

Policy Area IV Community Development and Housing



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

Community Development is the process of building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. Community Development expresses values of fairness, equality, accountability, opportunity, choice, participation, mutuality and continuous learning. Education, enabling and empowering are at the core of Community Development

As one of the basic human needs, as well as one that is rife with inequality, housing benefits greatly from community development activities. Public, private, and governmental entities can do a lot to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing in a community through preservation, development, design, and code enforcement. These strategies can be used to address the economic, safety and aesthetic issues that help people turn houses into homes.

When people have homes, they become more invested in the larger picture of where they live. They care more about revitalizing their Hamlets and Towns, improving their main streets and preserving their historic treasures. These improvements make a place more desirable for homeowners, renters, and businesses and thereby create a more stable population and stronger communities.

The following objectives were identified by the Sullivan 2020 Steering Committee and focus groups. They are important across government and within the private and voluntary sectors.

1. Act on the basis of the core values and commitments of community development
2. Support action by community and neighborhood groups and organizations and community businesses and neighborhood groups
3. Have a clear and well planned process that enables communities to influence their policies, programs and priorities
4. Recognize the right of communities to propose alternative courses of action
5. Value different types and levels of participation
6. Build local, county-wide and regional strategies through dialogue with people and organizations active in the communities
7. Recognize the functions of community development and allocate resources to implement the strategies
8. Identify the resources, information and support required by community representatives and organizations when working in partnerships
9. Assist in the development of private and public partnerships

10. Establish and assist communities with strategies, working practices, project/program and time management to enable participation by residents and stakeholders

Organizations in all sectors can provide crucial support to community development, by adopting these ideas and ensuring that it applies in their respective areas of work within their organizations. Therefore, Sullivan County and the local municipal governmental bodies should take into account the above objectives in the development of legislation, regulations, technical assistance and guidance.

Policy Area IV Community Development and Housing

Goal:

To create and implement community development policies, procedures, and programs to enhance communities and neighborhoods throughout the County.



COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

The process of community development includes changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Persons that work in community development support individuals, groups and organizations in this process on the basis of certain values and commitments. This support is achieved through facilitation and participation of local residents and community stakeholders throughout the entire process. The residents and stakeholders enable connections to be made between communities and the development of wider policies and programs.

Community development is undertaken with communities of place, identity and common interest. This includes communities based on faith, a shared culture or heritage, consumers of public services, those with common interests due to their employment and people working together to promote their rights and responsibilities as a resident of a community.

Community development takes place within the context of social, demographic, technological, economic, environmental, political and other change. These changes have regional and local impact. Communities initiate changes and through networking have a wider influence. There are also changes which are not initiated by communities that present both threats and opportunities. The community development process works with communities to analyze, initiate and influence social change.

A community development approach starts with people in communities coming together to address common issues. The approach supports the connections that exist amongst the people, and is flexible and responsive to their priorities and concerns. However, communities can not do everything and in some cases, the resources of federal, state, private and voluntary organizations are required to achieve change.

Community development can occur through community capacity building. Community capacity building involves collective action taken by Villages and hamlets to enhance the long-term social, economic, and environmental conditions of their community. This collective action is typically facilitated and enhanced through the provision of facilitation and technical assistance by either County planning staff or other professionals in the area.

Capacity building involves building partnerships among governments, non-profit organizations, citizen groups, and, in some cases, foundations to join resources in solving local development issues ranging

from beautification to addressing housing and infrastructure needs to main street revitalization that perhaps a general purpose government may not be able to do either because of limited staff and funding or lack of technical expertise.

Community capacity building is accomplished through focused visioning and strategic planning with localities to help them define their goals, how they want to accomplish them, and what actors will be responsible for certain actions. In effect, community capacity building defines the roles and actions of residents, and non-governmental organizations, and it establishes specific deliverables from local governments in meeting goals of the community.



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STRATEGY 4.1

Build and maintain partnerships among County, Towns, and local development corporations in addressing quality of life issues.

Timeframe

SHORT TERM
INTERMEDIATE
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Assist communities and local organizations to create their own visions and community development goals.	C/M/P	
Continue the partnership between the Division of Planning, other regional and local community development organizations such as the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, in offering Villages and hamlets visioning processes to meet their community development goals.	C/M/P	
Continue the partnership between the Division of Planning and beautification initiatives such as Sullivan Renaissance in order to improve planning, long-term sustainability and community capacity building.	C/M/P	
Provide technical assistance and value-added services to municipalities and other local partners to enhance and develop community strategies.	C/M/P	
Continue to assist and support Towns with the pursuit of forming, strengthening and expanding local development corporations and similar local not for profit agencies through technical assistance, structured training and increased funding.	C/M/P	
Continue and expand outreach to broaden and diversify citizen participation in all types of community events.	C/M/P	

Leadership Role: C – County M – Municipality P – Partners
Status: A – Active P – Pending C – Complete



Resources

Documents

- ◆ “The CAFÉ Approach: New Tools to Foster Citizen Involvement in the Community Development Process in Small Rural Towns.” Robert J. Tosterud, CD Practice Issue 10, 2005.
- ◆ “Strategic Partnering for Change.” Connie Coiley Loden, CD Practice Issue 9, 2004
- ◆ “Entrepreneurial Community Development: Exploring Earned Income Activities and Strategic Alliances for Community Development Nonprofits.” E. Stiefvater, NeighborWorks Program, Nov. 2001.

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ *Enterprise Foundation* - www.enterprisefoundation.org
Works in neglected communities nationwide to provide the opportunities that all Americans deserve: a decent home in a safe, thriving community, access to steady employment, a good education and quality child care.
- ◆ *Knowledge Plex* - www.knowledgeplex.org
Designed to support the efforts of practitioners, grantors, policy makers, scholars, investors, and others involved or interested in the fields of affordable housing and community development.
- ◆ *Building Better Communities Network* - www.bettercommunities.org
This website is an informational clearinghouse and communication forum dedicated to building inclusive communities and to successfully site affordable housing and community services.
- ◆ *Community Development Society* - www.comm-dev.org
This organization provides leadership to professionals and citizens across the spectrum of community development. Members have multiple opportunities to learn what’s new in the profession, to exchange ideas, to obtain the most current research and reference information available and to share professional expertise.
- ◆ *National Congress for Community Economic Development* - www.ncced.org
The NCCED promotes, supports and advocates for community development corporations (CDCs) and the CED Industry, whose work creates wealth, builds healthy and sustainable communities and achieves lasting economic viability.
- ◆ *Alliance for Nonprofit Management* - www.allianceonline.org
This alliance is a professional association of individuals and organizations devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofits.
- ◆ *Local Government Commission* - www.lgc.org
This organization is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that provides inspiration, technical assistance, and networking to local elected officials and other dedicated community leaders who are working to create healthy, walkable, and resource-efficient communities.

Funding Sources

- ◆ NeighborWorks: www.nw.org
- ◆ NYS Division of Housing: www.dhcr.state.ny.us
- ◆ Governor’s Office for Small Cities: www.nysmallcities.com
- ◆ Neighborhood Funders Group: www.nfg.org