

Sustaining Progress Checklist

Traits, Characteristics and Ongoing Activities that Strengthen a Community and its Organizations

This checklist is designed to be a self-assessment tool. Read the following questions and individually answer each. Then, as a group, compare answers. This exercise is a way to do an internal environmental scan and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Thus, this is a form of SWOT analysis.

Community Attitudes:

“Does your community/organization ...”

Yes No Undecided

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Believe in itself and its ability to create a viable future? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Try to solve its problems before seeking outside help? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Have a written values statement? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Willingly commit local dollars to improve the quality of life? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Cooperate within the community among the civic organizations and with the local government when planning projects, events, and programs? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Cooperate with other communities on projects? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Look to a variety of people for leadership? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Seek creative solutions to address its concerns? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Recognize and celebrate achievements and successes on a regular basis? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments:

Community Vision:

“Does your community/organization ...”

Yes No Undecided

- | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| 10. Have a vision statement that motivates, challenges, and unites people? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Identify and prioritize key issues? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Involve all stakeholders in pro-actively designing its future? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 13. Evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 14. See the community as extending past the city limits to include rural areas? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Have awareness of its competitive positioning? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Know what it wants its sustainable future to be? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 17. Have a visual image of its future? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

Community Plan:

- | “Does your community/organization ...” | Yes | No | Undecided |
|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 18. Have a formal organization that is responsible for the developing plans, implementing and revising them? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 19. Take advantage of state, regional, and national resources (i.e., grants, technical assistance, etc.) and educational programs? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 20. Have a written action plan based on a strong vision statement to guide development? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 21. Schedule regular meetings of staff in order to network across organizations and agencies? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 22. Have a program to welcome newcomers and visitors? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 23. Have a program to retain and assist local businesses? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 24. Have a program to promote business formation? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 25. Have a means of publicizing issues and strategies in an unbiased way (i.e., good local media)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

Community Resources:

- | “Does your community/organization ...” | Yes | No | Undecided |
|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 26. Have a large and growing leadership base drawn from all age categories? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 27. Have a person to coordinate community affairs and represent the community? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 28. Have a professional staff person to represent business interests? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| 29. Use natural resources in a sustainable manner? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 30. Carefully use local government financial resources? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 31. Build upon its historical and cultural uniqueness? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 32. Identify and use all the capital available within its boundary (i.e., human capital, financial capital, social capital, human engineered capital, etc.)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 33. Use information gathered from network meetings to address community concerns? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 34. Provide a special fund for community development (i.e., a community foundation)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 35. Encourage the use of current communication technology (i.e., the Internet)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 36. Maintain a good physical infrastructure (i.e., bridges, sewer, water systems, etc.)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 37. Have involved citizens ready to engage in action planning and visioning? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Comments: _____

Community Beneficial Actions:

“Does your community/organization ...”

Yes No Undecided

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 38. Have an ongoing training program for current and future community leaders? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 39. Build and utilize political influence at all levels, local, regional, state and national? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 40. Participate in regional planning and coordinating activities (i.e., regional economic development councils, RC&D's, regional tourism associations, etc.)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 41. Have an action agenda that is guided by a strategic plan? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 42. Use information from other communities who are successful in dealing with the same issues? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 43. Create and maintain a system that enhances marketing between local buyers and sellers (i.e. a business directory)? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Source: K-State Research and Extension
 Department of Agricultural Economists
 September 2003

Authors: David L. Darling and Charles Durbin