

THE GILMANTON CIVIC PROFILE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Civic Profile is a process by which communities take stock of where they are today and develop an action plan for how they want to operate in the future. Whether the issue is a quality school system, an air pollution problem, lack of adequate affordable housing or solid waste disposal, the need for effective problem-solving skills is the same. A community must have strong leaders, from all sectors, who are able to work together with informed involved citizens to reach agreement on issues. The Civic Profile assists communities to develop their problem-solving ability. It is a self-evaluation tool that draws heavily on the collective wisdom of the participants and is not a test or a comparison between communities. It provides a method for citizens to affirm community strengths, identify concerns and problems, and then to help a community structure collaborative approaches to meet these challenges creatively, set directions for the future, and manage change.

The National Civic League, along with several university studies have identified those qualities that make a community work - that help communities plan for the future and survive such dramatic change as extreme population growth, plant shut-downs or military base closings. These qualities make up the ten components of the Civic Profile and are the "tools" of the community self-assessment:

Community Information Sharing: Getting the right information to people who need it so they can make better decisions for themselves and for their communities.

Community Vision and Pride: Developing a positive self-image around what makes a community special and unique and taking proactive steps to keep it that way.

Civic Education: Doing all that is possible to help a community's citizens "learn the ropes" so that they can contribute to the life of the community.

Citizen Participation: Developing opportunities for people to volunteer for important work in visible, active ways, and making their entry an easy one.

Community Leadership: Ensuring the on-going development of active business, non-profit, and governmental leadership that is results-oriented, looks to the future, and takes appropriate risks.

Cooperation and Consensus Building: Designing ways and forums for sharing ideas, opinions, hopes, and fears in collaborative atmospheres, attempting to achieve common goals, and when there is a disagreement, to discover ways to resolve it.

Regional Cooperation: Working toward region-wide policies and programs to deal with problems and challenges facing a community and its neighbors by crossing traditional boundaries to offer and seek cooperation.

Intergroup Relations: Promoting communication among diverse community groups to form coalitions, understand different views, discover ways to resolve conflicts, and to prevent unnecessary escalation

Volunteerism and Philanthropy: Creating opportunities and an atmosphere for individuals, groups, and organizations to give to the community in time, knowledge and skills, and dollars, and to honor one another for our contributions.

Government Performance: Seeking the best from government in effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, fairness, and creativity.

To assist cities and towns to strengthen their Civic Infrastructure--those skills, institutions and systems that communities use to solve problems, govern themselves and decide their futures-- the Commission on New Hampshire in the 21st Century adapted a program from the National Civic League for use in New Hampshire, which they called the Granite State Civic Profile. This was the model that was adapted by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension for use in Gilmanton.

SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR GILMANTON

The Gilmanton process began when the Economic Development Committee, after a presentation by UNH Cooperative Extension, decided to undertake a Civic Profile. The Economic Development Committee became the core group of interested citizens who would be the Civic Profile Steering Committee. The committee identified six goals that they hoped to achieve through the Gilmanton Civic Profile. They were to:

- Develop a fundamental community consensus around a shared vision for the future of Gilmanton that can be built upon by other groups.

Achieve greater effectiveness in conducting business in a more cooperative and collaborative fashion.

- Invite active participation in the community from those not currently involved in order to enfranchise a broader range of citizens and to expand the leadership pool.
- Learn to share information in more effective and productive ways to facilitate the decision-making process.

Develop more effective ways to coordinate with various groups working within Gilmanton so that our efforts complement each other.

- Achieve a renewed spirit and sense of community in Gilmanton.

From the Civic Profile itself, the Committee expected that other goals for the community would likely be identified.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

From the very beginning of the process, the Steering Committee decided to include the broadest cross-section of the community as possible in the Civic Profile. In addition to current community leadership, an effort was made to include people who don't usually participate, community activists, and those people in the community who could prevent action on the recommendations. No group or individual was excluded from consideration as a potential participant. It was to be an inclusive, rather than an exclusive process. The Steering Committee identified over 100 individuals who would be contacted directly to participate in the Civic Profile.

The Steering Committee then went through all of the names to try to guarantee that balance was

achieved. Again special attention was paid to those people who do not usually participate. Letters were sent to each person on the list. Out of the 60 invitations that were mailed out, 36 people indicated that they would attend the forum. Two weeks before the Profile, reminder notices were sent out to the attendees. This notice not only reminded the participants about the meeting but it also told them what they were to bring to the pot-luck supper on Friday evening.

THE PROCESS

Participants met for two sessions, Friday evening April 21 and all day Saturday April 22, 1995 to discuss Gilmanton's Civic Infrastructure. The Profile began with team building and an over-view of the entire forum. The participants developed a mosaic of what Gilmanton is like now and a vision of what they would like Gilmanton to be in the future. The participants then went into randomly selected small groups of approximately 6 people each, which were led by facilitators from the community who had been previously trained to lead the small group discussions. Each of the five groups discussed two of the ten (10) components of the Civic Profile. For each component, the group was asked to evaluate two questions:

**How is Gilmanton doing now?
What should Gilmanton be doing in the future?**

After reaching consensus on the 5-7 most important points identified by the group, the small group facilitators reported their findings to the entire group and the other participants had the opportunity to comment on the reports. Key Civic Issues emerged as common themes.

Next, the participants split into small groups, based on their individual interests, to develop recommendations on methods to implement potential solutions to the Key Civic Issues. Each group was asked to define the following:

Critical steps to implementation

Resources needed

Principal leadership (group or individual)

Potential obstacles with potential strategies to overcome them

Timeline for implementation

Action step coordinator

At the conclusion of the second day's work, each small group reported their findings and recommendations to the entire group. Task groups formed to begin developing an implementation follow up plan of work for each issue.

GILMANTON MOSAIC

WHAT IS GILMANTON LIKE NOW:

The following perspectives on Gilmanton were identified at the first session on Friday evening.

- * Changing
- * Struggling with self-image
- * Isolated
- * High tax burden
- * Retirement community
- * Generational gap
- * Economic gap
- * Non-commercial
- * Relatively safe
- * Rural residential community
- * Scenic
- * Historic
- * Lakes region
- * Polarized
- * Agricultural
- * Recreational
- * Unspoiled (relatively)
- * Hard to get to
- * Spread out
- * Sparsely populated
- * Bedroom town
- * Conservative
- * Seasonal population
- * Suburbanizing
- * Two villages
- * Small town with two towns
- * Famous (notorious)
- * Significant transient population
- * Lack of opportunities for youth
- * Loudon speedway (impact)
- * Apathetic voters
- * Over burdened school (over crowded)

WHAT DO WE WANT GILMANTON TO BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE:

After describing how Gilmanton is presently perceived the group then shared what their vision was for the community.

- * Home enterprises
- * Quality day care
- * User friendly
- * Safe and drug free
- * Follow through with goals
- * More citizen participation
- * A community center

- * Organized adult sports
- * Cultural identity
- * Cultural activities
- * Sense of community
- * Better means of communication
- * Scenic and agricultural
- * Preservation of the quality of life
- * A real year round library
- * Enhanced volunteerism
- * Proactive rather than reactive
- * Historic preservation
- * Small businesses in town
- * A residential community
- * Status quo
- * Everyone working together
- * A place for youth to return
- * Stable tax rate
- * School with a good gym
- * Trail network
- * Trust and mutual respect
- * Affordable
- * Preserve the environmental integrity
- * Continued recreational activities
- * Dynamic educational system for all

THE TEN COMPONENTS

Friday evening, after developing the mosaic for Gilmanton, the large group broke down into five smaller groups to address the ten components to successful community, with each group doing two of the components. What follows is a report of the findings of those five work groups.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Lack of central information place
- * Confusion about how government works, responsibilities, etc.
- * No single newspaper
- * Lack of government facility open "after hours" for working people
- * Unidirectional information flow (burden is on citizens to get information)

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Local newspaper (e.g. Alton Main street, community calendar)
- * Bulletin board at dump
- * Strategic Planning
- * System for getting opinions to government representatives
- * "Welcome Wagon" for newcomers
- * Town telephone directory
- * Force more open government meetings
- * Published mission statement for each community

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Town government streamlined. Minimal services uncomplicated
- * Lack of space for large meeting (i.e. town meetings)
- * Minimal investment for infrastructure
- * No capital improvement plan, reactive management
- * No follow through with long range planning due to whims of economy

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Better promotion of town meetings
- * Develop public access channel
- * Streamline town meetings and processes
- * Producing information sheets for reoccurring questions. Change date of town meeting
- * Change to balloting
- * Implement programs to overcome
- * Factionalism and voter isolation. Encourage and promote cottage industries

COMMUNITY LEADERSIDP

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * We are economically driven to find short range solutions to "high profile" problems
- * We are reactive rather than proactive
- * We have fragmented communication between part') of the whole
- * We are not consistent in being part of a solution for the "greater good"

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Leaders need to develop a vision for the town that fosters consensus before conflict
- * Consolidate vision into policy
- * Communicate visions to all parts of the community for grassroots support
- * Foster a positive atmosphere of dialogue between all facets of Gilmanton

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Citizens do volunteer to serve on local boards, but barely enough. Many serve in communities out of town. Same faces volunteer.
- * How visible or active are local civic groups? Groups are active but not visible--there is not adequate publicity/communication
- * Do citizens know how local government works? Most do not care--many don't have time
- * Is participation reactive or proactive? More reactive (e.g. school) - the civic profile is proactive
- * Are citizens actively involved in major projects. Yes -playground, academy, town hall, churches, smith meeting house, school, fire department -- but often same faces

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Earlier to widen notification of board vacancies with job descriptions
- * Better recognition; need town newsletter & directory/resource guide
- * Forum for all interested about town government (with social/food)
- * Longer lead-time for publicity & citizen notification / plan ahead rather than fight fires
- * All groups should encourage volunteers, volunteers need to be personally invited

VOLUNTEERISM PHILANTHROPY

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Is there a community foundation? No but there are: church, Gilmanton assistance group, taxpayers general assistance, volunteers for school capital projects - high volunteer spirit
- * Do local corps have active giving programs - Some from outside Gilmanton
- * Does community have long term philanthropic goals --No
- * Do local programs honor volunteers and philanthropist - not enough for either groups or individuals

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Setup fund at N.H. Charitable foundation to benefit Gilmanton
- * Phase II - consider library/media center
- * Photos & thank you in town report - thank at town meetings

VISION AND PRIDE

HOW ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Ongoing volunteer committees & groups (e.g. recycling)
- * Ad Hoc special project volunteer committee
- * Lots of volunteers working out of "labor of love"
- * Lack of monitoring critical issues
- * Updated master plan
- * Boards & commissions (e.g. planning, ZBA)

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Tap people/business resources from within community
- * Have modern library open to public in evening
- * Have a model school facility & system
- * Have visionary land use planning
- * Decide how much sub urbanization we want
- * Preserve our history
- * Preserve our scenic beauty and open spaces

CAPACITY FOR COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Committees and forums exist but the town people don't utilize- what is available
- * Individual groups communicate internally - but not externally
- * Towns people do not take opportunities to participate in town affairs & events

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE FUTURE?

- * Create a network system that provides lists, names, numbers, purposes, events, dates, etc. to the townspeople
- * Create a regularly updated community calendar
- * Create opportunities for the diversified population of the town to become involved in public, recreational, leisure time and cultural events & forums

INTERGROUP RELATION

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Lack of sense of community and lack of recognition w/groups (diverse) in the community
- * Geographical limitations
- * Resource list needed
- * Communication problem both town/civic organizations

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Central information - town bulletin board resource directory
- * More social events - seasonal share identities - teach about
- * Better public access to deliver

REGIONAL COOPERATION

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * Can tap into Lakes region/Capital region
- * Town's traditional independence from other regional entities
- * Regional development (more commercial) offset residential
- * Not many services offered on a regional basis (government) due to cost
- * Lack of communication between neighboring towns

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Need to tap into state to promote our resources - they are available & not being fully utilized
- * Need forum for our leadership (town/civic) to communicate with other towns (ex. mutual aid on regular basis)
- * Recognize need and times to cooperate and coordinate resources yet maintain our independence
- * More regional cooperation with recreational facilities as well as cottage industries recognizing this is the viable growth opportunity for town

CIVIC EDUCATION

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

- * We have little or no educational training program for Civic education
- * Our means of information gathering is primarily gossip, and local papers - we have limited social meeting places
- * The school has limited involvement with civic education
- * There is no means in place to identify civic organizations and leaders * Problems of transient population not focused on issue

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING IN THE FUTURE?

- * Develop information booklet listing all civic programs and leaders
- * Promote public speaking by having informational sessions - develop program in the school
- * Develop an information resource center
- * Promote networking through a Chamber of Commerce type of organization -- promote better parent-student involvement

RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ISSUES:

After reviewing the ten components of the Civic Profile, the participants came to consensus on the KEY ISSUES that exist in Gilmanton. The five KEY ISSUES identified by the group were: Strategic Planning/Vision, Citizen Participation, Community Education, Community Identity and Pride and Community Communication and Information Sharing. The group then divided into five small groups to discuss the KEY ISSUES and their work produced the following results.

- I. STRATEGIC PLANNING/VISION. Action Step Coordinator
Sarah Thorne

Critical steps to implementation

- * Land use planning including consideration of master plan
- * Economic resources planning consideration of master plan
- * Social and cultural resource planning including recreational planning
- * Educational resource planning including schools and library
- * People resource planning

Resources needed (land use and economic planning)

- * Community survey
- * Better publicity for existing survey done by the Planning Board for information on resources, trails etc.
- * Natural resource inventory and establish priorities (air water minerals etc.)
- * Work group to promote farm resources
- * Inventory of historic resources
- * People to accomplish these things
- * Community center for information and activities

Resources needed and leadership (social and cultural resource planning)

- * Parks and recreation committee
- * Trail system and map committee
- * Snowmobile club
- * Conservation committee
- * Land
- * Swimming area (existing area marginally adequate)
- * Buildings
- * Organized sports clubs
- * Community facilities center
- * Involvement of school
- * Garden club
- * Inventory of artisans and resources in town
- * Greater involvement in and information about existing activities
- * Library and auditorium
- * Museum

Resources needed and leadership (educational resources planning)

- * Day care center (multiple benefits to the town)
- * Community education program i.e. Adult Education in local school
- * Adequate physical space
- * Individuals with special expertise and talents
- * Library trustees
- * P.T.A.
- * School Board
- * School principal

Principal leadership (land use planning)

- * Planning Board (should be key forum for all land use planning)
- * Board of Selectmen
- * Natural resource users (there should be a forum for these different user groups to come together and pursue common objectives)
- * Conservation Commission
- * Historic District Commission
- * Parks and recreation department
- * Garden club
- * Adequate representation of landowners in decision making groups

Principal leadership (economic resource planning)

- * Economic Development Committee
- * Board of Selectmen
- * Key business owners
- * Lakes region planning commission
- * Planning Board
- * Belknap County Economic Development Council
- * Landowners

Potential obstacles

- * Citizen participation i.e. apathy
- * Communication resources
- * Lack of inter-communication and coordination between groups and committees
- * Geographical differences
- * Property rights
- * Money
- * Time constraints for meetings of interested parties
- * Lack of transportation for after school activities

Timeline

- * Form Gilmanton citizens' strategic vision and planning committee (most important action step) to bring together diverse interests and existing entities
- * Sarah Thorne to set and advertise meeting tentatively set for May 24
- * Joe Downing to Jerry and Ralph about useful materials· from similar efforts in other towns
- * Committee is independent from government
- * Possible agenda for first meeting define name define mission and purpose define membership and makeup

- a. core working group with necessary representation of all groups and interests who can bring other groups and interests into the process as other needs and interests arise
- b. working groups involving others in addition to the core group based on different topics
- c. periodic meetings of all persons involved as one group to ensure direct communication

* Identify facilitator

* Define projects

* Define working groups (ensure all five components of strategic planning/vision are covered)

* Define how committee does communication and outreach

* Define how to proceed without a budget

* Invitees to first meeting

- a. Civic Profile attendees
- b. Chairs of government committees and any other groups but they must come as individuals not as representatives of groups
- c. Any Gilmanton resident (full or part time)

* Time frame and results

- a. by sixty days mission statement produced and working groups formed
- b. by one hundred eighty days working groups present preliminary recommendations
- c. before one year committee presents findings and work to the community
- d. by one year final report on progress is presented and products are evaluated and assess the appropriateness of continuing

II. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Critical steps to implementation

Action Step Coordinator Bob Richards

- * Inventory of what exists in and out of Gilmanton develop a handbook about this
- * Investigate ways to allow town groups to share their work and purpose
- * Inform the public of the Civic Profile work
- * Consistent and continual press releases

Resources needed

- * Economic Development Commission
- * Youth and civic programs with parent participation
- * Cooperation among youth groups and civic groups
- * Public forum for open discussion
- * Volunteers to make it happen
- * Money
- * Town library facility based in the school

Principal leadership

- * Town officials and school officials
- * Activists in the community
- * Individuals and organizations that will be leaders and highly involved

Potential obstacles

- * Inability to get people involved (not willing or able to give the time)
- * Lack of a large central meeting place
- * Diversity in the community and its effect on developing a consensus
- * SAU a possible blocking of school committee involvement
- * Money
- * Lack of sufficient volunteers
- * Inability to understand the principles and responsibilities of democracy

Timeline

- * Civic Profile final report approval June 1
- * Distribution and start of implementation September 1 1995
- * Questionnaire for committees and departments Sept. 15, 1995
- * Return questionnaire October 15, 1995
- * Brief town history draft by October 15, 1995 * Town handbook edited by February 1, 1996
- * Print town handbook end of March 1996
- * Press releases ongoing

III. COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND PRIDE

Critical steps to implementationAction Step Coordinator
Jim Nelson

- * Creation of an organization to gather, maintain and disseminate information
- * Obtain information
- * Create a mechanism for the dissemination of information between diverse segments of the population
- * Create a regional public relations division

Resources needed

- * People (Jim Nelson)
- * Organizations schools, media and established groups
- * Established community events

Principal leadership

* Individuals Doug Towle, Steve Owens, Gerry Besse, Jane Cumings, George Twigg, Pattie Bradley, Anne Kirby, Cindy Bedford, Fuzz Freeze and Jamie Clark

Potential obstacles

- * Name of the organization
- * Committee must reflect all segments of the community
- * Apathy of the people

Timeline

- * Identify leaders July 1
- * Propose name September 1 hold a contest to get name * First draft by February elections
- * Have a dedication of Friends Street on Old Home Day

IV. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING
Action Step Coordinator
Dave Russell

Critical steps to implementation

- * Gathering of ideas a central place use the expanding resources of the school and a bulletin board at the dump
- * Person(s) to coordinate the gathering and dissemination of information
- * Phone book
- * Resource directory
- * Calendar of events and a newsletter

Resources needed

- * Volunteers Carolyn Baldwin, Rob Baldwin, Mickey Daigle and Margaret Kelley
- * Funding and advertising and government support
- * Community representatives
- * All town organizations
- * Meeting places

Principal leadership

- * Town officials
- * Governing officials
- * Any interested citizens

Potential obstacles

- * Geographic differences Iron Works, Gilmanton Corners and Lower Gilmanton
- * Funding
- * Lack of intra-town committee
- * No central meeting place

Timeline

- * Gilmanton phone directory in May
- * Resource directory in May
- * School library media center
- * Call town meeting in May

V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Action Step Coordinator
Ann Bosiak

A. Identify organizational groups

This is necessary to identify both civic and volunteer groups such as 4-H and other youth groups organizations at Sawyer Lake and Shell Camp, church groups etc.

B. Improve citizen participation

By educating people about *how* government works, and it must be done before town meeting because many people have moved here from other regions where government is very different

C. Youth initiative

We need to teach our children how to participate

- * Invite them in to boards
- * Have kids work on gathering towns' living history
- * Recognize the involvement and contribution that they make

D. We need to take the political edge off meetings because people do not want to participate

- * Make meetings more social
- * Include lunch or dinner in town meetings

E. Inform people when there are openings available on town boards and commissions

F. Have groups organize internally a structure to bring people in and welcome them

G. When people move into town have a registration packet and provide them with information about the town

- * Develop na "incoming census"
- * Develop a systematic way to identify new people and include them without political pressure

H. More participation

People can participate in the town * A park system

- * Expand the use of the Smith Meeting House
- * People gatherings
- * Town clean up day to work with other activities such as Earth Day
- * A community pride day and have town truck pick up by the block

Timeline

- * Begin identifying and developing the resource directory now and other projects will follow on a project-by-project basis.

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANT LIST

Dave Allen	Katie Kardinal
Lori Baldwin	George Kelley
Rob Baldwin	Carolyn Kelley
Felix Barlik	Paul King
Stan Bean	Bonnie Kingsbury
Alice Bean	Anne Kirby
Elizabeth Bikowski	Jim Nelson
Jackie Bosiak	Meg Nighswander
Frank Bosiak	Warren Nighswander
Gene Boudette	Tom O'Flaherty
Gilbert Boyd	Ginny O'Flaherty
Phyllis Buchanan	Kristie Owens
James Clough	Stephen Owens
Candy Daigle	Robert Potter, Sr.
Mickey Daigle	Zannah Roberts
Joe Downing	George Roberts
Mary Gardner	Margaret Roberts
Harvey Gardner	Bud Salmon
David Hamilton	Walter Skantze
Paul Hempel	Andrew Stone
Robin Hempel	Sarah Thorne
Barbara Hyslop	

FACILITATOR LIST

Carolyn Baldwin	Tom Howe
Larry Frates	Phil Ray
Bill Half	Bob Richards

STEERING CO~TTEE

Carolyn Baldwin
Ann Bosiak
Phil Ray

The Steering Committee would like to thank very much the Temperance Tavern for supplying coffee and refreshments for the Civic Profile.