

The Futures Festival

Issue Area: Community Planning

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The **FUTURES** **FESTIVAL**

Summary:

The Futures Festival is not a city plan nor a campaign nor an initiative, it is guide to run a festival that will successfully the most important community questions and problems that need to be addressed. It raises issues that deal with community planning since the festival encourages older adults and young adults to talk about what they feel the community lacks or does well. It is a best practice for community planning because it demonstrates clearly with guidelines and examples how to organize and run an inexpensive forum that goals for community planning can be extracted from. Matthew Kaplan, Professor at Pennsylvania State, developed a facilitator's guide to the Futures Festival that works with intergenerational programs and aging.

Kaplan's guide lays out guidelines to successfully carry out a special event to engage people of all ages in a constructive dialogue about community development issues. The festival uses constructive visioning by a collaboration of older adults and younger adults in a creative process to depict what they believe are the right direction for the community's future. Some events that can be used successfully are creative projects that culminate with things such as murals, models, photographs, and theatrical displays. Kaplan breaks up the development of a Futures Festival into three stages: Event Planning (2-4 months), The Event (1 day), and Post-Event Organizing (2 weeks). There are four main objectives to the Futures Festival which Kaplan says are



Community development discussions are key to the Futures Festival

- (1) To give community residents an opportunity to learn how local development decisions are made.
- (2) To increase participants' understanding of their community and the needs and concerns of its residents.
- (3) To heighten participants' sense of civic involvement and responsibility.

- (4) To provide civic leaders and community development professionals with additional information about residents' concerns.

These four objectives classify why the Futures Festival is a great event to configure citizens' feelings on the goals and future of the community.

Additional Resources:

“A Facilitator’s Guide.” *The Futures Festival*. Agricultural and Extension Education of Pennsylvania State University. <<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Docs/Futures.pdf>>.

Kaplan, Matthew, Ph.D. “The Futures Festival: An Intergenerational Approach to Community Participation.” Community and Rural Development Institute. <http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/cd-toolbox/community_planning/000156.html>.

“Community Planning/Visioning.” *Intergenerational Programs & Aging*. Agricultural and Extension Education of Pennsylvania State University. <<http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Festival.html>>.