings should be scheduled after the Steering Committee charrette has been completed.

### **Final Plan Presentations**

The HNTB team will assist the Steering Committee in a series of meetings with the Plan Commission and the City Council to present the final version of the comprehensive plan for adoption at public meetings. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the plan at these meetings.

## **How Do We Get the Turnout?**

Here are some proposed ways to get the public to turn out the meetings to provide input.

### ❑ **Active Mailing Campaign/Electronic Notice (Completed)**

At each public and stakeholder meeting, a sign-in sheet can be provided so that participants can be entered into a mailing list data file. Each of the participants listed on the database would then receive advanced notification of important upcoming public meetings.

- This tool will be effective once all key person interviews, focus groups and the first round of public meetings are completed.
- Utilize City email list serve on City/County website to send out notices, newsletters, etc. to selected residents.
- Send specialized, written invitations to the members involved in Terre Haute Tomorrow's implementation committee.

### ❑ **Brochures/Electronic Newsletters (Completed)**

Informational brochures would be placed at common locations throughout the County such as the library, City Hall, County Courthouse, County Annex, and parks department. The brochures would contain a brief synopsis of the process, issues and references where to get more information.

### ❑ **Flyers (Completed)**

Placing flyers around the County in grocery stores, coffee shops, bookstores, etc. would remind people of upcoming public meetings and reinforce the plan as a solution to a perceived problem.

### ❑ **Newspaper Article Series and Advertisements (Completed)**

Print media remains the strongest source for information and education of the public during the development of the comprehensive plan. A section of the local newspaper that focuses on community issues would be used to provide a series of articles relating to the plan development. Specific articles before the citizen input meetings would help educate the public about the land use and demographic trends occurring in the County. Developing relationships with the editor and government reporter are key to developing these stories and gaining interviews. In the past, some newspapers have provided full page notices, free of charge, to educate and promote input into the process.

- See of the newspaper would be willing to donate a 1/2 page or full page to the County-City
- Identify key person at newspaper to assist us with publication
- Provide all information to the newspaper in electronic format

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□ **Presentations (On-Going)**

Presentations to local clubs, such as the Lions or Chamber of Commerce breakfast group would spread information about the plan to local leaders too busy to attend the night meetings regarding the plan.

- Identify key groups for presentation
- Identify key steering committee members to make those presentations
- Provide electronic presentation or display boards for presentations

□ **Radio News Stories and Interviews (Completed)**

Radio announcements about upcoming meetings and the progress being made on the plan would help keep those that do not regularly read the local paper informed about the process. Additionally, if a weekly show is aired on government issues, the HNTB team would be pleased to grant interviews.

- Identify key persons to act as representatives for the project
- Identify key contacts at radio station and contact for interviews for specific radio shows

□ **Television Programming (Completed)**

Television would be used to repeat public service announcements about important planning dates. Additionally, local TV interview shows often provide an additional opportunity for educating and informing the public about complex planning issues.

- Identify key persons to act as representatives for the project
- Identify key contacts at television station and contact for appearance on morning or evening newscast