



***“Visioning a Duluth without Poverty”
Community Engagement Session II Findings
May 22, 2007***

Overview

In the “Visioning a Duluth without Poverty” (community engagement event II) small groups of community members worked together to develop eight key areas of discussion into clear visions for the future. The areas of discussion were; housing, health, education, criminal background/criminal justice system, dependent care and childcare, employment, basic human services, and transportation. Throughout the visioning sessions small groups were asked to prioritize their top areas and ideas for change. The following document summarizes the major themes that have arisen out of the visioning session and what can carry into the “Strategies to End Poverty in Duluth” (community engagement event III). The information compiled thus far, along with the findings from the Fellows surveys, will act as a compass as we move forth with Duluth’s Blueprint to End Poverty. The following information is worded in a pro-active format; the goal of the visioning session was to truly picture a Duluth without poverty.

Housing

1. All Duluthians have access to safe, decent and affordable housing.
2. There is no housing segregation based on race, income or class.
3. Duluth neighborhoods are safe, clean place we enjoy living in.

Health

1. There are enough healthcare providers to meet Duluthian’s diverse needs.
2. Healthcare and healthcare supplies are affordable for everyone in Duluth.
3. Duluthians live well in a healthy environment.

Education

1. Diversity of culture, ethnicity, class and learning styles are valued in the Duluth education system.
2. Education is affordable to everyone.
3. There are a variety of educational opportunities available to meet the community's needs.
4. The Duluth public school system provides a high-quality education to our children.

Criminal Background/Criminal Justice System

1. Diversity is valued in the criminal justice system.
2. Comprehensive discharge planning, supportive programs and opportunities to build healthy relationships are available to ex-offenders re-entering the community.
3. The court system is organized and fair.
4. Preventative programs are provided throughout the community to persons at-risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Dependent Care & Child Care

1. Dependent care and child care is affordable to all families in Duluth.
2. Safe, caring and well-trained dependent and childcare providers offer services to our neighborhoods at flexible times.
3. Dependent and child care is not segregated by race or class.
4. Families receive support that enables them to make positive parenting choices.

Employment

1. Duluth workers are paid a living wage, offered benefits and childcare through their employer.
2. Community members can obtain the necessary skills to get and keep the jobs they want.
3. Jobs are available in the area that offers Duluthians a wide variety of employment opportunities.
4. Duluthians are able to build up a savings or put money on reserve for future investments.

Basic Human Services

1. Accessing needed services and community resources is easy.
2. Supportive services programs empower individuals through mentorship, positive relationship building, and value dignity.
3. Supplemental supports are available for everyone who needs them.

Transportation

1. Community members have access to private vehicles and resources to support vehicle maintenance.
2. A well-coordinated public transportation system offers a wide-variety of bus route options and serves riders 24-7.
3. Efficient, reliable transportation options are available in Duluth for persons with disabilities.
4. Non-motorized transportation options are taken into account.

HOUSING

1. *Everyone has access to safe, decent affordable housing*

a. Create more options for homeownership

- Create Gradual ownership (rent-to-own) options with foreclosure housing
- Develop house-sharing programs
- Make resources available for homeownership
- Ensure that housing is available for all lifestyles.

b. Expand/increase affordable rental options and housing assistance

- Provide subsidies for rental property owners who rent to low income people
- Provide enough public housing so there is no waiting list
- Share information about the economic self interest of having affordable housing for all.

c. Encourage landlords and tenants to keep housing safe

- Monitor landlords; hold landlords responsible for the housing they own.
- Develop a neighborhood-level monitoring system with respect and tact.
- Conduct efficient and effective housing and apartment inspection by city. Ensure smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and other safety equipment is present.

2. *There is no housing segregation by race, income or class*

- a. Create affordable housing stocks in all neighborhoods
- b. Encourage a mix of race, class/income, and culture in housing complexes
- c. Confront racism and class barriers and actively work towards integrated neighborhoods
- d. Promote education about creating a community with diverse income levels

3. *Neighborhoods are safe, clean places we enjoy living in*

- a. Start/enhance neighborhood block watches
- b. Protect the safety of women; (i.e. provide cell phones)
- c. Promote neighborhood pride, respect and trust of neighbors
- d. Encourage renters to connect to the community they live in
- e. Develop incentives for people to maintain property
- f. Improve garbage control - clean neighborhoods
- g. Have well-maintained aesthetically pleasing buildings
- h. Revitalize rundown blighted stock

Health

1. *There are enough healthcare providers to meet our diverse needs*

- a. More healthcare workers and more health providers; eliminate long waits to see a doctor.
 - Develop/maintain enough neighborhood clinics – full service, primary care, dental, mental and medication
- b. Do not restrict access to healthcare due to geography
- c. Develop facilities that are focused on different cultures
- d. Provide alternative medical practices/methods and make as available as conventional
- e. Make sure everyone has a “Medical Home” a regular (a primary healthcare provider) doctor to go to instead of using the ER.

2. *Healthcare and healthcare supplies are affordable for everyone*

- a. Create affordable access to dental care; it should be seen as healthcare
- b. Promote government funded health care (i.e. publicly funded / single payer system). Universal Healthcare.
- c. Develop/improve affordable care options to keep elderly in their home
- d. Make available Insurance that covers all health care needs; consider mental health issues under healthcare
- e. Provide free health supplies, prescriptions and first aid supplies for those who cannot afford it
- f. Increase the number of free clinics and sliding scale clinics
- g. Have access to insurance even if already sick
- h. Health care providers accept public insurance programs
- i. Develop health insurance that really covers all of one’s health care needs

3. *Duluthians live well in a healthy environment*

- a. Structure the city to encourage physical activity: walking, biking, running, soccer fields, softball, tennis courts in central hillside as well as east and west
- b. Support/enable healthy lifestyles with balance and vacation time
- c. Provide health education to all:
 - Go early - not putting off care

- Teaching preventative dental care
 - Education about alternative care – make it accessible
 - Prevention / Education to create healthy culture
 - Health education – nutrition etc.
 - Plain facts and truths about connection to pollutants, additives, and preservatives, etc.
- d. Stop overuse of medications –overmedicating clients.
- e. Make healthy food accessible and affordable

EDUCATION

1. Diversity of culture, ethnicity, class and learning styles are valued in the Duluth education system

- a. Add diversity to curriculum and faculty and staff, value diversity
- b. Require all schools to reflect the total community / racial, social diversity
- c. Recognize and value diversity of learning styles in all students
- d. Mainstream children with different learning styles and children facing challenges

2. Education is affordable to everyone

- a. Invest more money into education. Move money into education
- b. Have affordable college options

3. There are a variety of educational opportunities available to meet the community's needs

- a. More adult education
- b. Focus on individual skills and interests
- c. Teach skills to get along in the world; resumes, writing checks, etc.
- d. Offer Vocational / Technical / Trade School training (i.e. Harbor city)
- e. Open early childhood family education opportunities for all
 - Market and establish the importance of an education – at an early age “spark the curiosity” of children’s love of learning
 - Provide cognitive skills training occur early and throughout schools
 - Instill the importance and value of education at a very early age in all children

4. The Duluth public school system provides a high-quality education to our children

- a. Provide more hands on work – not just paperwork (not just to prepare for college). Service learning
- b. Have smaller classrooms and focus on one-on-one teaching
- c. Place teacher aids in every class (volunteer tutors)
- d. Encourage teachers to get to know students
- e. Support career exploration
- f. Incorporate flexibility/sensitivity for working students in high school (who help with the bills at home)
- g. Teach lessons of value and honor of integrity
- h. Empower educators to create a safe environment
- i. Ensure educator accountability
- j. Address seat-time VS learning time

Criminal Background/ Criminal Justice System

1. Diversity is valued in the criminal justice system

- a. Diversify employee body in the criminal justice system
- b. Deliver diversity training for those working in the system; diversity training on all levels
- c. Work with officials to stop racial profiling

2. Comprehensive discharge planning, supportive programs, and opportunities to build healthy relationships are available to ex-offenders re-entering the community

- a. Make reasonable accommodations for housing, jobs, job training. Change the institutional mindset for people in the system.
 - Address felony/criminal background barriers to jobs and housing
 - Move beyond low-paying jobs for folks coming out of system
- b. Create stricter guidelines on getting background check data
- c. Support Circle of support/ mentoring programs for offenders
- d. Facilitate spiritual support/ IN system belief that change can happen in faith
- e. Support restorative justice circles

3. The court system is a organized and fair

- a. Focus on jury of peers system more than a judge focused system
- b. Expand access to drug court
- c. Provide more rehabilitative options rather than only punitive
- d. Treat youth as their age, not as an adult
- e. Have a prepared and organized court system

4. Preventative programs are provided throughout the community to persons at-risk of entering the criminal justice system

- a. Provide access to education
- b. Expand preventative programs; move beyond consequence
- c. Support treatment for addictions, do not criminalize; provide follow-up after care
- d. Enhance preventative programs for juveniles. Keep kids from falling into cracks/system

Dependent Care & Childcare

- 1. *Dependent and child care is affordable to all families in Duluth***
 - a. Grant childcare scholarships to families who want to get a higher education (for those who aren't able to get help from colleges or county)
 - b. Make childcare available for those who need rehabilitation and persons with disabilities
 - c. Provide free child care for those who cannot afford it; in an ideal world it would be free for all.
 - d. Start a child care cooperative

- 2. *Safe, caring and well-trained dependent and childcare providers offer services in our neighborhoods at flexible times***
 - a. Expand Head Start
 - b. Ensure that childcare is high quality with well trained and caring providers
 - c. Pay care providers well
 - d. Offer care at night (night classes; shift work)
 - e. Develop neighborhood childcare
 - f. Stop abuse and neglect
 - g. Prevent overcrowding in care centers
 - h. Make respite care more available
 - i. Provide more mentors for kids; support mentorship programs

- 3. *Dependent and child care is not segregated by race or class***
 - a. Integrate children at a young age

- 4. *Families receive support that enables them to make positive parenting choices***
 - a. Prevent abuse or neglect due to stress
 - b. Increase social support networks for families
 - c. Support foster grandparents and inter-generational households
 - d. Offer faith-based support options
 - e. Promote policy change for assistance for aging parents

Employment

- 1. *Duluth workers are paid a living wage, offered benefits and childcare through their employer***
 - a. Provide workers with employer-sponsored health insurance
 - b. Encourage employers to market that they pay living wage
 - c. Develop a standard wage – pick jobs based on interest – they all pay the same
 - d. Deliver day care services on-site (employers)
 - e. Capture local businesses support and unify

- 2. *Community members can obtain the necessary skills to get and keep the jobs they want***
 - a. Offer business incentives to provide OJT/apprentice
 - b. Increase choices and opportunities for job training & skill development
 - c. Retrain workers when issues occur– disability, etc.
 - d. Make sure a variety of education courses are available
 - e. Facilitate opportunities for advancement – job/career ladders

- 3. *Jobs are available in the area that offers Duluthians a wide-variety of employment opportunities***
 - a. Increase amount of jobs in Duluth; economic development
 - b. Give job priority to people who need money
 - c. Make green/environmental jobs available
 - d. Encourage global businesses
 - e. Work to end job discrimination
 - f. Recognize value of all work, even “unattractive” jobs; respect & dignity

- 4. *Duluthians are able to build up a savings or put money on reserve for future investments***
 - a. Teach financial/household budgeting

Basic Human Services

1. *Accessing needed services and community resources is easy*

- a. Make use of technology to automatically conduct benefits assessments; cut down paperwork for benefits assessments
- b. Centralize information; develop a central source to access information about what resources are available – “one stop shop”
- c. Provide detailed information about where & how to access resources
- d. Develop a neutral, integrated application for mainstream resources – streamline.

2. *Supportive service programs empower individuals through mentorship, positive relationship building, and value dignity*

- a. Advocate through mentorship
- b. Bring together allies- circles of support; build community & positive relationships
- c. Create a “give and take: volunteer system
- d. Set individual goals, and identify assets
- e. Take away the stigma - Look like the people who need access to services
- f. Invest in youth services and youth shelter; make connections to schools and housing
- g. Support elder-care and elder services that breakdown isolation
- h. Make caseloads smaller for human service providers
- i. Hold policy makers accountable; re-think systems and how services are provided
- j. Provide youth with safe places to spend time with friends outside of school and home

3. *Supplemental supports are available for everyone who needs them*

- a. Develop an acceptable level of service/support that government needs to provide
- b. Make case loads manageable workers to provide supports to those in need
- c. Provide basic services: Make clothing vouchers, food vouchers and shelter available

Transportation

1. *Community members have access to private vehicles and resources to support vehicle maintenance*

- a. Develop shared repair services from different auto companies to fix cars of low income people.
- b. Provide funding to low-income households to fix up vehicles when they break down.
- c. More car donation.
- d. Create car co-ops and more car pooling groups
- e. Provide emergency response for auto problems – taxi ride subsidy
- f. Offer a subsidized auto repair employee training program.
- g. Make affordable loans available for cars; have them based on percentage of income.
- h. Offer cab service for families who are attending meetings or activities to better their situation
- i. Offer full reimbursement for volunteer drivers (Gas, car maintenance) – volunteer driver group

2. *A well-coordinated public transportation system offers a wide-variety of bus route options that serve riders 24/7.*

- a. Provide more bus routes
- b. Run busses all night – hourly. Smaller busses at low usage times. Invest in public transport.
- c. Bus service coordinates with schools, job sites and housing; with public schools– free bus passes for students & teachers & adequate bus schedules. (No increase in parking lot spaces).
- d. Start rapid transit to the Twin Cities. Invest in high speed rail system (trains) to St. Paul/Minneapolis & Fargo-Moorhead
- e. Encourage connective transportation-Public Policy

3. *Efficient, reliable transportation options are available in Duluth for persons with disabilities*

- a. Develop transportation options that ensure that persons confined to wheelchairs can get transport anytime/anyplace by a phone call without long waits, days of pre-planning, or large expense
- b. Public transportation: Wheel chair accessibility

4. *Non-motorized transportation options are taken into account*

- a. Walking (walk able communities)
- b. Make better bike lanes
- c. Keep bike racks on busses year round

