

Creating a Community Vision Statement

The activity described below can support your Mobility Coalition members in informally sharing what they hope and want for the future of your community. The activity can be adapted and adjusted as needed for your group and can help build excitement and energy around the work you are doing together.

Step 1: Engage the group in individual reflection on the community's past and future.

You can start this process by asking group members to begin reflecting before the meeting. At the start of the meeting, allow a few minutes for reflection for group members to reconnect with any thinking they have already done.

Step 2: Reflect on the past.

Consider using the questions below to guide a group discussion (you can include additional questions, but try to keep the overall list to no more than six or seven):

1. What are some of the notable moments of this past year or few years for our community?
2. What are some of your organization's accomplishments?

Step 3: Visualize the future.

Lead the coalition in thinking about their hopes and aspirations for the next five years that will advance upward mobility and racial equity in the community. Tell the group that in 3 years (or 5 years, or 10 years, depending on your MAP implementation timeline) a local news host will do a special report on your community, highlighting your progress on upward mobility and equity and successful interventions you have implemented to address community challenges. Keeping in mind what they shared in Step 2, give the group 3–5 minutes to write down what this news host would say. You can also prompt them with more specific examples like: "Take our visitors first to a new child care facility. What is going on? How has this made a difference in the community?"

Step 4: Find common themes.

Ask participants to share their future visions with the group. Once everyone has shared, identify the common themes and record them on a medium everyone can see. These will provide key words to include in the vision statement.

Facilitation tip: Much research indicates that visual cues help us better retrieve and remember information. So consider engaging a graphic facilitator who can capture your discussion visually. Graphic facilitators use a combination of graphics such as diagrams, pictures, symbols, and writing to lead a group to a goal. You can then display the resulting artifact at all your meetings as a means to keep the group focused and grounded in your vision for the future.

Step 5: Finalize your vision statement.

Allow the group a few minutes to reflect on the key words and themes identified and draft their own vision statements. Write down all the draft vision statements. Ask the group to vote on their top choices for further refinement.

Facilitation tip: Don't let the group get too caught up in semantics. If you reach a stalemate, take a break or end the meeting. Have the core team wordsmith and bring the statement back to the group. This is where it is important for everyone to have a clear sense of who has the authority to make the final decision.

Step 6: Confirm final buy in.

Once you have the final vision statement, do a quick check around the room to see where people are. Ask people to show a thumb up if they are excited and support the vision, a thumb turned sideways horizontally if they support the vision, and a thumb down if they do not support the vision.