

Foundation Building

Cultivating the Capacity of Small Communities to Address Planning and Community Development Issues

Lloyd Purdy

Emanuel Carter
Preston Gilbert
Scott Shannon

LSA 799 Capstone Proposal Studio
Faculty of Landscape Architecture
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
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Abstract

This project focuses on the Village of Freeville, a small community in Upstate New York. Freeville is used as a test case for the development of a capacity building process that other small municipalities around the country can use to guide the evolution of place. Small communities are beset by a range of challenges. They often have few or limited access to resources, strong but distance external influences and a mandate to serve the needs of their residents. Their leaders need a framework for coping with change whether externally or internally induced. This project attempts to use a simple, realistic and volunteer based process to help develop a community's capacity to address issues of community development and planning.

This project is segmented into three general stages. Each stage relates to a different facet of community development and planning. Different facilitator roles correspond to each stage because each stage requires a different focus and set of skills. Imbedded in each stage is a unique process that produces a resource utilized by the subsequent stage. Taken together they contribute to the development of the social capital, design literacy and connectivity of the community.

1. Initiate a Dialogue (Community Development)
2. Explore Potential (Design and Problem Solving)
3. Connect to Resources (Planning and Coordinating)

The deliverables from this project derive from a citizen support, participation and action. The first, is a codification of the values of the community. The second tangible product from this project is a list of prioritized opportunities for investigation that relate to this vision. The third product is a manifestation of several of these concepts, ideas and opportunities. Whatever form the physical manifestation assumes (illustrations, budget forecasts, models) they should be understandable by a layperson. The final product is a step-by-step action strategy for achieving these ends. These action strategies include a connection to the people and resources that can make these opportunities a reality.

By nature, this project is community centered and driven by the volunteer activities of local stakeholders. Local community members become the idea generators, arbitrators of dilemmas and the delineators of success. During the first two thirds of the project the facilitator's biggest challenge is the management of uncertainty. As a broker of ambiguity, the heaviest burden is planning for the innumerable *what if* scenarios while retaining the flexibility to adjust to the unique circumstances of the community. In trading control for civic participation, the process and end product become a part of the community. This commitment and buy-in at the fundamental level is essential to developing sustainable and responsive solutions to community needs, ambitions and goals.

level of foresight and planning. As a test case, a village in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate New York benefits from a stable (slightly growing) population. The implications of pressures for change are a key issue underlying this project. This project does not intend to find a way to reverse negative growth or stabilize hyper-development pressures. This project attempts a first step along a rejuvenating continuum of public planning. However, Internal and external forces do influence the evolution of communities. These influences must be addressed by action or default. Small communities with fewer resources often face a challenge of marshalling the forces necessary to cope with internal and external forces for change. The first step in coping with these pressures is the development of a plan. This project attempts to address some of the capacity building foundations that must be developed before even planning can be attempted. Social capital, planning literacy, exploration of potential are three components that must be cultivated before a community embarks upon sustainable and realistic planning.

In almost any community there will be critics who suggest that things are fine just the way they are. The answer, “even a steady state requires energy to maintain.” Without a codification of what is “fine” about “the way things are” an interest group far removed from the stakeholders of the community may effect unwanted change. In the least, small communities must define what they are, if not what they want to be. Whether for preservation of the status quo, or as a tentative first step toward something different, local communities must find ways to assert control over their destiny.

These are all realistic arguments that support the implementation of planning and community development programs and processes. Fortunately, in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate New York growth is not so rampant that the well thought out and time-consuming process of planning is restricted. Good planning is not done in a time of crisis when the proverbial wolf is at the door. It should be done as a proactive response to uncertainty about the future. Such a freedom from the pressure of imminent development is even more necessary for a project like this. A capacity building project acts as an incubator for future thinking about planning, change, and community development.



FIGURE 2. POLITICAL BOUNDARY
Village of Freeville

Initial research into the concepts of development for small municipalities leads to the usual suspects of renown in the field of rural and urban development. Work like that of Randall Arendt's *Rural by Design*, Nelessen's *Visions for a New American Dream* and *Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities* by Sargent, Lusk, Rivera and Varela provide instrumental background information for the creation of alternative development scenarios for a community the size of a hamlet, village or small town. A recent review of planning activities in the Finger Lakes region revealed the presence of organizations like the Central New York Regional Planning and

Development Board and the Finger Lakes Land Trust, both of which focuses on preserving open space and natural resources from the threat of development. This work is ideal for municipalities that feel they have a resource that needs to be preserved and a formal mechanism for articulating that perspective. This project seeks to build upon the aforementioned body of work, but apply it to a different constituency. The target audience for this project includes the small communities like those studied above. However, beneficiaries of this proposed project may possess even less in the way of physical assets (no water front, no historic districts, no pristine habitat). Residents of potential benefactor communities may have no understanding of the value of the resources they do possess. They may lack a formalized system for defining the future use of those resources. They may not even have a system for sharing individual concerns or community values. Let alone, mechanisms for communicating those concepts and ideas.

Previous research in the form of three small-scale studies I conducted (appendix) reveal that the Village of Freeville, halfway between Ithaca and Cortland, is an adequate test-case for this project. During the spring of 2005, I conducted a survey of residents modeled after a questionnaire found in *The Psychological Sense of Community in the Neighborhood*, Nasar and Julian, *Journal of the American Planning Association* (Spring 1995). My survey focused on issues of trust, connection and commitment between community members. Strong positive social relationships exist in the Village of Freeville. A high degree of social capital is a key ingredient that facilitates adjustment to stress brought about by change.

The second study used a mapping exercise, similar to Donald Appleyard's mapping technique found in *Three Streets in San Francisco*, From Livable Streets (1981). This exercise revealed a common sense of place among villagers. Communication was focused on spaces, points and paths. The majority of participants consistently picked out similar neighborhoods, places of interest within the Village and sites in need of improvement. Surprisingly, participant's perceived zones of control and responsibility were small. Among Village residents, there is support for maintaining a certain sense of place in the Village and a concerted desire for improvement at specific geographic areas. However, respondents did not feel empowered to affect these changes. A more design-literate public aware of viable potentials might be able to overcome this inhibition.

A third component of preliminary research consisted of one-on-one interview sessions where 7 villagers were asked open-ended questions. These interviews lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. The results were mostly anecdotal, but they support the finding of the other two projects. A strong sense of place and a strong sense of community are hallmarks of the Village of Freeville. There is a desire for improvement, change or development but no concept of how.

Purpose

This project is intended to inspire, encourage and even instigate. This project is an excuse for community members to come together. It provides a reason for villagers to talk about their collective future. It presents an opportunity to dream. The end result will be a community empowered through a participatory process. The community will be better prepared to take the next steps necessary to achieve their self-determined goals and objectives. The project will empower a group of community leaders with a greater capacity to make informed and sustainable decisions. Three components of this project also serve as an example other small

communities can use. In order to build the capacity of the Village of Freeville to deal with planning and community development issues a working model for participatory practice includes:

1. Initiating a Dialogue
2. Exploring Potential
3. Connecting to Resources

The first phase of this project, *Initiate a Dialogue*, includes the creation of a structure for input. This acts on one level as an information-gathering component that informs the second phase of the project. While it is a means to an end it also has value in and of itself. The goal of this forum is a citizen-crafted statement of values and opportunities. The values are worth preserving, the opportunities worth pursuing. If the project were to proceed no further than this, a great deal of good will have been done for the Village of Freeville. This process transforms the community's likes, dislikes, preferences and values into a coherent statement that can be used to help guide the community through the changes and challenges that face a village in the 21st Century. As a representative sample of the community's expectations, the results of this process can be used by the leaders of the community (business, civic and elected) to guide their decision making. This phase of the project also adds value at a deeper level. In this stage, volunteer participants share their likes, dislikes and values with neighbors. They meet residents from the other side of the village, for the first time. They learn about and from each other. These interactions build the social capital of the Village. Strong positive connections turn fellow residents into neighbors. The result is a stronger level of commitment and connection to the community.

The results of discussions in the first phase of the project can be harnessed and given form. Using these ideas, concepts, and opportunities is a starting point for *an exploration of potential*. The results of the second stage of the project are tangible products that show how the dreams of the community manifest in physical form. This phase of the project will bring into focus the tangible and real-world benefits of communication and planning. At this point the Village has an agreement on characteristics they value, a prioritized list of opportunities and a representation of several of these options in a form a lay-person can understand. The graphics, models, and forecasts derived from community input can be used as a starting point for continued discussions and review with the community at large. These building blocks serve as educational tools the community can respond to. They illustrate potential. Hopefully they encourage, inspire, and sustain the excitement that developed during the first phase of the project. At its best, this will motivate community members to continue to work together to achieve their goals. This conversion of concept to form is also an opportunity to introduce a design vocabulary and planning literacy to community leaders. Understanding potential removes some of the uncertainty from the future. It provides a starting point for further dialogue and exploration.

An articulation of actionable strategies is the third logical step in this project. If the first and second steps are successful, community members will prioritize the projects that most closely correlate to their value statements. They may also be able to categorize projects by short and long-term feasibility. The next phase includes developing the strategies, network of stakeholders, and *connection to resources* that will help make these projects a reality. While suggestions for the alteration to the physical character of the village may be a consequence of this project,

equally likely is the introduction of proposed changes to the social, cultural, political or economic landscape. Dealing with this uncertainty is a part of the challenge in planning, design and community development. Physical, market, political, civic or a combination of these factors may be appropriate means of addressing the implementation of several strategies. This project will not attempt to see a strategy through to completion. It will endeavor to leave in the hands of the community the strategies that will help bring an idea to fruition, a recognition and categorization of the resources any given action strategy will require, and a connection to the internal and external stakeholders that can help make this opportunity a reality. Defining and sharing guidelines for implementation will help community leaders make decisions about commitment level and resource allocation to specific strategies.

Goals

In order to achieve the objectives of this project the capacity of the village will have to be increased in three areas. The social capital, design literacy and connectivity of the village are essential components to the cultivation of long-term planning and sustainable development.

1. Cultivate Social Capital: Encourage intra-community connections through focus groups.

Social Capital (see appendix) a concept most frequently credited to Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, is a concept that deals with the inter-personal relationships within a society. It centers on issues like trust, participation, community support, and even adaptability to change. The cultivation of this capacity to trust, coordinate action, and adapt to the *evolution of place* is an essential component of this project. Any social scientist can study a village, a community or even the urban ecology of a place. As a student of planning and landscape architecture I am concerned with not just what is or could be, but what can and will be done. The cultivation of social capital sets the groundwork for any attempt to introduce change into the Village of Freeville. In community planning and development; financial, intellectual and human-capital are wasted without an investment in social capital. New ideas from a “pin-head planning professor” (Scott Shannon ¹) or from some outside professional have little chance of taking root if neighbors, friends, and residents don’t have the social capital necessary to deal with change.

By using a community-based local steering committee to inform the problem solving and design phase of this project, residents share with each other rather personal issues. Things they like, dislike and value become central themes of discussion. People connect, build upon each other’s ideas and get excited about potential. This level of communication builds trust, acceptance, and shared values. The added benefit is that community members attempt to provide solutions to community problems. This can result in solutions more suited to the unique situation found in the community, and a greater level of stakeholder buy-in. Solutions also become empowering. They are things “we” can do, not just things others should do for us.

¹ Professor Shannon is not necessarily a pin-head planning professor I am simply attributing the quote to him, I think he was simply the first one I heard use the phrase. Or was it pin-head Preston?

2. Design Literacy: Introduce concepts and process of planning and design to village leadership.

The National Institute for Literacy recognizes Literacy as " ... an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function... in society." Like English, the fields of planning, design and community development have their own language. Who in a small community comprehends and communicates in this language? A rural village like Freeville has no full-time mayor, planning director or even code enforcement officer. Because of the volunteer nature of Village leadership; the concepts, terms, processes, and solutions of the planning and design profession are a foreign language to most community leaders. In lieu of a planning and design professional advocating for the good of the community, non-expert members of the community must communicate to each other and to external stakeholders. Building their capacity includes introducing a common vocabulary for discussion of community development and planning issues. This project provides a forum for village leaders to begin developing a common vocabulary. Some of this will be internally developed through communication between stakeholders. Remember the fable of the six blindfolded villagers and the elephant (see appendix). Each villager describes a different component of the same thing. All are correct, but they miss the big picture. By providing a common element for discussion and removing barriers, complex issues can be approached, examined and dealt with. But design literacy is about more than a common language. Some of this literacy will result from the exploration phase of this project. Taking ideas and finding a way to give them form can help for the comparison, crystallization and conversion of specific strategies. Street trees, paths, sidewalks, lighting and shops may all be valid community desires. Shown in physical form – together the individual parts show potential. Understanding potential - *what could be* - is an important part of design literacy.

3. Connectivity: Develop a resource network internally and externally.

Making connections between village residents and between “the village” and other entities is an integral component to the successful implementation of the actionable strategies developed in this project. These connections may include following the adjacency concept of a rural community - riding the coattails of a nearby city. It may include simply developing stronger partnerships with neighboring villages. It could also include coordinating action with the town, county or neighboring institutions. Because of the civic nature of this project many of the development solutions may be grassroots based. Yet, there may still be instances where non-village parties can help solve problems, provide examples of success, or influence the community. Relationships with these “external” stakeholders should be facilitated, sustained and cultivated.

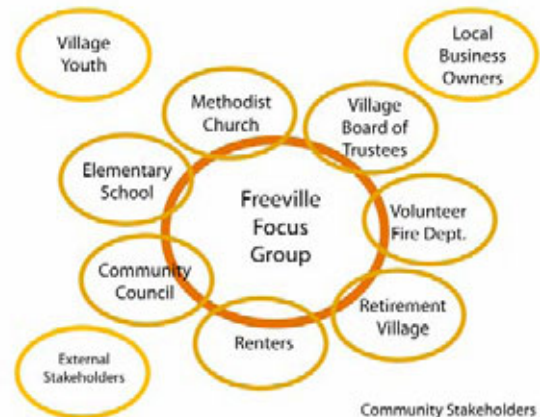


Figure 3. Village Stakeholders

The village participants in this project will gain experience in a participatory process. This shared experience will give them some of the common ground necessary to continue a dialogue on village development. They could also take their experience and share that, formally or informally, with other village stakeholders. Due to the limited capacity of this project the results should be used as a starting point for further discussion. A larger number of village residents should be included in a similar process. Non-residents of the village who have an interest in the community should also be included. These “internal” stakeholders should be engaged on a continuous if not frequent basis.

Methodology

The process used to reach these goals and meet these objectives begins and ends at the community level. Citizen input guides the entire process. My role begins as a community development facilitator. My responsibilities then transition to the creative realm of designer and problem solver. Finally my contribution transforms into that of a coordinator and planner.

1. Initiate a Dialogue (Community Development)

Cultivate Social Capital: Encourage intra-community connections through focus groups.

2. Explore Potential (Design and Problem Solving)

Design Literacy: Introduce concepts and process of planning and design to village leadership.

3. Connect to Resources (Planning and Coordinating)

Connectivity: Develop a resource network internally and externally.

1. Community Development Phase

The first step in this process is to create a structure for community input. By convening a forum for community discussion, the project becomes grounded, even beholden to, the needs, issues, concerns, and solutions of the community. This local steering committee should include a range of village stakeholders. Over the course of six to eight group meetings the focus of the discussion should center on developing an understanding of the likes, dislikes and values of the community. A sample letter of introduction is included as appendix item D. Finding the appropriate channel for disseminating information and an appeal for participation is one of the biggest challenges of this phase. This project relies on existing personal relations derived from a familiarity with the community and existing social connections.² The creation of a local steering committee is predicated upon a core group of villagers who do have a commitment to the community and are interested in sharing opinions.³ The second challenge of this phase includes guiding, shepherding, and even cajoling participants toward positive and constructive discussion that help progress the project. However, time for socializing, venting frustrations, and airing complaints

² Participants were fellow residents who were interested in helping the community or at least in helping me. The strength of personal persuasion was often a key component of ensuring their participation.

³ Residents who were approached but did not have the time or interested in participating were still included in the process through written updates of the progress of the project.

about the community was built into the process and even these conversations were taken note of. The results of this phase should be a statement(s) of community values, a listing of options, ideas and themes that connect to those values and a prioritization of these concepts. The third challenge of this process is interpreting both the formal and informal meaning, value, concepts and concerns illuminated by dialogue and participant responses.

Local Steering Committee Tentative Agenda

Project Introduction

- Meet fellow participants
- Clarify goals, responsibilities and expectations

Perceptions of the Village

- Hopes, Fears and Expectations

Strengths and Weaknesses of Community

- What does the community value

Vision for the Future

- Identify critical issues
- Discuss alternative methods for addressing values

Analyze Data

- Compare focus group data to precedent in literature and local examples
- Share ideas with group members, other community stakeholders

2. Design and Problem Solving Phase

Based on the results of these group meetings the common values, issues of concern and locally proposed options for addressing community values will provide the topics for further investigation. The next step of this project is to articulate a response to these community-centered topics that explore potential. Depending on the prioritization and analysis of values, and opportunities some can be combined, some reserved for longer term management. This phase does require a synthesis of phase one results with an understanding of the physical, social, political and economic dynamics of the site. It will require a survey and delineation of site characteristics relevant to the community's preferred opportunities. This component of the project also includes integrating precedent with local context. At the proposal stage of this project, it is difficult to predict exactly what the manifestation of the design phase will be. If interpersonal interaction is a key concern of the community, then physical and social aspects of community design will be addressed. If vehicular and pedestrian circulation is a topic of interest to the local steering committee than predominately physical and land use solutions will be illustrated. Of course, some solutions may bridge any given category and require the incorporation of several fields of study.

3. Coordinating and Planning Phase

Articulating a response to the community-centered topics developed by the local steering committee may require dealing with physical, social, and economic scenarios. The third phase of this project will create opportunities for implementing designed solutions through the use of

political, market and civic solutions. Outlining implementation steps, and making connections between internal and external stakeholders will be the deliverables from this component of the project. Outlining steps to scenario implementation, defining resources needed cultivating relationships with partners and resource providers is the focus of this phase. This should not be done at the end of the project. Including potential partner organizations, external authorities and stakeholders as early as phase one helps ensure external commitment and buy-in. This phase and the project will culminate in a presentation to the community at large. Internal and external stakeholders should be the targeted audience for this presentation. The process, participants, results and action strategies will be shared with stakeholders. The project will be presented as a first step in a process that should be continued on a wider scale and continual basis.

Literature Review

A project of this magnitude, dealing with participatory process and community development as well as the articulation of actionable strategies, builds upon a wide foundation of literature and precedent. Certainly Arednt's *Rural by Design* is relevant. The premise of the book is based upon local communities making local decisions. Ardent's focus on "creative rural planning techniques" address issues basic to land-use decision making and community development. Nelessen's *Visions for a New American Dream* builds upon this typology with more in depth case study's of communities and a wider range of specific examples. *Contemporary Urban Planning* by Levy provides some of the urban planning theory that supports any specific attempt at planning and development, at any level. *Community Strategic Visioning Programs* by Walzer provides a process that can be adapted for participatory input and provides a holistic review of issues and challenges to the process. *Rural Development in the United States* by Galston and Baehler provides an understanding of the rural context, what's been tried before and failed and some general potential opportunities. These five texts round out the short list of works that were frequent references for the amalgamated process used to meet the unique goals and situation of this project. The underpinning of the project's process, however, is based upon the idea of *Empowerment Planning*. The appendix contains a detailed description of empowerment planning. Proponents of empowerment planning, like practitioners like Kenneth Reardon and Mark Francis, use this planning paradigm as a foil to "traditional" or even "Advocacy" planning. This frameworks requires a proactive designer who collaborates with the community. The process works well in communities where resources may be limited, but a community can be mobilized. Five major characteristics of Empowerment Planning include:

- Local actors are agenda setters
- Local actors are active participants
- Planner's focus on practical solutions;
 - partial implementable solutions over comprehensive unexecutable solutions.
- Emphasis on further development of knowledge and skills of local actors
- Commitment to examining the role of values and goals

This process does rely upon a designer/coordinator/planner who assumes a proactive role. The designer must be visionary and a problem solver. An aptitude for risk taking, negotiation and enterprise is vital as well as a facility to deal with uncertainty. As a tool, the designer uses a

participatory process that the community can modify to meet its needs. This process does take a commitment to a longer time frame than traditional design and planning, a commitment to the greater good as opposed to a paying client, and the ability to manage uncertainty.

Another list of resources include the literature that provided background to the social, political and economic situation of small communities in Upstate New York. These range from thesis dissertations such as *Losing Local Power: The Coevolution of Social and Biophysical Forces in Cayuga County, New York, 1800 to 1900* by Greenfield to *The Island at the Center of the World* by Shorto. The first looks at local municipal issues of self-determination, control and power. The second focuses on the pre-history of Manhattan and the true underpinning of the socio-political heritage of communities in the state of New York. The thoughts of Jane Jacobs found in *The Nature of Economies* is another work that informs not the process followed during this project so much as the lens through which this project was approached. Similarly texts like *The Changing Rural Village in America* and Richard Florida’s *Rise of the Creative Class* provide a better understanding to the context in which this process of community development and solution articulation were implemented.

Deliverables

Tangible

- Citizen crafted statement of values.
- Prioritized options/scenarios for exploration.
- Analysis of Precedents.
- Cost/Benefit Analysis.
- Physical manifestation of concepts.
- Definitive strategies for implementation.

Intangible

- A community with stronger connections between residents/stakeholders.
- A leadership group with a higher level of planning, design and community development literacy.
- Connections to the resources that facilitate implementation.
- A process that other small communities can use to make informed development decisions.

Timeline

TABLE 1. PROJECT SCHEDULE

Proposed Schedule	Fall 2005	Winter Break	January	February	March	April	May
Community Development Phase							
Convene Local Steering Committee							
Design and Problem Solving Phase							
Analysis and Synthesize							
Articulate a response							
Review with Local Steering Com.							
Revise scenarios							
Planning And Coordinating Phase							
Develop Implementation Strategy							
Public Presentation							

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Appendix

Social Capital

http://www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm

The notion of social capital first appeared in Lyda Judson Hanifan's discussions of rural school community centers (see, for example, Hanifan 1916, 1920). He used the term to describe 'those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people' (1916: 130). Hanifan was particularly concerned with the cultivation of good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among those that 'make up a social unit'. However, it has taken some time for the term to come into widespread usage. Most recently, it has been the work of Robert D. Putnam (1993; 2000) that has launched social capital as a focus for research and policy discussion. However, other notable contributions have come from Jane Jacobs (1961) in relation to urban life and neighbourliness, Pierre Bourdieu (1983) with regard to social theory, and James S. Coleman (1988) in his discussions of the social context of education. It has also been picked up by the World Bank as a useful organizing idea. It is argued that 'increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable' (The World Bank 1999). We have also begun to see social capital as a focus for organizational maintenance and development (Cohen and Prusak 2001).

Defining Social Capital

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue.” The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (Putnam 2000: 19)

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions... Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together. (The World Bank 1999)

Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible. (Cohen and Prusak 2001: 4)

The basic premise is that interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

Trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust of a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole. Without this interaction, on the other hand, trust decays; at a certain point, this decay begins to manifest itself in serious social problems... The concept of social capital

contends that building or rebuilding community and trust requires face-to-face encounters. (Beem 1999: 20)

As we will also see, there is considerable evidence that communities with a good 'stock' of social capital are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement, and better economic growth. There can also be a significant downside. Groups and organizations with high social capital have the means (and sometimes the motive) to work to exclude and subordinate others.

The Dimensions of Social Capital

Those concerned with social capital have looked to the density of social networks that people are involved in; the extent to which they are engaged with others in informal, social activities; and their membership of groups and associations. Their big worry is that in the USA, for example, there has been a significant decline in the active membership of associations (like PTAs, football teams and community groups) and a corresponding increase in individualized leisure activities (most especially watching television). For example, there has been drop in the number of people involved in league (team) bowling and a growth in individual bowling (hence the title of Putnam's (2000) book – *Bowling Alone*). The result is that social capital is weakened (see below).

They are also concerned with an additional dimension of social capital – whether it is *bonding* (or exclusive) and/or *bridging* (or inclusive). The former may be more inward looking and have a tendency to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. The latter may be more outward-looking and encompass people across different social divides (Putnam 2000: 22).

Bonding capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity... Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion.... Moreover, bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves.... Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40. (ibid.: 22-23)

These are not either-or categories to which social networks can neatly assigned – ‘but “more-or-less” dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital (ibid.: 23).

Robert D. Putnam: Why social capital is important

First, social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily... People often might be better off if they cooperate, with each doing her share. But each individual benefits more by shirking their responsibility, hoping that others will do the work for her.... [Resolving this dilemma is] best served by an institutional mechanism with the power to ensure compliance with the collectively desirable behavior. Social norms and the networks that enforce them provide such a mechanism.

Second, social capital greases the wheels that allow communities to advance smoothly. Where people are trusting and trustworthy, and where they are subject to repeated interactions with fellow citizens, everyday business and social transactions are less costly....

A third way in which social capital improves our lot is by widening our awareness of the many ways in which our fates are linked. People who have active and trusting connections to others – whether family members, friends, or fellow bowlers – develop or maintain character traits that are good for the rest of society. Joiners become more tolerant, less cynical, and more empathetic to the misfortunes of others. When people lack connection to others, they are unable to test the veracity of their own views, whether in the give or take of casual conversation or in more formal deliberation. Without such an opportunity, people are more likely to be swayed by their worse impulses....

The networks that constitute social capital also serve as conduits for the flow of helpful information that facilitates achieving our goals.... Social capital also operates through psychological and biological processes to improve individual's lives. Mounting evidence suggests that people whose lives are rich in social capital cope better with traumas and fight illness more effectively. ... Community connectedness is not just about warm fuzzy tales of civic triumph. In measurable and well-documented ways, social capital makes an enormous difference to our lives.

Robert Putnam (2000) *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, New York: Simon and Schuster: 288-290

The Blind Men and the Elephant

A Hindu fable by John Godfrey Saxe from *Elephants ancient and modern* by FC Sillar and RM Meyler. Note: ``The Blind Men and the Elephant'' occurs in the Udana, a Canonical Hindu Scripture.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
`God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!'

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, `Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!'

The *Third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
`I see,' quoth he, `the Elephant
Is very like a snake.'

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
`What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain,' quoth he;
`'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!'

The *Fifth* who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: `E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most:
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!'

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
 About the beast to grope,
 Than, seizing on the swinging tail
 That fell within his scope,
 `I see,' quoth he, `the Elephant
 Is very like a rope!'

And so these men of Indostan
 Disputed loud and long,
 Each in his own opinion

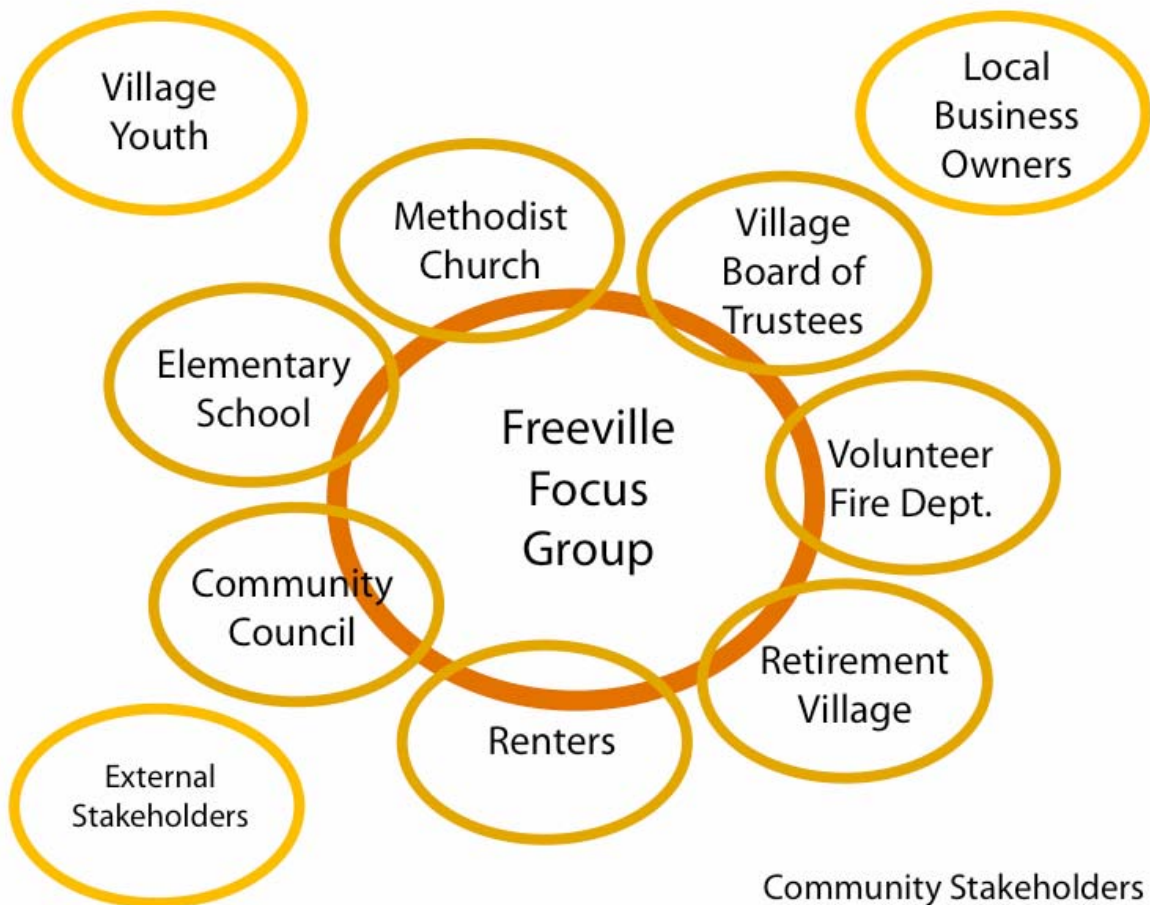
Exceeding stiff and strong,
 Though each was partly in the right,
 And all were in the wrong!

So, oft in theologic wars,
 The disputants, I ween,
 Rail on in utter ignorance
 Of what each other mean,
*And prate about an Elephant
 Not one of them has seen!*

Village Stakeholders Internal

STAKEHOLDER MAP

Groups touching the bold orange inner-most ring were represented in the Local Steering Committee. (Several business owners were invited but could not find the time to participate.)



Focus Group Invitation to Village Stakeholders

Dear (Freeville Resident),

I am seeking community input for my master's thesis and would appreciate your help. I am interested in finding out what people like about Freeville, what people dislike about our village and what people think our village should aspire to in the future. If you have any thoughts on the matter, I'd really like to hear them.

From the ideas developed by a group of village stakeholders, I will try to illustrate what that might mean in a physical sense through graphics and 3-D models, in a fiscal sense through budget forecasts as well as ay social changes. Then I will share my findings with all who may be interested here in Freeville.

For me this will be the culmination of three (laborious) years of work on a Master of Landscape Architecture at SUNY-ESF and a Master of Public Administration at Syracuse University. It should also translate into a very useful tool for the Village of Freeville. Through this process a group of residents will share an experience of participatory visioning that could be reproduced on a larger and more formalized scale. Participants in this preliminary process may in fact, choose to be future facilitators of a similar process. The results of this work will be a tangible product that shows how our dreams for our community could take physical form and the resulting infrastructure and financial impact. The graphics, models, and forecasts derived from your input could be used as a starting point for continued discussions and review. As a representative sample of our community's expectations, the results of this process can be used by the leaders of our community (business, civic and elected) to guide their decision making. Providing a community supported focus and direction for our community can help inform the decision making process, qualify the village for some funding opportunities, and help keep our community's fate in our control.

The community input phase of this project will begin in mid September and continue through the fall. By January 2006 I hope to be taking your ideas, hopes, and expectations and transform them into visions for our future. I am interested in developing a steering committee made up of a broad-based group of local citizens connected to many different components of life in the Village of Freeville. Participants should be comfortable sharing their hopes, fears and expectations. Hopefully this process will take a small commitment of your time, while supporting your larger commitment to the welfare of our village. If you would like to share your thoughts or know someone who would, please let me know. Attached is a list of specific topics we will discuss.

Thanks,
Lloyd Purdy

Tactics: Phase One (Community Development) Activities

1. Define purpose of Local Steering Committee.
2. Develop goals and themes for discussion.
3. Profile potential participants.
4. Approach twice as many candidates as you can fit around your dining room table.
5. Convene forum for discussion.
 - a. Be responsive to the preference and time commitments of participants.
 - i. Start with an introductory meeting that acclimates participants and clarifies expectations, scope and goals. Keep it simple.
6. Let participants do 99% of the talking. Facilitate, guide and provide direction.
7. Record and chronicle dialogue and responses. Use a reflective approach to dialogue by repeating ideas and concepts culled from conversation back to participants in order to gauge your understanding of their intent.
 - a. Start with a session that addresses community likes and dislikes.
 - i. List community likes and dislikes.
 1. Share these with participants before the next meeting.
 - b. Ask participants to explain how their likes and dislikes translate into values.
 - i. List community values (10 are probably too many)
 - ii. Ask participants to prioritize values.
 1. Share these with participants before the next meeting.
 - c. Encourage participants to define opportunities to address these values.
 - i. List them for all to see.
 - ii. Ask participants to prioritize opportunities (interventions) that interest them.
 - iii. Share this with participants.
8. Interpret data for meaning. Some content is literal. Some has deeper value/meaning.
9. Analyze results.
10. Confirm analysis with participants.

Local Steering Committee

LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS

This list does not include the focus group meeting participants from Lehigh Valley.

Participant	Phone	Address	email	Availability	Monday, Sept 26
Kate Coffey	personal contact	Main St.		M,T Evening	confirmed
Rachel Dickinson	844 4475	31 Main St.	RDickinson@clarityconnect.com	M,T Evening	called
Carvers	personal contact	Lehigh	-	Any	confirmed
Penny Beebe	844 9391	2 Union	pjb7@cornell.edu	M,T Evening	confirmed
Diana Radford	844 9413	16 Yates	dbirdie2@aol.com	M,T Evening	called
Dan Sykes	844 5393	17 Main		Any	confirmed
Lotte Carpenter	844 8666	51 Main St.	Caravan@lightlink.com	?	confirmed
George English	personal contact	Cook St.		?	confirmed
Millie Logan	844 4658	9 rouse			called
Christine Hernandez		18 Main St.		?	out of town
Spearman		13 Johnson		?	no response
In Shik Lee	844-4964	1 Johnson		?	confirmed
Suzanne Hoback	844-9436	28 Main St.		Not Monday	No Time
Jody Lawrence	844 8567	8 Main		no time	No Time
Joan Manning	844 9334	66 Main		?	no response
Gri Wilderstein	personal contact	Veterinary Clinic		?	No Time

Local Steering Committee Schedule Articulating Community Values

Discussion Topics

- 26 Sept. 2005 *Introduction*
Meet fellow participants.
Discuss what we will be doing.
- The Village*
Hopes
Fears
Expectations
- 3 Oct. 2005 No Meeting
- 10 Oct. 2005 *Strengths and Weakness of our Community*
Internally, who are we as a community?
What do you like about the Village, what problems are there?
- Opportunities and Constraints or Threats*
What do outsiders think of Freeville?
What outside forces may influence Freeville?
What limits do we face?
- 17 Oct. 2005 *Visions for the Future*
What do we want to be in 10 or 20 years?
How will we know we are there?
What would be a stretch for us?
What would be worth committing to during the next 5 to 10 years?
- 24 Oct. 2005 *Getting There*
Identify five most critical issues to address.
Discuss alternative methods of addressing these issues.
- Early 2006 *Update/Progress Meeting (2) January and February*
- April 2006 *Presentation*
Academic Presentation in Syracuse
Presentation to Village

What do we Value as a Village-Community?

From our last meeting, I culled a great list of the things we like and dislike about Freeville. I am interested in examining *why* we like or dislike certain things. My hope is that by getting down to the level of *values* we find some common and recurring themes. We can take any communal values and begin to define a vision for the future.

In no particular order, here are the likes and dislikes shared during last discussion.

Like

Church
 School
 Safe place to raise a family
 Kids can roam parts of the village
 Safety and security
 “old fashion family values”
 Safe for children
 Sense of community
 Summer recreation program - youth
 Church as an activity center
 Ability to depend upon neighbors
 Village Judge
 Not a homogeneous community, like the eco-ethno-socio-cultural diversity
 Low crime
 Friendliness of neighbors
 Village identity and rural character

Dislike

Freeville Police gone
 Grocer gone
 Library gone
 Diner gone
 Nursery School gone
 Traffic issues
 Volunteerism spirit gone
 Sidewalks lacking
 Abandoned looking property
 Creek ignored

During the meeting on Monday, Oct. 10, 7p.m. we can:

- I. Add to the list if there is anything that was left out. (10 minutes)
- II. Talk about what **this list** says about the village? (20 minutes)
- III. Do you have another way to describe Freeville? (5 minutes)
 - “Freeville is a place where...”
 - “Freeville is a community that...”
 - “We are....”
- IV. Talk about *what we value*. *Why* we like or dislike certain things. (30 minutes)
 - “I like the school, because the school zone slows down traffic”
 - “I like the school, because I think it adds life to the community”
 - “I like the school, because It is a historic institution for the village”

With an understanding of the things we value as a group we can use the next meeting, October 17, to focus on what we want the Village of Freeville to be in the future.

(Best case scenarios...anything is possible...dream big!)

Thanks for the help.

Where do we go from Here?

We know what we like and dislike about Freeville. Our last meeting included some great discussion of the values we hold dear. Now it is time to take those likes, dislikes, ideas and values and look to the future.

In no particular order, here are our values.

We Value:

- Safety of children and community
- Connection to nature
- Friendships and personal connections
- Visual appearance
- Help and care for each other
- Innovation
- Accepting diversity of residents
- Small size
- Local involvement, control and responsibility
- Affordable housing

Go ahead and add to this list if there is something you value that does not relate to one of these. *Then rank them, 10 is the most important value. 1 is the least important.*

During the meeting on Monday, Oct. 17, 7p.m. we can:

- V. Add to the list if there is anything that was left out. (5 minutes)
- VI. Discuss our priorities. (15 min.)
- VII. As individuals, write a statement that includes your most important values. (5 min.)
 “I feel it is important for Freeville to...”
 “It is important for me to live in a place that...”
- VIII. If you used the word “community” replace it with something else! (5 min.)
- IX. Review our statements (20 min.)
 Does Freeville live up to your expectation? How could it be better?
 Are these values worth working toward or maintaining, Why?
- X. Do our statements reflect the best possible scenario for the future of our Village?
 Is there any group agreement on any particular values?

The next step is to develop a statement that everyone agrees with and decide how we would measure our success in achieving this vision. Then we look at any critical issues or exciting opportunities for Lloyd to look into. *Almost Done!*

Village of Freeville Visioning Project – Summary

A diverse mix of 20 village residents shared their thoughts on the Village of Freeville. Here is a summary of the result of the information gathering stage of the project.

Like

Church
 School
 Safe place to raise a family
 Kids can roam parts of the village
 Safety and security
 “old fashion family values”
 Safe for children
 Sense of community
 Summer recreation program - youth
 Church as an activity center
 Ability to depend upon neighbors
 Village Judge
 Not a homogeneous community
 Low crime
 Friendliness of neighbors
 Village identity and rural locale
 Social Interaction
 Small size

Dislike

Freeville Police gone
 Grocer gone
 Library gone
 Diner gone
 Nursery School gone
 Traffic issues
 Volunteerism spirit gone
 Sidewalks lacking
 Abandoned looking property
 Creek ignored or abused
 Shabby look of Railroad Street
 No place to socialize

Top 10 Values: (in order of priority)

Help and care for each other
 Safety of children and community
 Friendships and personal connections
 Innovation
 Accepting diversity of residents
 Affordable housing
 Local involvement, control and responsibility
 Visual appearance
 Small size
 Connection to nature

Vision Statements

“Small enough that people know one another and are concerned with helping each other.”
 “A place that takes pride in social and community activities and its appearance.”
 “A village where you see neighbors, talk to neighbors and have a personal connection.”
 “A safe, open, inclusive and friendly community.”
 “A place where people look out for each other.”
 “A place that is safe, affordable and visually attractive.”

Prioritized Values

TABULATION OF LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE RANKING OF VALUES.

Highest number indicates highest value. Does not include results from Lehigh Village retirees.

Value	Total	Respondent Ranking						
Safety	66	9	10	9	9	9	10	10
Nature	28	1	3	7	4	1	7	5
Friendship	54	8	10	8	3	8	8	9
Visual	41	3	9	7	5	3	10	4
Help	46	6	7	6	2	10	7	8
Innovation	27	2	5	4	1	7	6	2
Diversity	39	5	6	2	6	6	5	9
Small	42	4	4	10	7	2	8	7
Local	44	7	6	3	8	4	10	6
Housing	37	7	5	10	5	9	9	1

Opportunities and Options of Six Most Thought About Value Areas

Safety of Children and Community

Neighborhood Watch (4)

Infrastructure Maintenance

Youth Center

More Active Police Presence

Sidewalks (trails and paths) (13)

Traffic Control (7)

Use TC3 students as a resource

Better enforcement of zoning (3)

Increase awareness of needs of community

Share times and meetings of Village Events

Connection to Nature and Rural Environment

Preservation of Nature (Land Trust/Laws) (5)

Collaboration with Village’s Neighbors (external stakeholders)

Bird Feeders

Local Responsibility and Control

Increase volunteerism and social capital

Increase Awareness of community issues

Local ownership (2)

Pride in community

Visual Appearance

Tree lined streets (2)

Street lamps

Clean and neat looking property

Entry Signs to Village (5)

Planters

Friendship and Personal Connections

Social Events (7)

Better communications of activities (2)

Places for social interactions

(coffee house, library) (17)

Welcome Wagon/Basket to new residents

Help and Care for Each Other

Volunteer Brigade (5)

Time and Talent Board

Promote Value of Volunteerism

Empowerment Planning Discussion

C. Klump, Research Assistant

February 4, 1999

<http://www.eslarp.uiuc.edu/durp/UP378-S99/empower.htm>

I. Advocacy Planning

Planning that promotes the needs of the poor and the marginalized first and foremost. In 1965, Paul Davidoff challenged the planning profession to become more involved in the civil rights struggle. He claimed that planners should play a very important role in elevating the lives of the oppressed and representing the underrepresented. Davidoff argued that advocacy planners could create plans that addressed the special needs of certain segments of the population and put their concerns on the policy-making agenda. This approach is often called “plural planning”, because the idea is that multiple plans (plans made by the private, public, and non-profit sectors) would improve the overall quality of local planning.

In the years following Davidoff’s challenge, hundreds of plans were created under the “advocacy” idea. Unfortunately, these plans had minor success because they were rejected by the private sector who viewed these plans as attacks on the status quo. Also, advocacy planning, while acting on behalf of the poor and marginalized does not typically INVOLVE these actors in the planning process. In response to the problems of advocacy planning, EMPOWERMENT PLANNING has emerged as a way to overcome the problems associated with advocacy planning by incorporating PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH and DIRECT ACTION ORGANIZING. These two methods effectively address the problems of advocacy planning by involving local residents in every step of the planning process and by organizing support from both the private and public sector for the plan.

II. Empowerment Planning - a definition

An alternative approach to community development practice that seeks to improve the quality of urban and rural life by enhancing community mobilization, social learning, problem solving, program development and non-profit management capacities of CBO’s serving low-income communities in order to promote more equitable patterns of urban and regional development.

Principles of Empowerment Planning

- Broad-based citizen groups are needed to influence public and private decision making ---“power to the people”
- Emphasis on the development of local citizen organization with the capacity to train residents in Participatory Action Research and Community Organizing
- Focus on training residents to be the leaders, rejection of the “expert model”
- Actively involve citizens in every step of the process – on equal footing with “professional planners”
- Planning process is not a linear path, straight from problem identification to implementation. Rather, it is a constant process of action and reflection and reshaping the process to address new information.
- Every step of the process is an opportunity to involve more and more residents

III. Participatory Action Research

- Commitment to the most marginalized groups
- Local residents determine the research agenda – what the plan will study
- Local residents are involved as co-investigators at each step in the planning process
- Commitment to using knowledge to promote change, knowledge = power
- Willingness to take action when information may be imperfect or incomplete
- Combination of quantitative and qualitative methods
- Emphasis on building local capacity to solve complex issues
- Appreciate iterative nature of research
- Commitment to broad dissemination of information through scholarly and popular outlets

IV. Direct Action Organizing - principles

The roots of direct action organizing can be found in the Settlement House movement, the Civil Rights era, the Women’s movement and student movements across the country. Jane Addams, John L. Lewis, Ella Baker and Saul Alinsky are important contributors to direct action organizing. Many national networks regularly use DAO. These groups include the Industrial Areas Foundation, ACORN, the Gamaliel Foundation and others

- Good ideas are rarely enough to achieve social reform – must act and organize on issues
- Broad base of organized political power is critical to implementation of community-initiated plans

- Community organizations seek to be representative of the neighborhoods they serve in terms of membership and leadership
- People will organize around issues that are of critical importance to them
- Use the issue to mobilize existing leaders and interested individuals
- Focus pressure on those holding the power
- Move to increasingly confrontational tactics until you get the desired response
- Participation in issue campaign provides a rich form of political education
- Collaborate with other groups, form partnerships with all sectors, increase support

V. Education for Critical Consciousness - principles

The major component of Empowerment Planning is EDUCATION, or what is often referred to as “Education for Critical Consciousness”. This concept has its roots in Latin American Literacy, land Reform and Social Justice Campaigns. The important contributors in the fields include Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Myles Horton and Ira Schor. This is the basis for liberation schools for children and adults throughout the world.

- Personalize problems (example: poor street lighting is our problem to act on, not just the city’s problem)
- Examine the structural nature of problems – why did things get as bad as they did in ESL?
- Encourage individuals to compare the actual operation of their local political system with the “civic book” understanding of these systems
- Individuals are exposed to situation in which people just like them have mobilized to end oppressive social and economic problems
- People are challenged to work collectively to end the structures that oppress them

VI. Drawbacks of Empowerment Planning

- Process is time consuming
- It threatens traditionally trained professionals who use the “rational planning model”
- May require longer and different training for future professionals (how is planning taught?)
- Support must be provided to resident leaders given the reciprocal nature of the process

VII. Comparison of TRADITIONAL PLANNING and EMPOWERMENT

The traditional planning model focuses on large-scale physical improvements that are devised by planning professionals. This model has limited citizen participation and employs top-down decision making tactics. The idea is that plans and policy are made by planners working for municipal government or private consulting firms who have the technical and analytical skills to devise doable projects for an area. EMPOWERMENT PLANNING emphasizes the involvement of residents in plan creating, implementation and policy reform. The belief is that through their lifetime experiences, residents know what is wrong in their neighborhoods and many cases know how to make things better, but lack the organizational and financial resources necessary to bring about change.

Freeville Pilot Project

College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Landscape Architecture
LSA 650 – Behavioral Factors
Lloyd Purdy



Freeville Pilot Project

Project Aims

The purpose of this pilot project is to lay the groundwork from which a strategic plan can be developed for the Village of Freeville, a small community outside of Ithaca New York. A plan acts as a framework the Village can use to address issues of planning, growth, development and change. Eventually such a plan could help answer questions such as; Should the community limit or encourage growth? What type and rate of growth is appropriate in a socially, sustainable, environmentally responsible perspective? What does the Village of Freeville want to be and to offer its citizens? All these ideas are forward looking based upon a plan. The first step in developing this plan was to develop a small study that attempts to define the current state of affairs in the Village.

Project Relevance

During the planning process early community input ensures that a proposed plan is not only feasible but responsive to the needs of the community. Open communication also helps generate discussion and the opportunity for new ideas and perspectives. The third benefit of community contact in the development of a planning document is related to the amount of input, control, and buy-in community members feel they exert over the results. A community that feels like they have ownership of not only the process but also the results of a planning document are more likely to support any proposed changes to the status quo. (Changes create stress and ownership helps ameliorate some of this stress.) This project, utilized community participation to test the waters. At very little expense and minimal time commitment I was able to develop an idea of the sense of community and the sense of place currently existing in the Village. Specifically results helped determine if the community felt any need for change within the village and the extent to which social relationships could support change.

Hypothesis and Testing Tools

The original hypothesis of the study was that there was no coherent sense of community or sense of place in the village. This hypothesis was based on anecdotal evidence that suggested that Freeville was a “bedroom community.” Under this paradigm no strong relationship between community members existed nor was there any use of the village for purposes besides that of domicile. This pilot project used two elements of primary research to gauge the sense of community and sense of place. Secondary research in the form of census statistics were also used for descriptive and comparative purposes. The first component of primary research was a 12-question survey that helped explain the strength of social relationship between community members (sense of community). The second application of primary research included individual interviews supported by a map marking exercise. This technique allowed for fairly free flowing discussion regarding how villagers used, felt and thought about the components of the Freeville (sense of place).

Literature Review

Community and environmental psychology is a field relevant to the underlying issues of this pilot project. Quality of life, social processes and the affects of intervention in the status quo are hallmarks of psychologists like Charles Holahan and Abraham Wandersman. *The Handbook of Environmental Psychology* (1990) Chapter 21 documents how place (the environment) and change influence community health. This literature also stresses the importance of the relationship of the individual to the corpus (community as a whole.) These issues are extremely relevant to the topics of focus in this pilot projects. Of specific relevance are the idea related to the sense of place. “*Habitatability* of the built environment” and the “quality of the physical environment,” (Holahan & Wandersman, 1990) can be directly correlated. The look, feel and quality of our environment affects behavior. “As people became more sensitive to surrounding environmental conditions, they came to recognize more fully the many subtle ways in which the environment can affect human functioning.” (Holahan & Wandersman, 1990) This pilot project documents how the current physical state of the village of Freeville influences how the village is used (human functioning in the village.) through the use of interviews and the mapping exercise.

Another tenet of environmental psychology is sense of community, the idea that a strong network of social support facilitates transitions through stressful changes. “This concern with social process and social ties is reflected in the definition of community.” (Holahan & Wandersman, 1990) *The Handbook of Environmental Psychology* (1990) Chapter 21 sites sense of community as “The perception of similarity to others, as acknowledged interdependence with others...the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure.” (cf. Yankelovich, (1981) Social support and community participation are key factors in sense of community. This pilot project uses a sense of community, focused questionnaire to document the current state of social capital in the Village of Freeville. Strong community relationships, processes and social ties enable a community to deal with change. One of the major purposes of this project is to serve as a litmus test to help determine how receptive the community is to change and how well proposed changes will be received.

Another component of this project relevant to existing research and literature can be found in Donald Appleyard’s *From Livable Streets* (1981). The pilot study “Three Streets in San Francisco” contained methods that were adapted for this project. The use of a mapping exercise connected to neighborhoods provided interviewees a method for communicating concrete and abstract ideas. Anecdotal evidence derived from topical conversations were grounded in places, points and paths. I also expected traffic issues, similar to those found in the “Three Streets in San Francisco” pilot to reveal themselves as important factors to the Freeville community. Ultimately, traffic concerns did not manifest as a major issue in this study. This may be due to the true relevance of the issue or limitations of the study.

Issues of New Urbanism and the sense of community created by New Urbanist environments are also relevant to a study of village life. *Physical and Psychological Factors in Sense of Community* (2004) Kim, Kaplan illustrate the importance Community Attachment, Community Identity, Social Interaction and Pedestrianism have on a healthy sense of community. Admittedly, their study was a comparative analysis of “neo-traditional design.” (Kim, Kaplan 2004) However, shouldn’t similar issues be the grounding for a healthy sense of community in an original “traditional” construct (i.e. a 150 year-old village). While the Freeville pilot project

did not explicitly test the “theoretical dimensions of a sense of community” these concepts are some of the underlying concepts that influence how villagers feel about their community and place. Other influences on the sense of community and sense of place have been reviewed in a chapter on Disorder in Ralph Taylor’s *Human Territorial Functioning*, chapter 11. Fear of crime, territorial markers and concepts of territoriality as well as the ideas described by Joan Nassauer in *Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames* as published in *Landscape Journal* are all relevant to the way Freeville residents regard different parts of their community (sense of place).

For the purposes of this project this preceding literature review is an abridged version citing only some of the literature and research relevant to the project. However, one more article should be recognized, less for its content application to this project and more for its methodology. In *The Psychological Sense of Community in the Neighborhood* (Nasar, Julian 1995) several interview questions answered on a scale of 1 to 5 are used as the focus for their test of validity. These questions provided the basis for the questionnaire used in this project to gauge the sense of community found in the Village of Freeville.

Project Data Collection Methods

The first component of this pilot project was the development of a survey that tested the social capital and sense of community of residents in the village of Freeville. Twelve questions, taken from *The Psychological Sense of Community in the Neighborhood*, Jack Nasar and David Julian (1995) were used to meet this criteria. Respondents were asked to circle a number between one and five that best described their response to the question. See the appendix for a sample of the questionnaire. The true population for this study is the 128 households occupying and owning their own home in the one square mile village political boundary. (There are a total of 224 homes in the village and 505 residents according to census data found at www.epodunk.com.) Due to the limitations of this study, renters, community members under the age of 25 and non resident users of the village were assumed to be represented by the test population. With full disclosure and a clear understanding of the limitations of such a small sample size, 20 completed surveys were collected. While demographic information was not a part of the survey it is safe to assume that an equal number of males and females responded to the survey. All responders were over the age of 30, home owners, village residents and the majority were attendees of the Methodist church.

The second component of this pilot project were 10 interviews of village residents. Open ended questions were asked to encourage interviewees to discuss issues about the village that were important to them. A mapping exercise with focused questions was used first to provide a physical reference villagers could use to convey ideas. The exercise itself may have been a mechanism that helped focus subsequent conversation on sense of place issues. A sample of the mapping exercise can be reviewed in the appendix. Some of the results of the conversation and mapping exercise were expected and some were surprising.

Survey Results

The following information includes the questions asked and reveals the typical response to the questions. Also included is how the true population may have answered it. When appropriate supporting commentary relevant to the project is included.

Question 1

I am similar to most people who live here.

Overall, respondents answered in the affirmative (agreed) that they were similar to their neighbors. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an affirmative response. A sense of connectedness, belonging and empathy with neighbors is important for sustaining and developing successful social ties.

Question 2

If I want to I can talk to other people in the neighborhood.

Overall, respondents answered in the affirmative (strongly agreed) that their neighbors are accessible for conversation. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an strongly affirmative response. Open communication between community members is a key component of building successful relationships and coping with change.

Question 3

I don't care whether this neighborhood does well.

Overall, respondents answered in the strongly negative (disagreed) that they did not care about the neighborhood. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an strongly negative response. This shows a strong concern for the welfare of the community.

Question 4

People here know they can get help from others in the neighborhood.

Overall, respondents answered indecisively or even apathetically that they could depend upon people in their neighborhood for help. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an indecisive response. This counterintuitive result showed a polarized response when individual responses were reviewed. Half of the respondents answered very highly that they could depend on their other people in their neighborhood. The other half answered in the slightly negative range. (Perhaps this is due to variances in what people construe to be their neighborhood.) this questions might not be the appropriate measure for willingness to help out, but more a reflection of ability. Can the accountant next door, who does not get home until after dark, watch the neighbors children during the middle of the day?

Question 5

My friends in this neighborhood are part of my normal daily activities.

Overall, respondents answered in the affirmative that their friends in their neighborhood were a part of their daily activities. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with a slightly stronger affirmative. Probably, daily activities for many people don't include the opportunity for much social interaction. This question might not be a good measure of willingness to "be neighborly" simply our society's hectic lifestyle.

Question 6

If I am upset about something, no one in the neighborhood will care.

Overall, the response to this question showed a positive result. Most respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that no one in the community would care if they were upset. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question in a similar way. This shows that villagers think others in the community recognize them as valuable people and empathize with their feelings.

Question 7

What is good for this neighborhood is good for me.

Overall, respondents answered slightly affirmative, that the welfare of their neighborhood had a influence on their welfare. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an similar response. Perhaps this question reveals the mobility of our society, or even the fact that there is not a great deal of attachment to place. A detailed review of individual answers reveals a slim majority of respondents actually strongly agree that what is good for their neighborhood is good for them. It appears that a few respondents have skewed the results.

Question 8

We have leaders here we can trust.

Overall, respondents answered strongly in the positive that they could trust their community leaders. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with a slightly less strong response. In this case it has to be assumed that community leaders include not just the mayor, board of trustees but also pastors and maybe even upstanding community members (as it should.)

Question 9

There are people in this neighborhood, other than my family who care about me.

Overall, respondents answered strongly in the affirmative that their fellow community members care about their welfare. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with an similar response. This question seems to be at odds with question four. Potentially there exists a difference between care and the actualization of concern into behavior.

Questions 10

If someone does something good for this neighborhood that makes me feel good.

Overall, respondents answer very strongly in the positive that positive community action resulted in a positive personal perspective. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with a similar response. This supports the idea that our environment affects our psychological state of mind and eventually our attitudes and behaviors.

Question 11

If I have no friends in this neighborhood on whom I can depend.

Overall, respondents answered very strongly in the negative to this question. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with a similar response. If the strength of the response can be measured as an indicator than, respondents feel they absolutely do have friends in their neighborhood on which they can depend. As a measure of social ties this is a very positive indicator.

Question 12

Being a member of this community is like being a member of a group of friends.

Overall, respondents answered overwhelmingly in the positive to this question. Apparently being a member of this community *is* like being a member of a group of friends. If this data is representative of the community as a whole than, 95 out of 100 times most residents would have answered this question with a slightly less positive response. Social connectivity and social ties help create a strong sense of community.

Interview Results

The results of the interviews are mainly anecdotal. Surprisingly, in this project, no one mentioned heavy traffic along NY Route 38 or NY Route 366 as issues. Subjects broached by interviewees include lack of a complete sidewalk system, the look of buildings, amenities or lack their of, and proximity to friends. Some interesting statements are listed below.

“I live work and go to church all right here in the village...I wish the store (grocery) was still open than I wouldn’t need a car at all.”

“My husband drives the other way just so he can avoid the corner of Rail Road Street.”

“I’m uncomfortable saying there are things about the village I dislike...it’s not the people on Rail Road street I dislike...its just the way things look...it’s not the people.”

“The transportation system in the village is great, the bus goes right into Ithaca.”

Mapping Exercise

The mapping exercise was probably the most informative component of this project. (A sample map can be seen in the appendix.) Interviewees were asked to:

Circle your neighborhood.

Mark the last place in the village they had visited.

Trace their route from their home to that place.

Put a box around any part of the village you dislike.

All four steps in the mapping exercise revealed something of interest. The majority (8 out of 10) participants described their neighborhood as their house and street, not the village as a whole. The two that circled the whole village first asked if they were *allowed* to circle the entire village! If this response is typical, than the village is more nucleated than expected. Do people on Willow Drive feel any connection to those on Brooklyn Road? At what level does being from the Village of Freeville influence people attitudes and behavior?

The marking of places visited include a park, a neighbor, a church, a gas station and a place of work. This certainly goes a long way to support the idea that Freeville is a place in its own right and not an ancillary to Ithaca. Even though there are several connecting streets in the village people follow an out and back approach to navigating through the village. Main Street is a common component for most of these excursions. This supports the paradigm of the traditional village structure and use pattern.

Surprising in the extent but not unexpected as an answer, was the degree to which participants marked Rail Road street as the part of the Village they disliked. Nine out of 10 marked approximately the same place. The one dissenter could not think of any part of the village they disliked or felt needed to change. In general this exercise shows a wide and traditional use of the village. The fact that zones of control or responsibility are more limited than expected and the extent to which residents feel a particular place in the community needs attention are striking.

Conclusions & Project Limitations

The results of this pilot project show that for a sample group the Village of Freeville is a place of strong social connectivity -- there is a strong positive sense of community. Freeville is also a place to be valued, appreciated and used in its own right, not just as a commuter "bedroom" community to larger towns nearby. A large degree of social capital seems to support the idea that the Village can adjust well to responsible and planned change. The initial hypothesis seems to be discounted by these results. The next step should be a study of the extent, degree and range of the sense of community as well as a look at specific places and values in the Village. This study was limited by the size and character of the sample population future research could expand on both these areas. The inclusion of renters, non-resident village users and youth would create a more accurate picture of the true state of affairs. Another limitation can be seen in the bias of the questions proposed to participants. For the most part, questions offered a narrow range of answers and because of the specificity may have missed important information, but at least a starting point has been established.

Background

The focus of this proposal is the Village of Freeville located in Upstate New York. Located 10 miles north east of Ithaca between the larger towns of Groton and Dryden, Freeville is marketed as a bedroom community (suburb) for Ithaca or even Cortland.

The Village covers one square mile, half of which is farmland and wooded wetland. The other half is predominately residential (about 459 people in 180 homes.) Two creeks transect the village before they empty into Cayuga Lake. A historic rail line, originally part of the Leigh Valley railroad, once stopped in Freeville. New York routes 366 and 38 also converge in the middle of Freeville. A small senior citizen apartment complex, a historic spiritualist camp and portions of the George Junior Republic boarding school (established in 1895) are contained within the village. Several small businesses, two farms, an elementary school, church, post office, fire station and a village hall balance out the rest of the non-residential land uses in the village.

Non residential uses of the village include a printer with a weekly publication, a gas station (full service), two mechanics, an architect who operates from home, a bed and breakfast, a tile, stone mason and kitchen design retail store, a new veterinarian located at the edge of town, a dinner, a mobile home accessory supply store and a physical therapist.

Of the 224 housing units in the village, 42 percent (96) are renter occupied. This is about equal to the state average and a little higher than the national average of 30%. The average number of household members is just under two, which may be accounted for in the high number of senior citizens in the village. The state and national averages are over 2.36 people per household. The typical monthly costs of owning a home in the Village (including mortgage) is \$925. The state average is \$1,357 and the national average is just over \$1,000. In the village gender is equal (252 males to 253 females) which is in line with state and national trends. The average age of a resident is almost 37 years and 97% of the population is classified as Caucasian. Fifteen percent of the village has an advanced college education (master's, professional or Ph.D.) Of the entire population, 155 are currently enrolled in some level of school. The median household income in 1999 was \$39,643. The source of this descriptive data is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, found on the ePodunk.com web site.

The first record of activity in what would be the Village of Freeville is from 1790. Israel Buell owned the land and harvested timber and potash. The first settler, David White, came in 1798 where he establishes a grist mill on Fall Creek. Prior to 1836 the area was known as White's Mill, legend has it when it was time to formally name the area, locals were in favor of calling it White's Mill or White's Corner, but Daniel White himself "vows that in this new country the place names ought not to perpetuate some man's name merely because he got here first. He proposes they call it Freeville" (excerpt taken from town timeline.) The first church (Methodist) is constructed in 1848, the post office in 1864. More facts and dates can be reviewed in the Freeville Timeline found at the Village Hall.

References

Appleyard, Donald, 1981, *Three Streets in San Francisco*, Livable Streets.

This pilot study set the precedent I will use for my mapping techniques – circling, marking and tracing residents’ experience of place.

Bronzaft, Arline, 2002, Chapter 32, *Handbook of Environmental Psychology*.

From conversations with villagers I’ve heard that large truck traffic creates noise pollution along main street that cause stress on residents. Will this issue manifest itself in this study? Stress would go a long way to destroying positive social relationships and a healthy community.

Holahan, Wandersman, 1990, Chapter 21, *Handbook of Environmental Psychology*.

Sense of community, quality of life, value of social relationships are key underlying factors in a study of village life.

Kaplan, Rachael and Kim J., 2004, *Physical and Psychological Factors in Sense of Community*.

This study supports the idea that Community Identity, Pedestrianism, Social interaction and Community attachment are integral components of a healthy community.

Lund, Hollie, *Testing the Claims of New Urbanism*, APA Journal, 2003, Vol. 69 No. 4

Related to the mapping exercises of this pilot project, this article gives the reader an idea of how physical design relates to community behaviors.

Nasar, Jack and Julian, David, *The Psychological Sense of Community in the Neighborhood*, Journal of the American Planning Association v61 p 178-84 Spring 1995

Questionnaire questions were derived from those listed in this article.

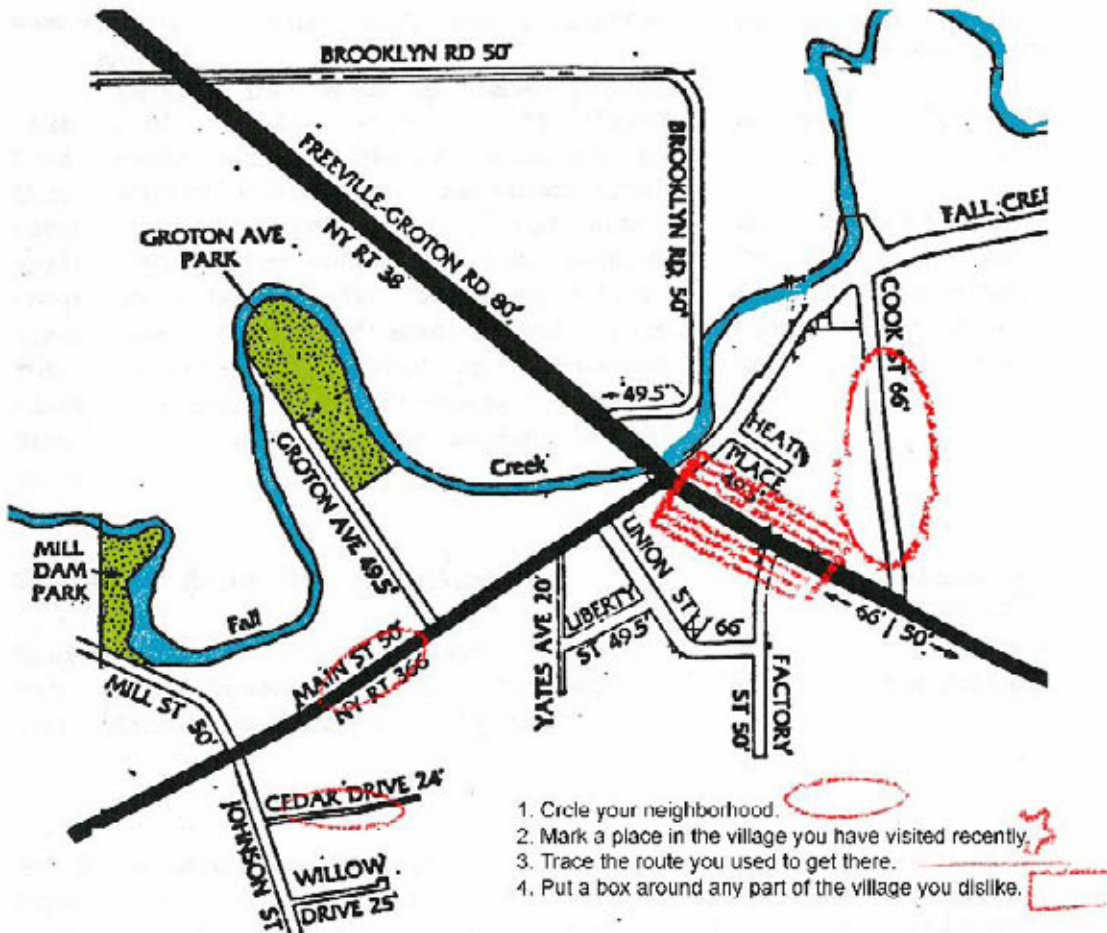
Taylor, Ralph, Chapter 11, *Human Territorial Functioning*.

Disorder does exist in the Village of Freeville. Will citizen concern for crime and fear manifest in study results? This article helps put the issues into perspective and provides the idea for ranking land use I will implement something similar.

Taylor, Ralph, Chapter 8, *Human Territorial Functioning*.

How do yards, sidewalks drives, homes close together, homes further apart affect the feelings for and use of the village’s public, private and semi-private spaces? With a majority of homes set close to the street, how do people behave in “their territory?”

Appendix Item B: Map from mapping exercise, scaled to fit page. Area inside map is inside the political boundary of the Village.



Lloyd D. Purdy III

12 Cook Street, Freeville, NY 13068 ♦ (607) 844-3999 ♦ ldpurdy@maxwell.syr.edu

EDUCATION

Maxwell School at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Master of Public Administration, anticipated May 2006

Focus: Public Sector Management and Finance

SUNY-Environmental Science & Forestry, Syracuse, NY

Master in Landscape Architecture, *anticipated May 2006*

Focus: Community Development and Urban Planning

University of Florida, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Gainesville, FL

Bachelor of Science, Food and Resource Economics, December 1999

Focus: Marketing, Policy Analysis, Economic Theory

Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Communication, December 1999

Focus: Public Relations, Media Management, Media Production

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Purdy & Co. Development Consultants, Freeville NY, 5/04 - current

- Developed conceptual master plans for relocation of Cortland County healthcare facilities.
- Wrote grants and managed projects for local municipal government.
- Fulfilled technological grant specifications as subcontractor to NY State agencies.

General Manager, Pots & Plants Garden Center, Austin TX, 9/01 - 7/03

- Managed day-to-day operations of horticulture production and retail business.
- Supervised retail staff of four and production crew of four.
- Initiated training procedures and customer service specifications for all employees.

Marketing & Communications Manager, TEPSA, Austin TX, 3/00 - 7/01

- Planned and produced events, promotions, and marketing campaigns to increase membership.
- Coordinated advertising activities and increased ad revenue by 20 percent.
- Improved internal and external communications through newsletters, publications, and the web.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

E. Scott Kasproicz Fellowship Recipient, 2005-2006

- Scholarship support for thesis work on community design and planning.

Sons of the American Revolution Historical Society, 2002-2006

- First Continental Chapter New York, NY.

Village of Freeville, New York, 2004-2006

- Zoning Board of Appeals, 2004-2005
- Board of Trustees, 2006

Sigma Lambda Alpha, lifetime member

- Honor society for scholarship in landscape architecture.

American Planning Association, 2005-2006

Village of Freeville, New York

Zoning Board of Appeals, 2004-2005
Board of Trustees, 2006
American Planning Association, 2005-2006
Sigma Lambda Alpha, lifetime member
Honor society for scholarship in landscape architecture.