



Visioning Our Future: Looking Ahead to 2015

Summary Report

In the Spring of 2011 the Clarkston Development Corporation initiated a series of community dialogues to increase consensus among a wide range of residents and other stakeholders. In the first two sessions more than 100 participants gathered at the Clarkston Community Center to enjoy food, each other, and lively conversations.

When the sessions were completed the ideas were collected and sorted into similar categories. Besides ideas that fit into themes related to the initiatives that CDF has developed from previous conversations with residents and stakeholders there were good ideas that we have grouped into two themes included in a fifth section titled “Other Themes.” For each of the initiatives and “other themes,” vision statements were written. These **vision statements are being sent back to participants**, made available to the community, and reviewed to decide the next stages of planning and acting.

Additional opportunities to meet and to envision the future are being planned since this is an ongoing process.

Themes and Vision Statement: A Summary

The visioning sessions asked participants to think broadly about the future of Clarkston and what they hope for in 2015. More than 400 ideas were created by the participants. There were two sessions. The first session, with about 55 participants was made up of a range of participants, with significant participation by elected officials and representatives of a variety of groups committed to Clarkston and its environs. The second session, with about 45 participants, was made up of a significant number of community residents, fewer elected officials, and representatives from various community groups and organizations. From the 400+ ideas created in the two sessions, six major themes were apparent.

The list should not be viewed as a diagnosis that fixes the importance of issues. It can rightfully be used as a listening tool. To what extent does the ordering of the ideas fit with other observations from your own work in the community? Do the ideas and the visions seem to fit with what you hear from the community and from various stakeholder groups?

These statements are part of an ongoing community conversation. By sending out the report and making the list of ideas available to those interested, additional information can shape the wording and the prioritization of ideas.

The Four Initiatives Stated as Themes:

The Connected Community

Community Building and Family Advocacy.

We want to be the model of a peaceful community that sees its diverse cultures, gifts, and abilities as the building blocks for further development.

The Learning Community

Education

We want to improve our schools and we also want to make sure that there is a range of educational opportunities that engage our youth and that put young people in leadership roles.

The Healthy Community

Health and Wellness

We want a healthy community that has a beautiful health care facility with resident professionals. We want preventive health through health fairs, healthy eating and active living, e.g. cycling, walking, competitive races.

The Well Fed and Ecologically Sustainable Community

Urban Agriculture and Green Space

We want a community where we have food markets with healthy choices and where we have access to community gardens and green corridors and open spaces.

Other Themes:

The Safe Community

Health and Safety

We want to create a community that has safe places and safe passages to get to those places. We also want communities organized to stand against crime with the active support and engagement of Clarkston and DeKalb County police officers and to further leadership among our youth toward a safer and stronger community.

The Playing and Fit Community

Recreation

We want a community that has enough places for individuals and groups to exercise and to play. We want to find the right mix of facilities in neighborhoods and apartment complexes and facilities in public areas.

The Four Initiatives as Themes

The Connected Community

Community Building and Family Advocacy.

We want to be the model of a peaceful community that sees its diverse cultures, gifts, and abilities as the building blocks for further development.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Honor our diversity
- Find ways to meet, to strengthen connections for individuals and families.

Ideas and Dreams:

- Support individuals and families by connecting them with available services.
- Find ways to keep the community clean
- Create public spaces where people can gather
- Create venues to share our art, music, poetry, and cultures
- Ensure that apartments are well managed and managed for the benefit of residents.

Important Questions:

- How do we create public places for the community to meet and develop relationships and plans?
- What events could help bring us together across cultures?
- Who are the key stakeholder groups that are on the sideline and how do we engage them?
- What are the practical ways in which we can connect individuals and families with the services they need?

The Learning Community

Education

We want to improve our schools and we also want to make sure that there is a range of educational opportunities that engage our youth and that put young people in leadership roles.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Create opportunities for young people who would be otherwise unchallenged.
- Create opportunities for young leaders to be ambassadors with influence.
- Public schools will need to be partners in our efforts to improve educational opportunities.

Ideas and Dreams

- Have educational opportunities that start with pre-schoolers but that extend to adults.
- Develop stronger relationships with the schools and the new superintendent.
- Use the gifts of stay-at-home mothers and older residents.
- Have street mentors.
- Create new schools to better serve the needs of our students.

Important Questions

- How can we encourage more youth activities that also lend themselves to leadership development and education?
- How can we have the maximum leverage with the DeKalb County Schools?
 - Who are our allies with relationships?
 - Do we invest in programs in the community?
 - Do we invest in convening and advocacy?
- What steps should we take in exploring the creation of a strong educational pipeline from Preschool through high school?

The Healthy Community

Health and Wellness

We want a healthy community that has a beautiful health care facility with resident professionals. We want preventive health through health fairs, healthy eating and active living with races, walking, and playgrounds.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Focus on better coordinated and more accessible health care.
- Create better sources of healthy food.
- Ensure places for exercise.

Ideas and Dreams

- Train health advocates to translate and to advise
- Hold a health fair
- Increase state-of-the-art preventive practices
- Focus on chronic illnesses with speakers and information
- Have “play streets” that may be blocked at times
- Bring in healthy food stores.
- Create additional health services, e.g. a clinic.

Important Questions

- How can we leverage the interaction of health professionals and institutions in the community?

- What would increase accessibility to treatments and to preventive health opportunities?
 - What changes in the systems would make a difference?
 - What organizing among different stakeholder groups would make a difference?
- What can we learn from Kaiser-Permanente and other providers and their work in the other communities, e.g. Kaiser in the Belvedere Community?

The Well-Fed and Ecologically Sustainable Community

Urban Agriculture and Green Space

We want a community where we have food markets with healthy choices and where we have access to community gardens and green corridors and open spaces.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Increase the number of markets whether in buildings or open-air.
- Encourage new alternatives for local food production.

Ideas and Dreams

- Hold more open air markets.
- Hold cultural food festivals with the markets.
- Start local grower networks
- Re-open the 129 wells in the city

Important Questions

- What is the best way to build additional support for urban agriculture?
- How can garden venues be increased?
- What steps would increase the sustainability of the gardens in the community?

Other Themes

The Safe Community

Health and Safety

We want to create a community that has safe places and safe passages to get to those places. We also want communities organized to stand against crime and we want supportive and accountable relationships with our police officers in Clarkston and in DeKalb County.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Work to prevent bullying.
- Take steps to maximize police presence, and provide avenues of communication through meetings with the police and training of community members.

Ideas and Dreams

- Use more video surveillance
- Maximize bike paths and sidewalks for safe passage
- Create safe places for play
- Create neighborhood watches and neighborhood list serves
- Activities off the streets and maybe cultural movie nights

Important Questions

- How can we foster greater connections among neighbors, city officials, and police departments to increase awareness and security?
- What are the ways that we can connect homeowners and other stakeholder groups to join in common cause around security?
- What can we do to increase security in the apartment communities?

The Playing and Fit Community

Recreation

We want a community that has increased places for individuals and groups to exercise and to play. We want to find the right mix of facilities in neighborhoods and apartment complexes and facilities in public areas.

The Principles that Shape the Vision

- Provide safe places for recreation that is community friendly.
- Provide opportunities for individuals and for groups and leagues.
- Find outdoor performance space for entertainment.

Ideas and Dreams

- Establish playgrounds in the apartment complexes.
- Have soccer tournaments by age.
- Do community marathons or 5K races.
- Support the rec teams.

Important Questions

- What is the thread that connects green spaces, passive recreational spaces, and active recreational spaces?
- Are there resources currently available that people do not use or that many people are not aware of?
- What are the recreational issues in the apartment communities? Are there possible creative improvements there?