

Vision to Reality

Turning a collection of diverse ideas
and opinions into a vision plan that
gains acceptance and support

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Before the visioning process

1. What are you asking people to discuss or “envision”?
2. Understand what is actually possible to avoid wasting time on unrealistic options
3. Find out what frightens or concerns people about developing an area or project
4. Be prepared to address the myths

Who will participate in the Visioning Process?

1. Business owners and property owners in the district
2. Representatives of civic and community organizations
3. Residents
4. Elected and appointed community leaders

The Visioning Sessions. How many?

A lot !

- Meeting with business & property owners is time well spent. They are most affected and can be powerful supporters
- Don't hold a mass meeting for organization leaders. Go to their meetings.
- A public meeting is necessary but don't stop there. Keep people informed. Follow up is important.
- Elected officials, members of Planning Boards, SID Boards etc. need to participate

Cranford Vision Plan

- Met with and surveyed residents, community leaders & business owners (more than 450 responses)
- Feedback was the basis for Community Visual Preference Project. More than 400 people participated in person or online
- Results shaped the Community Vision Plan on issues like redevelopment, public spaces, parking, pedestrian improvements, building heights and zoning

Community Questionnaire

The important policy questions that were asked

- Should the Township pursue redevelopment to stabilize or lower property taxes?
- Should redevelopment/development be a high planning priority for the business district?
- Should mixed-use development be encouraged?

The Results

- 88 % strongly agree or agree that downtown redevelopment/rehabilitation should be high priority
- 92% strongly agree or agree that deteriorated structures must be rehabilitated for downtown to be healthy & prosperous
- 58% supported condemnation with fair compensation to pursue development
- 81% believe Cranford has the potential in 20 yrs. to be one of the most dynamic & interesting places to live, work and shop

Hot button words & Issues

Facts Matter !

- Density
- School children
- Building heights
- Ruining the town character
- Crime
- Urban design
- Local information matters more than state or national reports
- Use facts about existing apartment & downtown buildings
- PICTURES

Talk to everyone but spend time with the right audience

- There is always a group that will NEVER agree
- There is always a group that SUPPORTS everything you do
- Spend time talking with the BIG group in the middle. It's likely they talk to lots of other people.

You've only just begun

- You have a Community Vision Plan & a Redevelopment Project but people will forget or be swayed by new information
- Keep meeting with civic & community groups even if there are only 6 people in the room.
- If the direction changes you need to explain

Be in charge

If you aren't managing the information & message someone else will and likely it will be an opponent