



Local Strategic Planning

Taking a “strategic” approach to planning the future development of a community, region, or state.

Strategic Planning For Local Development

OVERVIEW

Strategic planning is not a complicated concept. It basically involves taking a more “strategic” approach to planning the future development of a community, region, or state. This means thinking in a more focused, or targeted, way about where the development emphasis of local government and local development organizations and institutions should be.

Much consideration is given to understanding the impact that current and future socio-economic trends are having and are likely to have on the community, and an organized effort is made to figure out how to respond effectively to these changing circumstances. This entails setting priorities based on need, opportunity, and a realistic appraisal of available resources.

Not all strategic planning for local economic development, however, has proven to be effective. Although the structure of the planning process is not complicated as such, the interplay of “power,” “politics,” and “personalities” often impedes the flow and eventual success of this process. This material is designed to assist community leaders and economic development practitioners in crafting and implementing a strategic plan that can have a higher probability of achieving the desired results. The following materials are geared to be practical and easily used in the facilitation of the planning process. A degree of flexibility has been incorporated into this process so that it can be used in a variety of local situations.

BRIEF BACKGROUND ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning evolved out of the military as strategists sought to gain an advantage over the “enemy.” Eventually, corporations embraced this approach in an attempt to increase their ability to compete in the marketplace. In the 1980s, strategic planning began to be applied to communities in their quest to use their resources more effectively. Today, strategic planning is widely used in the field of economic and community development to assist communities, regions, and states in achieving a stronger competitive advantage so their local economies can grow and prosper.

Step 1: Beginning the Process (Initiation and Organization)

The strategic planning process doesn't just happen. Some key leader or highly respected group has to decide this process is needed. There has to be awareness that the community's economic development situation needs significant improvement, and that this won't happen without a well thought out planning process. In addition, successful strategic planning requires an understanding of what it takes to make this process effective, and a commitment by the local leadership to see that process through. Poorly conceived planning wastes everyone's time and talent.

One "champion" or a single group is not likely to successfully initiate and sustain strategic planning. Other community stakeholders will need to get involved in various ways and at various stages in the process. To that end, it will be important to begin by creating a steering committee that will have the responsibility to carry out the strategic planning effort. It is difficult to say just who should be on this committee, but it should be relatively small (less than 20 members), and the members should be committed to "staying the course."

This steering committee should be composed of a cross-section of the key leadership (private and political) of the community, people who have the respect of the community. However, it is advisable not to involve top local officials, CEOs of major companies, and other local leaders who would be too busy to take the necessary time to be engaged in the ongoing planning process. On the other hand, if the steering committee is comprised of people who are low on the local leadership totem pole, it isn't likely to be able to marshal the necessary stakeholders and resources to make the strategic plan a reality. It is often useful to engage local leaders in a dialogue about the need for strategic planning, especially when times are good and the local economy is moving along. However, these leaders should be encouraged to think about the future of the community, which can change rapidly with unexpected plant closures, layoffs, loss of a competitive advantage, etc. Strategic planning is not "crisis" planning. It is about positioning the community, region, or state more competitively so that it can ensure its growth and prosperity into the future. Strategic planning also ensures the planners that their efforts will complement the "greater plan" – adding density to a more expansive regional or state plan.

Before time and money are spent on the planning process, it should be determined if the community's leadership is ready for a rigorous strategic planning effort. To that end, it is time well spent to survey key leaders (formally or informally) to determine their readiness or perception of need. This feedback from local leaders can then be compiled and a determination made of the level of support for developing a strategic plan.

If the level of support is low, and it is believed by some leaders that the need for this planning still exists, it may be necessary to provide some workshops or

presentations to demonstrate the value of strategic planning.

If the level of support appears satisfactory, it is time to move forward with the planning. The steering committee should be responsible for deciding how the strategic planning process will proceed. A number of ways exist to do this planning, but an ill-conceived process will not lead to the desired results. The committee should carefully discuss and decide:

- What it will take to complete a successful strategic planning process:
 - Sequence of activities (see the flow chart)
 - Timing
 - Costs and funding
 - Local participation
- Which leaders/stakeholders should be involved, from areas such as:
 - Financial
 - Local business
 - Government
 - Manufacturing
 - Agricultural
 - Property owners
 - Religious
 - Civic
 - Health care and social services
 - Youth
 - Senior citizens
 - Education
 - Electric and/or gas utility
 - Telecommunications
- How to enlist these leaders in the strategic planning process:
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Letters
 - Group meetings
 - Presentations to local organizations
 - Invitations to a leadership workshop
- What the role of the Steering Committee will be.
- Which individual or agency will serve as the local coordinator, or point person, of the process.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The following chart shows that the key components of strategic planning are analysis of the situation, formulation of goals and strategies, implementation of

the plan, and evaluation of results. This evaluation component provides the necessary feedback to determine what changes, if any, are needed in the plan to ensure the desired results and outcomes.

To make sure that the steering committee and other stakeholders understand what is involved in the strategic planning process, guide them through the following flow chart using the included questions to briefly explain each step of the process:

Strategic Planning Process

- Initiation and Organization -- How do we get start this planning process the right way and get people involved in an effectively?
- Conduct Community Assessment -- Who are we as a community? What is unique about us? Why would someone want to live here? Why would a company want to locate or operate here?
- Identify Local Issues -- What is important to us in the growth and development of this community? What do we think our community's strengths and weaknesses are? What do we need to focus on?
- Envision -- Where does this community want to go? What would we like our community to be or to look like ten years or more from now?
- Define Goals -- Based on our priorities, what specific direction should we be headed?
- Develop Strategic Actions -- What do we need to do to accomplish our goals and to solve our problems?
- Finalize Strategic Action Plan -- How do we craft a plan that will take us where we want to go?
- Assign Organizational Responsibilities -- Who will implement these strategic actions?
- Formulate Organizational Strategic Action Plans -- What will the community's organizations and agencies do differently to move our community forward?
- Allocate Resources -- What will it cost to do what needs to be done, and where will the resources come from?
- Monitor Activity -- Are the strategic actions getting done in a timely manner and within budget?
- Review Performance and Progress -- How well are we implementing the plan? Are we achieving the results we want?
- Analyze Impact -- Are our actions leading to desired changes in the community? Are we moving closer to our goals and vision?
- Adjustment -- What do we need to change or to do differently to obtain the desired results?

Step 2: Community Assessment

Any good plan should start with a clear understanding of what is going on in the community and what its economic realities are. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the community, real or perceived? What is the local business climate like? How attractive is the quality of life? A number of tools and techniques exist to help answer these questions. Some of the more useful and easiest to use are described in the following section, including an analysis of the local economy and surveys. A complete module is dedicated to this topic. Please refer to the toolbox for more information on how to perform a community assessment.

Step 3: Leadership Engagement (Envisioning and Identifying Issues)

As was stated earlier, strategic planning for economic development is generally not very effective as a “bottom up” process. Community leadership tends to be more capable than the typical resident of seeing the big picture of what needs to be done to move the economy into a more sustainable mode. For that reason, it is critical that the key leadership of the community is effectively engaged in the strategic planning process. This is particularly true of the effort to create a vision of the future and establish local development priorities.

APPROACHES TO EFFECTIVE VISIONING

Having a better understanding of the community is important, but it is only the beginning of the strategic planning process. Once it is known “who” or “what” the community is, it is critical to decide what it wants to become. Planning without a clear vision is an exercise in futility. It is like leaving for a vacation with no idea of where you are headed.

A number of ways exist to develop a vision for the community. Strategic planning experts generally agree, however, that the vision for a community comes from the leadership, not from local residents. People become leaders in a community because they have a vision of the future that others want to follow.

For that reason, it is important that the visions of local leadership be captured in a structured process. These individual visions need to be articulated and then brought together into a “shared vision.” A leadership workshop or retreat has proven to be an effective means of developing a shared vision for the community. Within the course of less than a full day, local leaders can learn about key aspects of their community and major economic trends that are affecting them. This serves as a foundation for a realistic and viable vision for the future.

The steering committee should arrange a full-day workshop for local stakeholders/leaders (Ideally, this workshop should be conducted over the course of a seven-hour period, including a catered lunch. If necessary, it could be

done over two half-day workshops). This workshop can be designed to:

- Educate local leaders about major socio-economic trends affecting the communities of the state.
- Report on the findings of the surveys and community assessment.
- Create the foundation for a vision statement.
- Identify the priority issues that need to be addressed in the community.
- Clarify what needs to be done to proceed from this point.

The first task is to identify all of the stakeholders/leaders who should be invited to the workshop. The intent is to ensure that all significant interests within the community are represented. The process of identification described in Step 1 should be expanded upon to ensure broad participation.

The next task is to choose a location that can accommodate this workshop. It must have a large meeting room in which the entire group can assemble, and also enough space in that room for breakout sessions or nearby small rooms should be available. A catered lunch should be provided, and coffee and soft drinks should be available for a break in the morning and a break in the afternoon. A computer projector, laptop computer, and screen will be required, as will a flipchart and easel for each small group. The small groups should be no larger than eight participants. Masking tape and marker pens also should be provided for each small group.

An invitation letter should be drafted explaining the workshop's purpose and why it is important participants attend for the full day. This letter should be mailed to each invitee approximately four weeks before the workshop. Follow-up phone calls should be made by the steering committee approximately one week before the workshop. Efforts should be made to get publicity about the workshop in the local media.

The steering committee also should identify local individuals who could serve as facilitators of the small groups. These could be school teachers, government staff, retired professionals, etc.; they should not be key local leaders/stakeholders, since their input will be important to the process. These small group facilitators will be trained by the strategic planning facilitator the day before the workshop in a two-hour training session.

The day before the leadership workshop, the workshop facilitator should ensure that all arrangements are taken care of and should train the small-group facilitators. A meeting should be held with the steering committee to go over all the details.

At the workshop, the following agenda could be followed:

- 8:00 Registration and coffee
- 8:30 Welcome and introductions by the chairperson of the steering committee or other appropriate leader
- 8:45 Presentation by the strategic planning facilitator on key socioeconomic trends
- 9:30 Presentation of results of community assessment and surveys
- 10:00 Coffee break
- 10:15 Visioning exercise
- 12:00 Catered lunch
- 1:00 Prioritizing of key development issues
- 2:30 Coffee break
- 2:45 Vote by all participants on final issues
- 3:00 Discussion of “path forward”
- 3:20 Wrap-up and dismissal

Prior to the workshop, participants should be assigned to their small groups by the steering committee. Their group number should be on their name badges when they register.

Leadership Workshop Visioning Process

What is your vision for the development of your community?

- What types of economic, governmental, and social activity would you like to see happen in the community in the future?
- What community values should be retained or developed as part of this vision?
- What type of jobs should be developed to meet the needs of the community and the work force?
- What new infrastructure is needed to more effectively develop the community?
- What social and quality of life issues need to be resolved?
- What new attractions and facilities should be built?
- And so on.

Now, imagine that this is the year 2018. Your hopes and expectations for the local economic development effort have been realized. Significant changes have occurred, but the best of the past has been retained. The community’s quality of life and economy meet the needs and desires of the residents.

Please describe in writing the five most important characteristics of your region.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5.

The components of the community's shared vision would be captured through a small-group exercise that combines the Nominal Group Technique and Consensus-Building. The facilitator's instructions for this process are found in the Appendix. Generally, the writing of the vision statement is not done at the workshop. That process would be too time-consuming. Instead, the high priority elements of the vision coming out of the workshop could be crafted into a vision statement by the steering committee or by an outside facilitator or consultant.

Exercise to Prioritize Key Development Issues

The next task of the workshop is to identify and prioritize key development issues confronting the region. No community or region can simultaneously and effectively tackle all of its problems and pursue all of its opportunities. Strategic planning is about "focus"; which of the region's many concerns can be successfully addressed by a more concerted effort? Strategic planning is not comprehensive planning. This "targeted" process focuses on key development issues. Issues are local development problems and opportunities and potential; and organizational considerations.

Until a development issue becomes a key priority for local leadership, it is unlikely that much will be done to address it. Establishing priorities facilitates the strategic allocation of limited resources so they can be most effectively used. Forms that participants can use to prioritize issues are found in the Appendix. The participants will first individually identify his/her key regional issues. The small-group process using the Nominal Group Technique will capture their issues and their priorities. The top five or six issues from each small group will be combined into one master list to be voted on by the whole session group. This will result in a list of the key priorities for the economic development of the state and its regions.

Step 4: Setting Goals and Measurable Outcomes

The steering committee will need to convert each of the problems, or issues, into goal statements. These goals will be incorporated into the strategic plan, along with the priority strategic actions that address each goal.

It should be noted that the goal is the bridge between the vision statement and the strategic actions. It is not measurable or action-oriented; instead, it is a statement describing a desired future condition. For example, a goal could be as follows: "The local educational system, from kindergarten through secondary school, meets the needs of the businesses in the community."

Step 5: Strategic Action Planning

After the leadership workshop and the writing of the vision statement, the

steering committee should begin the process of preparing strategic actions for each goal/priority issue. These actions will represent programs and activities that have worked in other communities to accomplish similar goals, research on strategic plans, past strategic planning experience, and ideas gleaned from the previous planning efforts.

It may be appropriate to set up individual task forces, or strategic action teams, to develop the strategic action plan for each priority issue, one team per issue. These task forces should consist of individuals with a strong interest in and/or experience with that particular topic.

The steering committee should decide who should serve as chairperson of each team and recruit that individual. That chairperson, with the help of the steering committee, should identify other individuals in the community who would be a valuable addition to that team and then enlist their involvement.

If this course is pursued, these teams should then be trained in how to effectively and efficiently carry out this important task. This could be accomplished in a joint workshop held for the members of the strategic action teams (SATs). This training is extremely important to the success of the action-planning effort, and every chairperson in particular should attend. Every SAT must be represented at this training. Each chairperson can be provided with a package of materials to be used by the team over the course of its meetings. The facilitator might take the teams through these materials to ensure their understanding of what needs to be accomplished.

A strategy is a pattern of action through which the leadership proposes to address key issues, modify current circumstances, and/or realize latent opportunities. A strategy is a course of action (strategic action) laid out to reach a specific goal. Tactics are strings of planned tasks that make up a strategy. Many tasks may be involved.

After determining the strategic actions, the team should prioritize these actions to determine which would be most cost-effective and critical for addressing the goal. The “high” priority actions will be incorporated into the strategic plan; the rest will be noted. Upon completion of the action plan, this would be submitted to the steering committee for its review and feedback.

Step 6: Writing and Communicating the Strategic Plan Draft

The strategic plan draft should contain the following:

- An explanation of the local strategic planning process
- A summary of the community assessment
- The vision statement
- The goals and strategic actions

- The implementation procedure for the plan

The format for the goals and actions should be as follows:

Goal 1:

Measurable Outcome:

Strategic Action 1:

Responsible organization:

Estimated cost: \$

Source of funding:

Timetable:

Benefit to the community:

Performance measure:

Strategic Action 2:

Responsible organization:

Estimated cost: \$

Source of funding:

Timetable:

Benefit to the community:

Performance measure:

Example of a goal, measurable outcome, and strategy:

Goal: Our community will become an important center for corporate office operations.

Outcome: Within the next two years, promote the advantages of our community for office operations to all of the Fortune 500 corporations.

Strategic Action: Send direct mailings to CEOs in the Fortune 500 companies.

The steering committee will collect the above information from the teams and complete the first draft of the strategic plan. The steering committee will then meet collectively with all of the SATs to discuss the strategic plan. Discussion at this meeting also will address how to present the plan to the general public for its review and comment before the plan is “finalized” (No strategic plan should ever be final).

An executive summary of the plan’s highlights should be prepared to be distributed to the interested public and/or published by local media. Several public meetings should be held after plan distribution to allow open discussion of the plan.

Step 7: Implementing the Plan

An implementation process should be developed by the steering committee to ensure that the plan is carried out. This could include:

- Members of the steering committee meeting with representatives of the

organizations designated as responsible for specific strategic actions. The purpose of this discussion is to obtain buy-in from the organization or agency regarding its role in the action and to assist in determining how the action can be implemented effectively. This should lead to a Memorandum of Agreement from each responsible entity.

- A task force should be established from each SAT as an ongoing entity to monitor and coordinate the implementation of its sector of the plan. Each task force should provide quarterly or bi-annual reports to the steering committee on the progress achieved.
- The steering committee should prepare an annual report on the status and progress of the strategic plan, which will be presented to the public and local officials through the media and possible public meetings. It is important that “benchmarks” or “milestones” or “performance measures” be defined for each of the strategies so that progress toward their achievement can be determined.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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APPENDIX

Facilitator Instructions for the Visioning Exercise
Forms and Facilitator Instructions for Prioritizing Issues

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE VISIONING SESSION OF THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Each participant in the workshop will be asked to write down on the sheet provided the five major components of his or her vision for the region. This will be explained to them in the "full group" session. The participants will then be dismissed to their small groups or will begin working with their facilitator.

1. Ask each member of the group to share, in turn, one of his/her characteristics of the region in the year 2018. Write this on the flipchart. Go around the group, getting one characteristic from each member. If the component or characteristic is similar to one already stated, try to combine them. If it is identical to something already stated, ask for another component from the individual.
2. Repeat the process, asking for a second characteristic.
3. Repeat the process, asking for a third characteristic
4. Ask if any additional characteristics need to be listed.
5. Go through the list with the group and consolidate similar characteristics.
6. Start with the first characteristic and determine if there is group consensus on including it within a vision statement for the region. If not, move on to the second, the third, and so forth.
7. After you have determined those characteristics for which there is consensus, go back through the remaining items to determine if any of them could be developed with minor changes or modifications. Add to the list those characteristics for which there is consensus and eliminate those without consensus.
8. Working with the group, try to determine the priorities of the vision components. Give each component either an "H" for high priority or very important, "M" for moderate priority, or "L" for low priority or not very important. If the group can't agree on how to rate a particular component, give the rating that the majority of the group believes is correct.
9. Rewrite the high priority components on a flip sheet to bring back to the group as a whole for discussion.

What is your vision for the community?

1. Listed below are five factors that many people think are important when choosing a place to live. How do they rank in importance to you? Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third most important, a “2” by the fourth most important and a “1” by the least important.

- () Employment opportunities
- () Desire to be near family
- () Near good schools and other community services
- () Climate and recreation activities
- () Housing availability

2. Please circle how satisfied you are with the following in your community

ISSUE	Very pleased	Satisfied	Not sure	Not satisfied	Very unhappy
a. Elementary and secondary education	5	4	3	2	1
b. Community college	5	4	3	2	1
c. Availability of adult continuing education	5	4	3	2	1
d. Job skills training	5	4	3	2	1
e. Programs for senior citizens	5	4	3	2	1
f. Health care	5	4	3	2	1
g. Child care services	5	4	3	2	1
h. Race relations	5	4	3	2	1
i. Recreation programs	5	4	3	2	1
j. Recreation facilities	5	4	3	2	1
k. Cultural activities (art, music, festivals)	5	4	3	2	1
l. Housing availability and cost	5	4	3	2	1
m. City planning	5	4	3	2	1
n. Local streets and parish roads	5	4	3	2	1
o. Major highways serving the community	5	4	3	2	1
p. Public transportation	5	4	3	2	1
q. Traffic movement	5	4	3	2	1
r. Commercial air service	5	4	3	2	1
s. Water and sewer service	5	4	3	2	1
t. Water quality	5	4	3	2	1
u. Storm drainage	5	4	3	2	1
v. Environmental protection	5	4	3	2	1
w. Law enforcement	5	4	3	2	1
x. Telephone service	5	4	3	2	1
y. Level of local taxes	5	4	3	2	1
z. Availability of quality jobs	5	4	3	2	1
aa. Availability of local business	5	4	3	2	1
bb. Retail shopping	5	4	3	2	1
cc. Downtown	5	4	3	2	1
dd. Image of the community	5	4	3	2	1

ee. Public access to the recreation area	5	4	3	2	1
ff. Cleanliness of the community	5	4	3	2	1

3. What would you say is the biggest problem facing the city today that you would like local government to do something about? Place an "X" in front of the answer of your choice (only one choice permitted).

- The quality of local education
 - The availability of quality jobs
 - The availability of job training or retraining
 - The loss of young people moving out of the community
 - Programs for senior citizens
 - Health care quality and availability
 - Availability of a range of recreational and cultural activity
 - Availability of public transportation
 - Local traffic congestion
 - The quality of drinking water
 - The attractiveness and cleanliness of the community
 - The level of crime and drug activity
 - Race relationships
 - The availability of quality housing
 - The cost of housing
 - The level of local taxes
 - The lack of vacant land in the city that can be developed
 - Lack of enforcement of zoning and building code regulations
 - Inadequate shopping opportunities in the community
 - The condition of the downtown
 - Other
- (describe) _____

4. How old are you?

- 15 years or younger
- 16 to 21 years
- 22 to 35 years
- 36 to 55 years
- 56 to 65 years
- 66 years or over

5. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

6. What is your level of formal education?

- 8th grade or below

- 9th grade thru 11th grade
 - High school graduate
 - Some college/technical school
 - Associate degree from two-year college
 - College graduate (four years)
 - Post-graduate college
7. How long have you lived in the community?
- Less than one year
 - One to five years
 - Six to ten years
 - Eleven to twenty years
 - More than twenty years
 - All my life
8. What is your occupation?

Do you live in the parish or within a town or city?

Parish _____ Town or City _____

If within a town or city, which one? _____

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY ISSUES USING THE NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

1. Break into smaller groups of no more than 8 people.
2. Each group member writes on the worksheet provided what he or she considers one of the most important issues for economic development in the area. Each individual should come up with five issues.

Issues are to be thought of as problems to be solved, concerns or needs to be addressed, or opportunities to be pursued. Issues should be stated clearly as problems, concerns, needs, or opportunities. For example, "education" of itself is not a problem or concern; "a high percentage of high school graduates are illiterate and lack basic skills" is a problem.

3. Each member ranks his/her issues on the worksheet, giving the most important a "5" down to "1" for the least important.
4. Each member states his or her first priority issue (rated "5") in turn, going around the entire group once, and each issue is written on the flip chart.

5. The process is repeated a second, third, and possibly fourth time. If an issue is already stated, the group member should state the next one on his/her list. Continue process until all issues have been stated and recorded.
6. The facilitator should work with the group to attempt to consolidate similar or related issues into one issue as appropriate.
7. If necessary, some or all of the issues should be rewritten on the flip chart to ensure clarity. A letter of the alphabet in sequence should be placed in front of each issue.
8. Each member of the group chooses only five of the listed issues by circling the appropriate letters on the list provided. He or she should then rate these five issues on a 1 to 5 scale, "5" being most important, "1" least important. These ratings should be placed at the appropriate blank on the sheet.
9. Tabulate the results and display them on the flip chart.
10. Dismiss the group back to the main group and take the flip chart sheet with you. Report your group's list in order of priority to the larger group.
11. Assist in consolidating the lists of issues, the rating of the issues, and the tabulation of the results. The issue with the highest total number of points will be considered the highest priority issue.

After each of the small groups has shared its five or six top priority issues, the small group facilitators will consolidate these into one master list. This list will be posted and the participants will use the second rating sheet to vote on the issues. These sheets will be collected and tabulated immediately.

Key Issues in the Development of your Region

Issues are to be thought of as problems to be solved, concerns or needs to be addressed, or opportunities to be pursued. Issues should be stated clearly as problems, concerns, needs, or opportunities. For example, "education" of itself is not a problem or concern; "a high percentage of high school graduates are illiterate and lack basic skills" is a problem. You are asked to write down in no particular order what you consider to be the five most important issues currently facing your region relative to its economy or its quality of life.

Key Issues

- A. _____
- _____
- B. _____
- _____
- C. _____
- _____
- D. _____
- _____

E. _____

PRIORITY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

(to be used in the small groups)

The following letters refer to the list of regional and economic development issues that are listed alphabetically on the flipchart sheets. From that list, choose the five that you believe are the most important for the future of the region. Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third, a “2” by the fourth, and a “1” by the least important of the five.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____
- I. _____
- J. _____
- K. _____
- L. _____
- M. _____
- N. _____
- O. _____
- P. _____
- Q. _____
- R. _____
- S. _____
- T. _____
- U. _____
- V. _____
- W. _____
- X. _____
- Y. _____
- Z. _____

**PRIORITY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
(to be used for the final whole group vote on priorities)**

The following letters refer to the list of regional and economic development issues that are listed alphabetically on the composite list that combines the results from the small- group process. From that list, choose the five that you believe are the most important for the future of the region. Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third, a “2” by the fourth, and a “1” by the least important of the top five issues.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____
- I. _____
- J. _____
- K. _____
- L. _____
- M. _____
- N. _____
- O. _____
- P. _____
- Q. _____
- R. _____
- S. _____
- T. _____
- U. _____
- V. _____
- W. _____
- X. _____
- Y. _____
- Z. _____