

COMMUNITY BUILDING

STRENGTHENING SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Ideas for Action

- **Create a central core that defines the community.** It can be a village green, a particular place in town, or even a building, like a community center. What is important is a physical space that people associate with “community.”
- **Organize mechanisms.** Trusts, foundations, land banks – through which people may contribute to the greater good of the community as well as to specific organizations and activities. Consider revenue generating activities such as theater events or movie tickets sales so there is a general fund for community improvements.
- **Continue to develop and maintain central villages and town greens** recognizing they are a nucleus to bring people together.
- **Hold community-wide neutral forums to allow people to network** and learn about other aspects of the community. There could also be the opportunity for substantial debate on the issues from all segments of the community.
- **Bring the three sectors (public, private and non-profit) together** to work on specific areas of concern and to share information. This information-sharing process often shows people there is a lot to be proud of in the community.
- **Much of the negative impact in our communities** comes from the closing of store fronts and other businesses, creating empty buildings in the area. Look at ways that support existing businesses or hinder their development through over-regulation.
- **Protect natural resources** through zoning, the master planning process, preserving the character of village centers, and through the education of community residents. Start by defining and inventorying resources, reviewing existing beautification or conservation plans, and, if necessary, creating a special task force to bring all interested parties together.
- **Create opportunities for people to come together to have fun and celebrate the community.** It can be a community-wide fair, a pot-luck supper or just a social hour to get to know each other.
- **Create a Civic Association to coordinate activities** in the community across the various interest groups...look at the community as a whole, rather than the sum of its parts.

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- **Market the positive aspects of a community.** Put good news in the media and include information about the things that make the community special and unique.
- **Develop a long range civic and social master plan** that is visionary and is broader than just government, planning or zoning. It should include a vision of the future, development, land use and acquisition, population growth, education, and environment, as well as the steps of how to get there. Include all sectors in the planning stages.
- **Conduct a community survey to generate interest in the planning process** and to begin to focus attention on improving the image of the community. Identify what is unique and special about the community. Involve youth.
- **Develop community-wide projects** such as beautification efforts, to bring people together in a tangible, positive endeavor around the community.
- **Create contests** that focus on smaller communities within the town and give prizes so people develop pride in their communities.
- **Set aside pride days** to promote the positive aspects of a community. They could also be an educational tool by informing the public about the history of the area.

Resources:

Granite State Civic Profile Book of Ideas, The Governor's Commission on New Hampshire in the 21st Century.