

Ideas for Introducing Vision:

Planning and creating a vision are not new ideas. But planning is different now – our communities are different and continue to change, our lands are changing, and our relationship with other communities and jurisdictions are complex. As these factors of our lives change, our processes to deal with them also need to change – our planning needs to be more concrete, formalized into clear decision-making, and longer term. For example, a decision to install new houses and infrastructure (like roads, water and sewer pipes) costs a lot of money, takes time, and can send the community in a new direction if this decision is made without the appropriate thought behind it. We want these buildings and their infrastructure to last for a long time so we need to think long term when we plan where they should be located, what materials and technologies they should use.

The changes we are seeing in our communities and our lands are also happening faster than they did in the past. Climate change is an example of rapid changes affecting the lands that then affect our communities and livelihoods – by changing when and how we can travel on the land, by affecting the habitat, wildlife, and resources, impacting our buildings (through severe storms or mould) – and all of these things affect our economy, our society, and our culture. To make sure that we can handle these changes (and others that we may face) and thrive for many generations into the future we need to include these issues in our decisions, in our planning, and in our governance.

Community planning and good governance are linked. Community planning needs the support of the leadership AND the support of community members – it is the community input and involvement that gives the plan strength. With a community plan that is comprehensive – that includes the environment, the economy, the culture, and society (and all the areas that fit within – natural resources, education, health, language, governance, infrastructure) everyone in the community knows the direction they are going – and can work together in the different departments and as individuals to move in that direction.

So how do we decide what that direction is? By having a clear vision – a picture in our minds of that destination, of what the community will look like and act like in 20 or 30 years. Communities need to do detailed plans that look at 5 years or so but having this long-term vision is the guide. It is important that as many people get involved in creating this vision as possible – because it needs to be the community's vision (not only the leadership or the administration's vision) to remain strong over time.

One way to begin thinking about your vision is use your imagination. Think about all of the things that are good about your life and your community – think about the things that you used to have that were good but aren't as much a part of your life now and about getting these back – think about the things that aren't good right now and removing these – and come up with a picture in your mind of what the community would look like, like this, at its best.

We are going to do this now as an initial planning exercise together. If you want to talk about what you saw in your mind with the people at the table afterwards please do because sharing these ideas help us come together and create a common vision. We are going to hand out pieces of paper for people to write some ideas down and there are other people with paper already at their tables because we want to share these ideas with other community members – so everyone can think about a community vision.

So please take a minute now to close your eyes and imagine that you are a bird or in a plane soaring over the community, looking down on it 20 or 30 years from now. Imagine into the future when your grandchildren are starting to have families of their own. Think about what the community looks like at its best – what features does it have, what facilities, what are people doing, how do they relate to each other and to the land, what is the economy like, or the education and health services?
(wait approximately 1-2 minutes)

You can open your eyes now. Please share your ideas with the people at the table and have someone write down these ideas. We also have a piece of chart paper up on the wall here in case anyone wants to write down some of his or her ideas so share.

Follow-Up:

After doing this session you could work with your planning team and use sustainability as a framework for grouping these ideas and then coming up with themes that can help you create a draft vision.

Sharing this draft vision with the leadership, the administration, Elders, youth, and the community is an important next step. You will probably get into discussions about the use of certain words, the way sentences are put together, using images and art as part of the vision – and more! This is a creative process and doesn't happen overnight. The input from these people will help you modify the vision to come up with something that the community supports and is excited about. Having a vision that is community based is essential and will guide the development of your plan and give it strength.



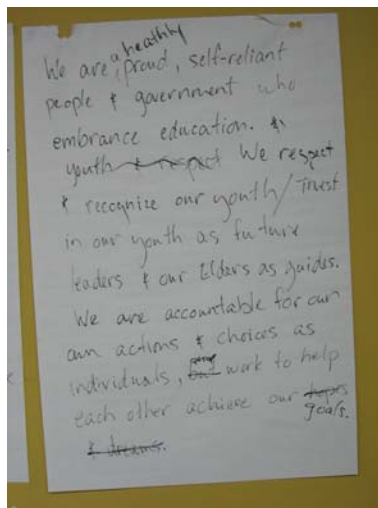
Vision Ideas & Sustainability



Looking for similarities
Separating vision & project ideas



Creating themes for the vision



Coming up with a draft vision