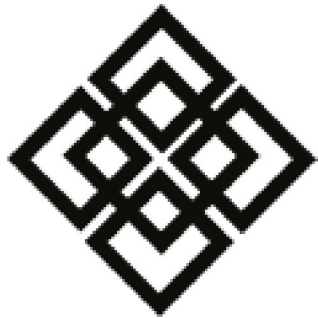


# CD PRACTICE

• PROMOTING PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE •

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## Using Community Capitals to Develop Assets for Positive Community Change

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*Portions of the material in this article have been used in other publications by the same authors. ([www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu](http://www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu))*

The Community Capitals Framework (Flora, Flora and Fey, 2004) is currently being used by a number of researchers and practitioners in their work with communities. This article is based on a workbook developed at the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and tested with a variety of researchers and field-based specialists in Ames, Iowa in October 2004. These community-based experiences and the resulting comments and suggestions were used to refine the workbook for this issue of CD Practice. During the past six years, this approach has been tested in several community settings. However, we recognize that this is a work in progress and represents an evolving approach to community interventions. We welcome feedback from those who are using this approach to help us learn from one another how best to create a dynamic praxis around the Community Capitals Framework.

In this issue of CD Practice, we present a dynamic approach to planning, strategizing, and monitoring change processes using approaches that are asset based, framed by the Appreciative Inquiry approach to work with people and change, and situated in the Community Capitals Framework

The Community Capitals Framework is used in this issue to show the whole system and how the various capitals interact with one another. Appreciative Inquiry is used to shape the process in which we engage others in discussion, planning, implementation, and monitoring. Quite simply, the Community Capitals represent the things we have to work with; Appreciative Inquiry defines how we will work with them.

The Community Capitals approach builds on the notion that communities have assets. These assets may be inactive or they may be invested to create more assets. Community assets, like many other things in our environment, tend to deteriorate when unused. Thus, a current state of equilibrium in any community setting will likely begin a slow decline

unless there is activity to change direction. Change, after all, is a constant; our shaping of it determines our future.

Asset mapping is not new to the field of community development, but using the Community Capitals Framework to direct asset mapping is new. In addition to presenting strategies for applying the Community Capitals Framework, the activities described in this issue rely heavily on strength-based approaches to working with communities and organizations.

In this issue of CD Practice we show how asset mapping can help communities identify their assets. Using Appreciative Inquiry helps community members determine the best strategies for investing existing assets to create additional assets within the community. Mapping strategies and outcomes using the Community Capitals Framework provides concrete evidence of asset development as well

as illuminating the interaction among the capitals that can generate an upward spiral of positive community change. Many planning processes end up on the shelf gathering dust. The processes we present here provide reasons to revisit the plan and keep it in the hands of people energized to implement the goals.

We intend for this issue of CD Practice to offer suggestions on using both Appreciative Inquiry and the Community Capitals in community work. While the activities, worksheets, and suggestions are organized in a linear fashion beginning with creating an inclusive and energetic planning group and ending with monitoring for success, we all know that community planning and project implementation is essentially a messy process with many starts, stops, and retracing of steps. Thus, we offer these pages as a menu of opportunities rather than a prescription for community planning.

## Why Focus on Assets

When communities begin their planning processes, groups from the community often get together and begin talking about change in terms of what needs to change, and how they are going to make those changes. In many communities, these conversations are stunted because there may be individuals or a whole group of people in the community who do not embrace change: “If it was good enough for me, than it is good enough for my kids” is a typical comment. This acceptance of the futility of action to support positive change results in an end to the conversation or continues in a long discussion about all the

problems in the community, with no discussion of possible solutions. When communities allow this behavior, progress cannot occur and people become frustrated.

Asset mapping counteracts these negative conversations. We begin the conversation by asking participants to point out the positive aspects of the community instead of working from the negative “problems” in the community. Once community members are excited about what they have to work with, they can begin to think about an even brighter future by working from existing assets.

### What is an asset?

According to the Canadian Rural Partnership: “Assets are what we want to keep, build upon and sustain for future generations. Assets can be physical things like a building, a local swimming pool or a 150-year-old tree in the town square; assets can also be intangible, like the work that volunteer groups do to beautify the main street or raise funds for the food bank.”

([rural.gc.ca/conference/documents/mapping\\_e.phtml](http://rural.gc.ca/conference/documents/mapping_e.phtml))

### What is a capital?

Flora, Flora and Fey, (2004) define capital as, “Capital is any type of resource capable of producing additional resources (page 165)...When those resources or assets are invested to create new resources, they become capital (page 9).” Thus, community capitals represent assets in all aspects of community life. Capitals may be tangible as industrial parks, businesses, and nature trails or intangible as with community norms related to helping one another, pride of heritage, or political influence. Capital assets can be invested, saved, or used up. For example, when a community sees its young people as a rich resource for the future and invites their energy and motivation into the local leadership, it is investing the human capital of youth in order to build additional assets in social capital—links between generations, cultural capital—the community becomes more accepting of youth and of others, and human capital as youth bring new people and new energy to community projects related to infrastructure, business development, community service, education, etc. Capital can be hoarded or saved when, for example a community foundation holds on to its money instead of investing it back into the community. Community capital can also be used up instead of invested to build more assets or capacity. We have all seen many communities that invested a great deal of local financial, social, and political capital to build an industrial park in response to the desires of some local business leaders and outside influences that sat empty for years. When these assets are used up, they don’t build other resources or additional capacity.

**An asset becomes capital when it is invested.**

A community rich with elders has assets in historical knowledge, a diverse population, and a base of information about the past and wisdom for the future. If a mentoring program is developed with the elders and youth, then the asset is invested, becoming capital.

Asset development in communities can be traced to the investment of existing assets in strategies and projects that build additional assets across the community. Assets may be invested internally to build local capacity, or externally to support asset development outside the community. Strategies where local assets are invested but lead to asset development for external actors often cause decline throughout the community. For example, the local assets used to support big box stores in rural areas utilize the financial and political capital of the community, but

in the long term often lead to the deterioration of existing local assets as small businesses close, per capita income declines, and access to health care decreases. At the same time, financial assets, including profits, flow to corporate headquarters resulting in a net loss of assets in the community.

As the following case illustrates, community assets are not always obvious, and sometimes something overlooked in the community can become a tool for community revitalization.

**Developing an Unusual Asset in Cummins, South Australia**

Cummins, South Australia (population 600) was a town in crisis in the mid to late 1990s, as young people were leaving the area to find jobs, and the rural downtown was diminishing. They had little to no social capital in town, and negativity was at an all time high. They were categorized as “dying” by the state newspaper, The Advertiser. Banks and shops had closed their doors, and the future was looking bleak. Two local leaders decided that their town definitely needed a future; they were not willing to give up the fight. They also knew they had to get the locals to believe in the cause as well. Cummins had to look into their local assets which were not clear at the beginning. An Enterprise Committee formed and soon recognized something in town that could be developed further: the old Kalamazoo Railway that ran through town and was no longer used. A local campaign was initiated by the committee: “Cummins on Track.”

Activities planned by the committee were funded in part by a pledge campaign. Through this campaign, the committee suggested the event “The Kalamazoo” to get local pride going, now called “The Kalamazoo Classic.” This running race event is held on and around the Kalamazoo Railway with several different types of races and tests of strength. This event has generated a lot of attention and interest inside and outside the town because of its “wackiness.” The campaign made townspeople excited about Cummins again, and people began working together for the town’s future. Now, there is a new bank in town, shops have opened up, and the school is doing well again, with graduating students either going on to college or finding employment locally. Cummins found that the key to their redevelopment was to first look at possible assets in the community, get local people enthused and organized, and then work on activities and economic development together. Rural Community Economic Development Case Study Review. Prepared by Cornelia B. Flora, Susan Fey, Corry Bregendahl and Jennifer Friel. PDF format (1,081 kb)

<http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/projects/benedum/casestudysummaries.pdf>

## Appreciative Inquiry: A Brief Overview

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) began as an approach to help corporations become more effective and has since grown into a world-wide movement. The focus on “appreciative” means that we think of the world as a glass that is half full as opposed to a glass that is half empty. Our appreciative eye focuses on the things that are working. “Inquiry” refers to the quest for new knowledge and understanding. We rely on the stories people tell about what is working in their lives and their communities and what they wish for the future as both the content and inspiration in our quest for new knowledge and positive social change.

In the traditional approach to Appreciative Inquiry developed by David Cooperrider, there are four stages in the AI process (Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver). Another approach which we will use here has six Ds (Define,

Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, Debrief) (Figure 1). The Define stage allows us to form our AI process on what we want to see more of. The Debrief, or Drumming and Dancing stage as Mac Odell, a community development practitioner in Nepal, describes it, provides an opportunity to reflect on what we are doing and what we can learn from those experiences at the same time it offers reason to celebrate with dancing and drumming or whatever the culture supports.

The theoretical basis of the approach emerges from the field of social constructionism. Social constructionism examines how what we think and talk about determines what we care about and do. Thus, awareness of how we tell the stories about what is working well in communities is critical to learning how to make those communities even better. One

way to think about this approach is that if we focus on problems, we create more problems. On the other hand, if we focus on solutions, we can create more solutions. If we talk about our dreams, we can create a vibrant new future. AI is a process that encourages us to think and talk about what is working and how it could work better.

AI involves several key components including:

- The Power of Storytelling
- Recognizing the Wisdom of Others
- The Importance of Curiosity in our Quest for Doing Better
- The Value of Hearing Stories
- The Primacy of Conversations and Dialogue

To learn more about AI, visit:  [<appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/>](http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/)

***The Power of Storytelling***

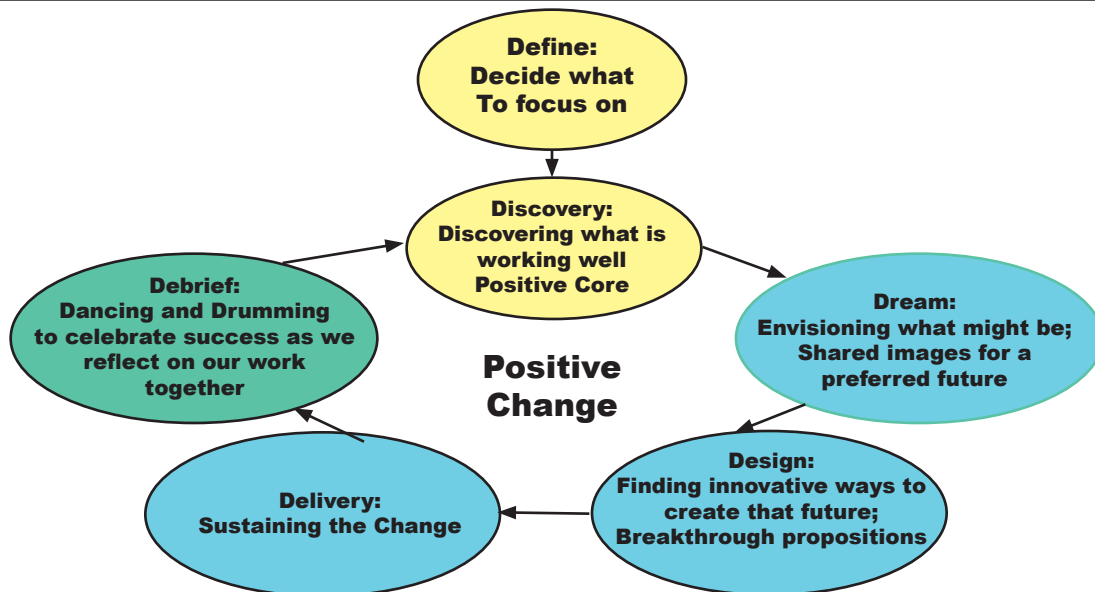
Each culture has its own tradition of storytelling; thus, we can easily adapt the AI approach in many different settings. AI asks people to discover the best of what is by sharing their wisdom in a story about a time when things were working very well in regard to the topic that emerged from the Define stage of Appreciative Inquiry. For example, in the Agricultural Workers’ Health Initiative (a project of the California Endowment to help agricultural workers identify and build on local assets that support wellness strategies), we asked community members to share their stories of when they and their families felt the healthiest. In an Alaskan Village, we energized people by engaging in a discussion about what was working well in the village-based medical system. In other settings, we have asked people to tell stories about a time when their community was working very well together. What did they value most

about living in their community? These stories ground the process in the reality of people’s everyday lives. The common themes among these stories constitute the positive core of that community. As we co-construct the positive core of what is working well, we create the foundation for effectively Dreaming for the future.

In AI we also ask people to construct a story of what the best could be; what life would look like if things were even better than the ideas generated in the Discovery stories. For example, we asked community members to tell us a story of what their community would look like if this positive core were even better, if the village medical system was working even better, or the community was even better at supporting family wellness. We might follow with asking what three wishes do they have for their community? Based on their awareness of what makes their community work well they can envision how it could become even better. These stories connect people to their passions and values. Sharing our wisdom about the best that is and that can be through stories creates a unique sense of community. It also generates positive energy and allows people to find a way to act on their passion.

AI approaches typically involve participants by encouraging them to use the AI process to interview one another or to listen to stories about the best that is. The interview process asks people to share their stories around personal and community successes. Furthermore, it asks people to consider what conditions lead to those best experiences and what might come from building on our strengths. Listening to the stories and hearing what people care about creates the opportunity to develop unique relationships. These relationships, based on hearing what people are passionate about, build the foundation for mobilizing people to make the changes necessary to create a healthier community.

**Figure 1. The Process of Appreciative Inquiry**



### *Recognizing the Wisdom of Others*

AI works best when we approach the process as co-learners. We must apply active listening skills to fully hear the stories of others; we must eagerly seek the wisdom that emerges from their experience. Active listening means giving others our full attention demonstrated in our responses to their points and our alert and receptive body language. We do not evaluate or judge their stories; we honor their wisdom and strive to learn from their experience. As co-learners, we explore the best of what is, so that we can then co-create with fellow participants a design for the future.

### *The Importance of Curiosity in Our Quest for Doing Better*

AI requires us to be curious about what we hear. Our curiosity allows us to be open to new ideas and perspectives. The AI approach continually searches for new ways of looking at what is by using an appreciative eye to seek what is working well and why. The AI quest also leads us to consider what might be possible, pushing the possibilities as far as we can. In AI we seek to open doors as well as to look for new doors that need opening. In the Design stage, we ask participants to think outside the box about what strategies can take us from the best of what is

now to a future where the best can be even better. Finally, we explore those possibilities and generate strategies to make them real.

### *The Primacy of Conversations and Dialogue*

Traditional planning processes use a lot of brainstorming, post-its, and sticky dots. We suggest that providing the space for people to have real conversations with each other about what they value and their hopes for the community is vitally important to co-creating a future in which they all have a stake. Then in the Design stage we urge people to construct “provocative propositions” and create “strategy declarations” that can bridge between the positive core of what is to the future to which we aspire. The AI process invites people to begin a conversation about what they care about and what their dreams of the future are. In the dialogue that emerges from these conversations, people can share their experiences and insights about their community and the opportunities for positive change. Such conversations help develop the trust and commitment people need to work together to construct a vibrant future. They also lead to new ways of thinking and talking about community and change. Thus, the discovery process leads to a new language with which to describe our work toward a new future.

## **Using the Community Capitals Framework in Asset-based Community Development**

Cornelia and Jan Flora with Susan Fey (2004) developed the Community Capitals Framework as an approach to analyze how communities work. Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial communities, they found the communities that were most successful in supporting healthy sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital: 1) natural; 2) cultural; 3) human; 4) social; 5) political; 6) financial; and 7) built. In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals as well as how investments in one capital can build assets in others (Figure 2).

### **Overview of the Community Capitals Framework**

**Natural capital** refers to those assets that abide in a location, including resources, amenities, and natural beauty. Natural capital might include parks, farm land, and features of the landscape or of nature. For example, Nebraska has invested in its asset of crane migration to build a vigorous tourism effort.

**Cultural capital** reflects the way people “know the world” and how to act within it. Cultural capital includes the dynamics of who we know and feel comfortable with, what heritages are valued, collaboration across races, ethnicities, and generations, etc. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to; which voices have influence in what areas; and how creativity, innovation, and influence emerge and are nurtured. Cultural capital might include ethnic festivals, multi-lingual populations, or a strong work ethic. In Roswell, New Mexico, the college invested the cultural assets of their bilingual staff to create a successful mentoring system for middle school students at risk due to their low reading scores.

**Human capital** is understood to include the skills and abilities of people, as well as the ability to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge in order to increase our understanding and to identify promising practices. Human capital also addresses leadership’s ability to “lead across differences,” to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group. Human capital might include

a local leadership development program, a high level of educational achievement within the population, or a cluster of skilled crafts people. At Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, the college provides on-site training in new energy-conscious construction as part of their new building project; thus expanding the human capital available in the region to address energy conservation.

**Social capital** reflects the connections between people and organizations or the social glue that make things happen.

**Bonding social capital** refers to those close ties that build community cohesion. In Native villages in Alaska, communities invest their social capital by offering students an elder to mentor them in learning how to apply their new skills and knowledge within the community. **Bridging social capital** involves weak ties that create and maintain bridges among organizations and communities. In Williston, North Dakota, the Extension specialist coaching the college team in their planning process has also been able to link them to a number of state and federal agencies; thus expanding their bridging capital to new sources of technical assistance and resources.

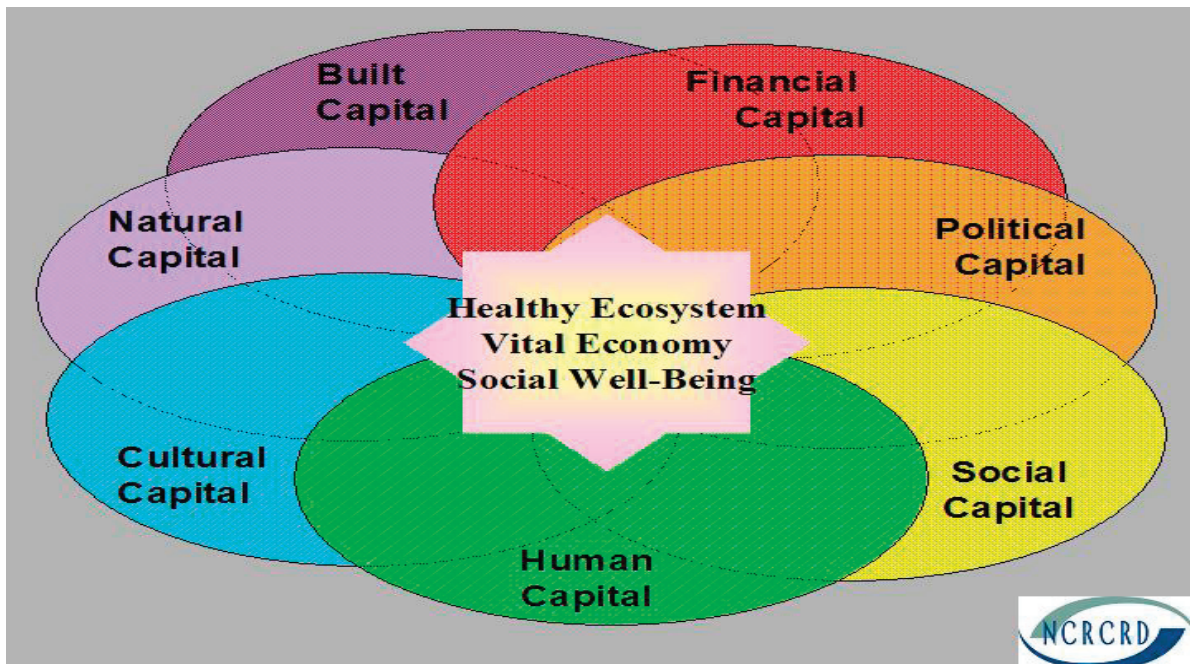
**Political capital** reflects access to power and power brokers, such as access to a local office of a member of Congress, access to local, county, state, or tribal government officials, or leverage with a regional company. For example, in the HomeTown Competitiveness project, organizers were able to leverage their political capital to

encourage investments in the strategy by utility companies, which in turn promoted foundation interest.

**Financial capital** refers to the financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, to underwrite businesses development, to support civic and social entrepreneurship, and to accumulate wealth for future community development. Many times financial capital becomes the focus of community efforts. For example, a community may seek grants to replace aging infrastructure. However, in Ord, Nebraska the community has focused efforts on capturing 10 percent of the expected wealth transfer for this decade through charitable giving. In turn, Ord will invest in the other capitals by supporting economic development, leadership training, and youth entrepreneurship.

**Built capital** refers to the infrastructure that supports the community such as telecommunications, industrial parks, main streets, water and sewer systems, roads, etc. Built capital is often a focus of community development efforts. However, preliminary research indicates that when grants for water, sewers, roads, and other projects are given to communities that have not invested in the other capitals, these projects tend to be less successful. For instance, specialists who help rural communities overcome water quality problems often have to start first with helping to develop local leadership.

**Figure 2. The Community Capitals Framework**



## Community Banks: Another Way to Think about the Community Capitals

An alternative explanation of the capitals framework might be to consider assets as community banks or a community bank with 7 types of accounts. Thus, for example, human capital becomes the community people bank. We have also considered using piggy banks to represent the capitals in a culture where piggy banks are commonly used to store savings. Our point here is that language should not be a barrier in helping people map assets or strategize for success. The abstract concepts of capitals can be re-worded in ways that make the process meaningful to those who engage in it.

### Step 1: Introducing the idea of the community as a bank

Imagine that your community has a very special bank. This bank stores the strengths, skills, and opportunities available to and residing within community members. The resources in these accounts can be squandered, for example in community conflict over a school or library. They may be hoarded, thus having no impact on the community. Or, they may be invested. Using the resources from this bank carefully can help communities increase the assets represented by the bank thus building the community's strength to create positive change. Within that bank there are seven accounts.

The **people account** includes the skills, leadership capabilities, information, knowledge and wisdom that reside within your community. For example, an agricultural cooperation may rely on the wisdom of traditional agriculture practices to help them raise traditional crops successfully. It may also draw on the leadership skills within the community to develop a formal organization.

The **networking account** includes the close bonds among families and friends as well as the loose ties to other organizations, resources, or people. We draw on our bonds with family and friends to help start new businesses as well as to cope with difficulties such as a job lay off. We draw on the loose ties when we contact someone we know in county government to help us work through the process of applying for a permit or with someone at the college or Extension office to help us with business planning.

The **environmental account** houses the resources that exist in the natural world around us. For some that would include healthy soil and strong crop strains, and for others that might mean healthy forests and a good water supply. We access these resources in our efforts to harvest products, and also when we work to improve the quality of life. Thus, in some cases the quality of the air and water can help keep businesses in the community.

Another account might be referred to as a **financial account** and includes the resources related to money and access to funding that exist in our community. When we develop a community foundation, for example, we draw on the wealth that exists among community members. We may also have access to funds through existing contracts and grants.

Closely related to finances, we find the account that represents our **building and infrastructure**. So, for example, the bathrooms that support attendance at the local farmers' market are an example of this kind of resource. For many small communities access to the telecommunications infrastructure aids local businesses in selling their products on the web.

A very important, but often overlooked, **account** houses our **cultural resources** including our way of viewing the world; our dances, stories, and traditions; our values and connections to the spirit; and our habits and attitudes. Communities often make use of these resources when planning to enhance tourism. We also draw on them to bring unity to the community and to help our youth find their way in today's troubled world.

Finally, we have an account that represents **power and our connections to the people who have power**. We draw on this resource when we unite over a controversial issue that impacts community life. We can build on this resource by making connections with political and community leaders inside and outside our community and sharing our stories of success.

### Step 2: Using the Community Capitals Framework to Map Strategies

Ask participants to think about an event or activity that helped the community become successful. Share the stories in pairs and think about what resources were used from these special banks.

As a group discuss the stories and identify which banks were drawn upon to make things happen.

### Step 3: Using the Community Capitals Framework to Map Results

As participants to share a story about how things are better since the project started. As a group discuss the stories and identify which banks developed new resources as a result of the project.

### Step 4: Using the Community Capitals Framework to Map the Future

Ask participants to share a story about how things could be even better.

As a group discuss how making things better would impact the community banks. What resources would be used? How would the resources in the accounts grow?

In this next section we offer some strategies for applying the Community Capitals Framework to community development work. We have organized these strategies around the steps in a planning process, but we do not present them as a step-by-step approach, rather they are intended as a cookbook of possibilities. In some cases we have included alternate strategies designed to address different group configurations. Communities all have their own history and their current opportunities. We invite you to use these strategies when and where they are most appropriate to the work at hand.

### Strategy 1: Developing a Planning Team with the Community Capitals Framework

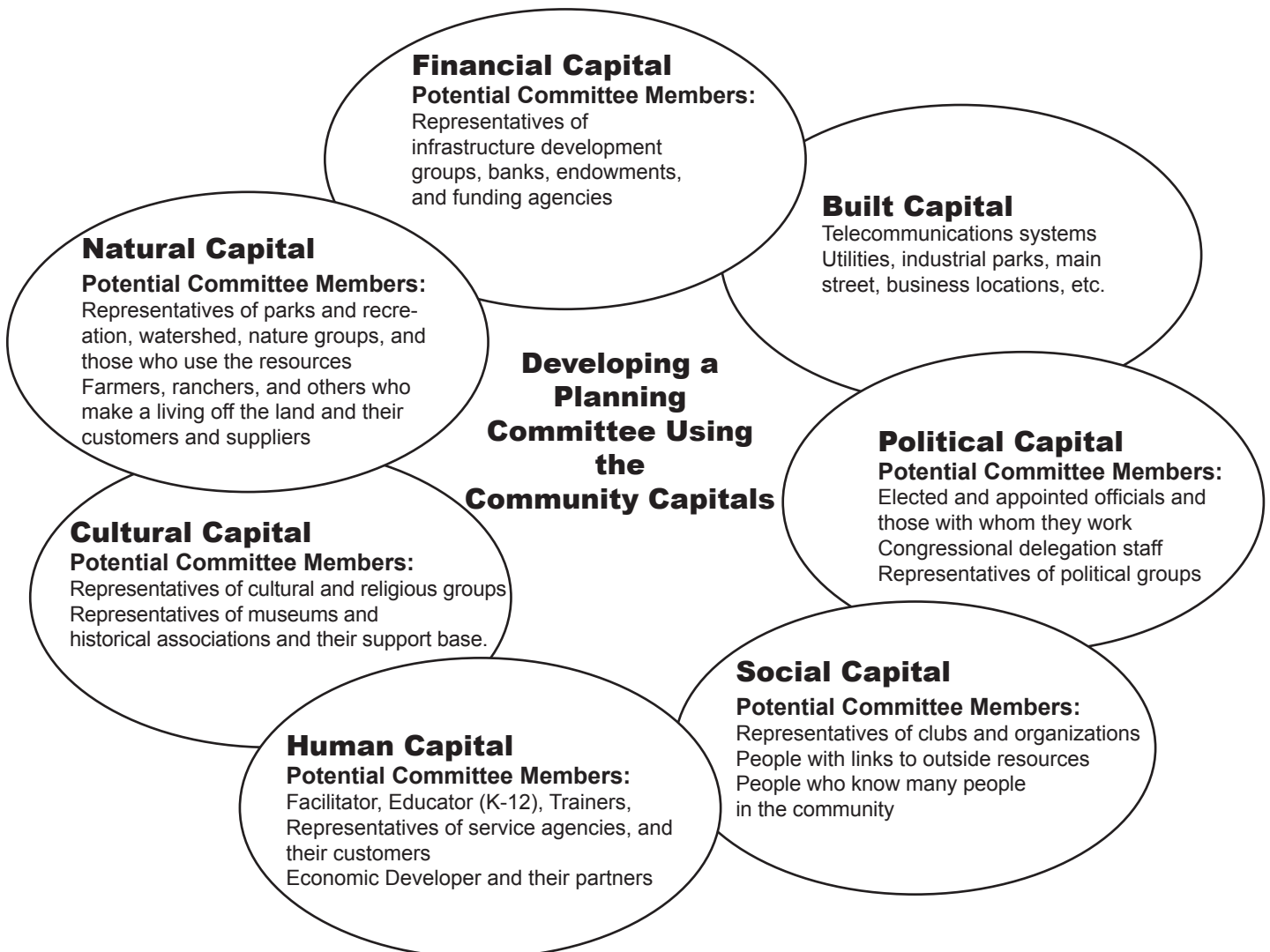
The first step in the planning process focuses on who will participate. Who is involved in the planning process determines a great deal about who will support the plan and, more importantly, who will help make the plan successful. We know that the more voices involved in the planning process, the more successful the effort will be. Traditional approaches to planning often focus on key

stakeholders or decision makers leaving out the voices that represent everyday life in the community. These voices provide essential grounding in possibilities, bring energy to the process, and ask important questions about accountability and impact. Without them, it is so much easier for plans to land on the back shelf. Successful communities opt for a more inclusive model of leadership and community participation. In these situations a planning committee takes responsibility for organizing meetings and inviting people from a wide spectrum. These approaches to planning bring the light of everyday life to bear on the potential and possibilities for creating effective change that benefits all of the community or every part of the organization.

Use Figure 3 to guide you in brainstorming the names of individuals who might be invited to join the planning team.

Using Figure 4, fill in groups/individuals related to each capital that you could invite to participate as planning team member. Use the sample provided on the following page to guide you:

Figure 3. Sample Map





**Figure 4. Developing a Planning Committee Using the Community Capitals**

The diagram consists of six overlapping ovals arranged in a circular pattern. Each oval represents a different type of community capital and includes a section for listing potential committee members.

- Financial Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Built Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Natural Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Political Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cultural Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Human Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Capital:** Potential Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_

**Strategy 2: Creating a Contact List**

Once you have identified potential committee members, you will want to create a contact sheet for each individual or group you intend to contact and invite to participate in the planning process (Figure 5). As you develop the

list, identify who will personally contact them to share the invitation. Despite efforts to make everyone welcome, some of the contacts you identify may choose not to participate. If that occurs, ask for suggestions of others in that group who can attend.

**Figure 5. List of Invitees to Planning Process**

Invitees and Contact Information	Community Capital Represented	Contact Person

### **Strategy 3: Defining the Focus of the Process: What do We Want More of?**

All Appreciative Inquiry processes begin with a Define stage. Spending time to carefully identify the focus of the Appreciative Inquiry process will determine how successful the process will be. So for example, a community working to eliminate poverty would not focus the process on poverty, but rather on sustainable livelihoods. Thus, we focus not on the problem; instead we attend to what we want more of—sustainable livelihoods. To Define your process, discuss what it is you want more of or what positive view of the community you want people to concentrate on. It is often useful to put your Defined goal in a prominent community space so that those involved always have their “eye on the prize”. When Cummins began thinking about what they wanted more of, they probably thought about retaining population and community and economic development, as well as increasing town enthusiasm.

### **Strategy 4: Using the Community Capitals Framework and Appreciative Inquiry to Map Assets**

A mapping approach is a way of helping participants create the most comprehensive inventories of assets possible. Therefore; we have designed a process and worksheet that planning teams can use to map assets. In addition, to support the strength-based approach to planning, we propose integrating Appreciative Inquiry (AI) into the planning activities.

Several strategies are possible depending on the size of the group and the time available. However, before you begin these strategies, your planning team should focus on how to engage participants. With help from the planning team, you might begin in the Define stage to determine what questions will help the group focus on the challenge. For example, a Discovery question might be, “Tell me about a time you felt really good about being part of this community?” Follow up with, “What was it about that situation that made it work so well for you?” Follow up again with, “What is it that you value most about this community?” To move into the Dream stage, the interviewer can ask, “If this community was the best community it could be, what would it look like? Think specifically about who would be doing what with whom? How? Why?”

#### **What is mapping?**

The dictionary describes mapping in the following way: “to plan or delineate, especially in detail; arrange” (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997). We use the word “mapping” to mean detailing and arranging assets.

### **Discovery**

The Discovery stage in AI focuses on helping individuals and groups “discover the assets.” Members of the committee will want to ask themselves, “What assets do we have under each form of capital?” In the case of Cummins, this may have been difficult at first, because they saw themselves as losing everything, but through their planning processes they were able to identify an asset that had long been overlooked—the old railway. The benefit of asset mapping is that it helps communities visualize things that they may not have really seen before. There are three possible approaches individuals and groups can use in the Discovery stage.

#### **Approach A**

1. Begin this planning session by asking people to interview someone in the group they don’t know using the Discovery and Dream questions developed in the Define stage. Some people may be taken back a bit with starting a meeting this way, but the energy in the room will grow as people engage in conversations that speak to their values and hopes.
2. In small groups, ask people to share insights from listening first to the discovery stories of others and, second, by probing to learn more about the conditions that made that successful story possible. Then using Figure 7, ask the planning committee to identify the community assets described in the stories under each of the capitals.
3. Small groups can then share their maps to create a general map of community assets by type of capital.

#### **Approach B**

1. You may wish to use a warm-up activity. For example, you could ask people to find a partner and share an example of a successful planning process. Partners might introduce each other to the group with one idea about how to engage in successful planning.
2. Review the purpose and process for the meeting and briefly explain the approach.
3. Ask participants to work individually on identifying assets by community capital using Figure 6.
4. In small groups, ask participants to consider an example of when one of those assets was making a positive difference in the community. For example, a person might talk about the role of an elder in supporting students or the role of a banker in supporting a leadership program.
5. In the small group, develop a map (Figure 7) that includes everyone’s thoughts on the assets in each form of capital.

Approach C

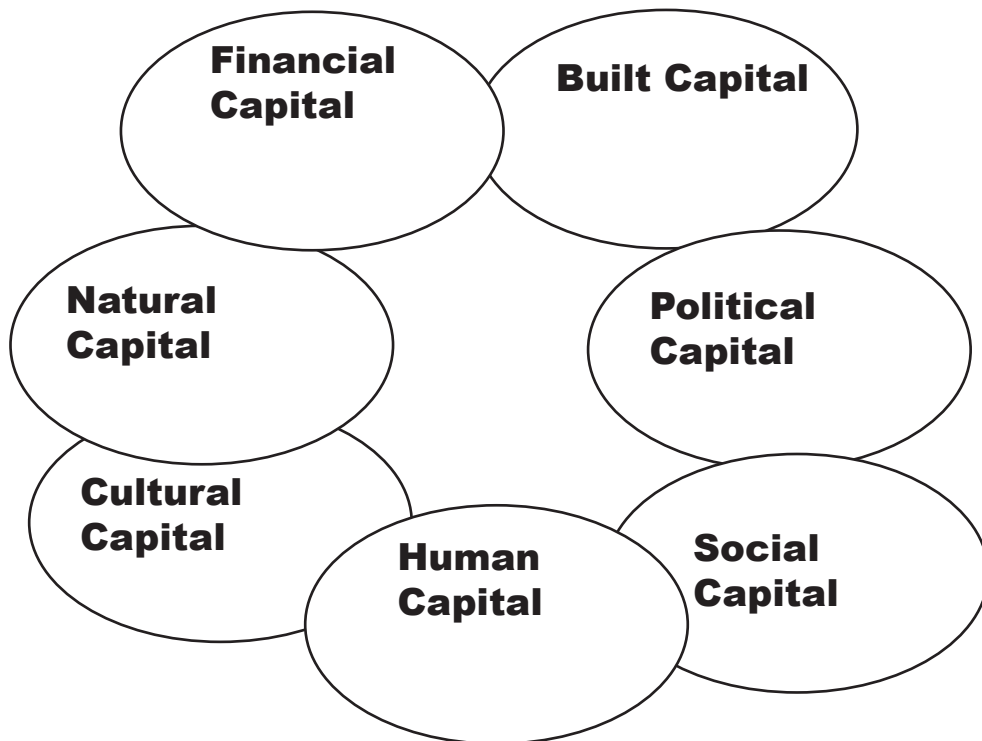
- Using either strategy above, replace the actual mapping process by asking participants to develop individual maps for each of the capitals. Break into small groups, so that each group can concentrate on creating a

complete map for each capital. In those small groups, encourage participants to tell stories of success they have experienced in the community; this storytelling will evoke ideas in the group. (If the map provided in Figure 7 is not large enough, create your own on poster paper.)

**Figure 6. Mapping Assets by Community Capital**

<b>Natural Capital Assets:</b>	<b>Cultural Capital Assets:</b>	<b>Human Capital Assets:</b>	<b>Social Capital Assets:</b>	<b>Political Assets:</b>	<b>Financial/Built Capital Assets:</b>
<i>Example: Parks</i>	<i>Example: Community festivals</i>	<i>Example: Community College</i>	<i>Example: Community clubs</i>	<i>Example: Elected officials</i>	<i>Example: Banks</i>

**Figure 7. Asset Mapping with the Community Capitals**



**Strategy 5: Using the Community Capitals Framework and Appreciative Inquiry to Map the Future**

***Dreaming***

After Discovering all the community assets, the groups can begin to process the stories that Dream about what the future could look like. The discussion of current circumstances (mapping assets) is followed by a Visioning or Dream focus. These processes work best when they are grounded in the reality of the current circumstances and when participants are asked to develop

a Dream story of how things can be “even better.” Sharing these stories builds excitement and energy. Based on these stories, the group can identify common themes among the dreams for the future. The community capitals can be used to organize dreams. There are two approaches appropriate for Strategy 5.

**Approach A**

1. If the group has not already interviewed one another about their future hopes and wishes, ask each person to write down the Dream narrative. Encourage them to create very specific scenarios.

Write your Dream narrative here:

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2. After you have your Dream story drafted, share it with your group. After you finish sharing, begin organizing the story elements by using the community capitals.

It is okay if you do not have a story element that fits under every form of capital. Use Figure 8 for this step.

**Figure 8. Dream Elements by Community Capital**

<b>Natural Capital</b>	<b>Cultural Capital</b>	<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Social Capital</b>	<b>Political Capital</b>	<b>Financial/ Built Capital</b>
<i>Example: A new park is built.</i>	<i>Example: A new cultural festival is held.</i>	<i>Example: Every child completes high school and has an opportunity for future training.</i>	<i>Example: New clubs form.</i>	<i>Example: Political candidates are more diverse in the future.</i>	<i>Example: New home ownership program starts.</i>

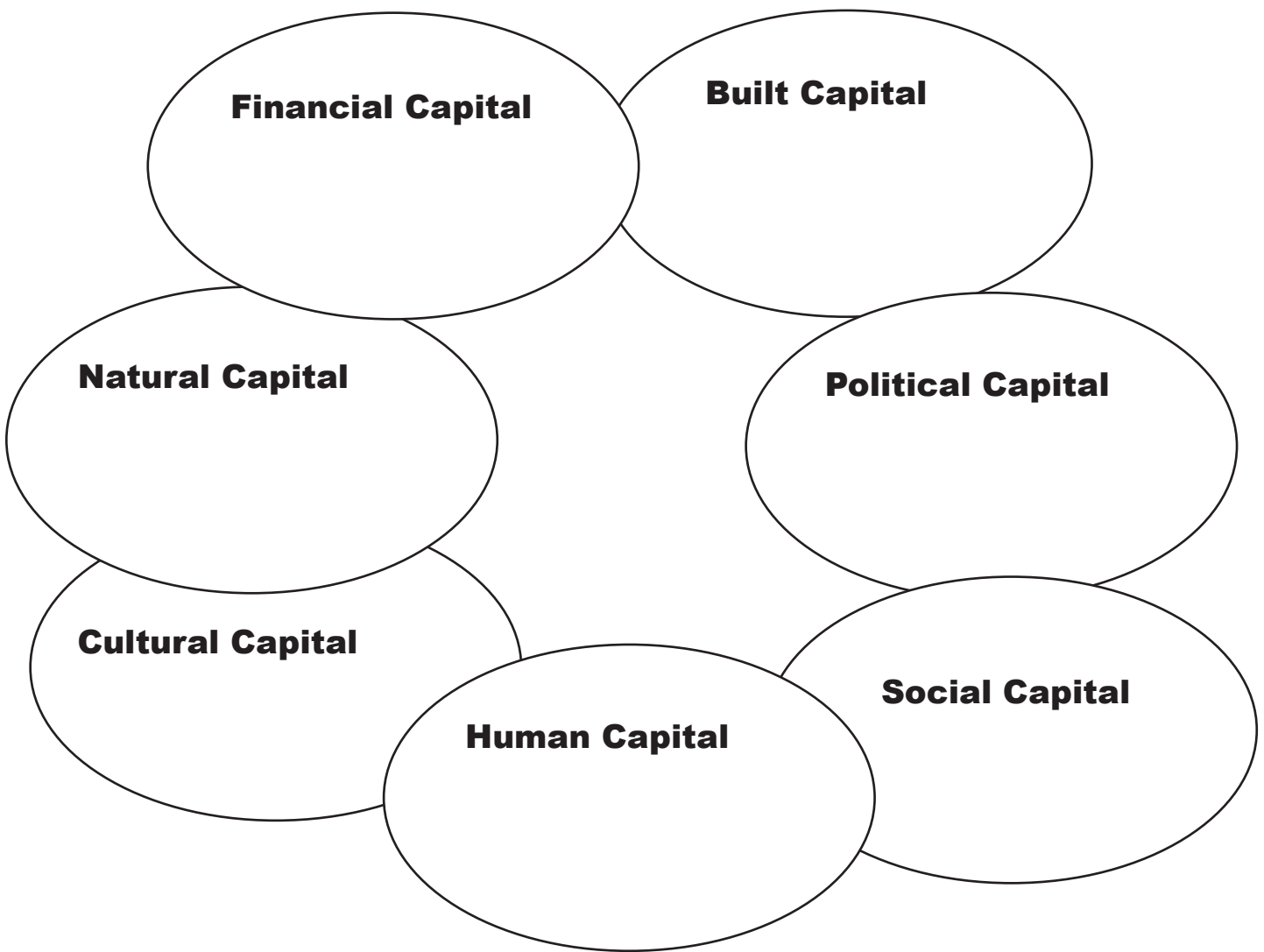
3. Once your story elements are configured in Figure 8, you can use Figure 9 to create a map of the future. Map your future ideas according to how they fit into the Community Capitals Framework. As you make your map, you will want to notice any overlap or connections among the capitals.

**Approach B**

If the group has already shared their stories of the future, the small groups can go directly to mapping the future using elements from the interviews.

**Figure 9: Creating a Map for the Future with the Community Capitals**

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### **Strategy 6: Strategizing for the Future**

#### ***Design***

Taking dreams from wishful thinking to concrete strategies for change can be challenging for planning groups. We encourage you to use your asset map and Dream map to strategize for effective change. In doing so, you will create a strategy map. You will want to identify what strategy will move you from where you are now to the future you want to create. The mapping activity will encourage participants to think about the multiple impacts of a single strategy. For example, developing scholarships for kids will impact several forms of capital: human capital as kids attain more education, social capital as people work together to develop the scholarships, financial capital as money is invested in education, and cultural capital as the importance of

education is reinforced within the community. There might also be an impact on political capital as the scholarship group identifies candidates for school board or other offices who share their values about the importance of education. Thus, those strategies with the most strategic value will demonstrate a high level of return in multiple capitals. In another example, providing affordable housing would impact human capital because homeowners develop skills and abilities to take care of a house and children who have stable housing do better in school. It will also impact social capital as neighborhoods with stable residents develop both bonding and bridging capital. In AI, we use the phrase, “provocative propositions” or “strategy declarations” to describe what we have to do to move from where we are on the asset map to where we want to be on the map of the future.

### **Dayton Maps out a Dream and Delivers!**

In the 1980s, Dayton Washington had several empty buildings around town and many that were in disrepair. Town leaders wanted to revitalize the downtown and create more local economic development. A town meeting was held by the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and 300 residents came, which is 1/10 of the population. At the meeting an outside facilitator helped the community members brainstorm ideas, and big ideas were written on pieces of poster paper and hung up around the room. Later during the meeting leaders and committees attached their names to the big ideas.

Five major ideas came out of the meeting:

1. Restore the courthouse.
2. Form a Downtown Development Task Force
3. Make improvements in natural capital, including planting grass and trees in an ugly downtown lot and placing a walking bridge across the Touchet River to improve access.
4. Plan community festivals.
5. Form a joint advertising committee.

There was swift follow through with the ideas, and soon a local Historic Preservation Commission formed, as well as a Local Improvement District (LID), which required a 60 percent approval vote from business owners inside the LID. (Dayton's LID received 82% approval.) A LID is a mechanism for building owners or business owners to tax themselves and use the tax collected to make improvements to the downtown. Businesses paid \$42 per foot assessment, which was collected over a 10-year period at 8 percent interest. This money was used as match for larger grants. This dollar commitment also showed that the community was behind the effort. Revamping the downtown became a reality with street repairs, new lamp posts, trees planted, and store fronts renovated. As the store fronts were renovated over a three month period, there was no front access to the businesses, so an "alley creeper" campaign went into effect, and residents entered through the back door.

The Director of the Chamber of Commerce is proud of Dayton's progress: "Our Main Street revitalization was a long... process... The committees all had a mixture of volunteers who were of varied talents... artists, construction people, money types, and group leaders... The process would not have worked without dedicated, persistent community members with vision. After 20 years we now have incredible community pride, a much-improved business district, and the continual restoration of homes and businesses. Our Main Street is considered very beautiful, and our large, healthy trees are one of things tourists comment on most. We have become a well respected historic destination, and it never would have happened without the Main Street Revitalization process."

When Dayton designed their new future, they took care to focus on projects that mobilize assets across the capitals (natural capital—large healthy trees, human capital—volunteers, cultural capital—historical association and community pride, financial capital—LIKD, built capital—downtown, social capital—the Chamber and the Commission, and political capital—voter approval) to create new assets across the capitals (built capital—downtown revitalization, social capital new volunteers and more robust organizations, human capital—new skills in volunteers, natural capital—preserving of natural attributes and new plantings, financial capital—money types who participated, and cultural capital—support for main street). These impacts are mapped in Figure 9.

Rural Community Economic Development Case Study Review. Prepared by Cornelia B. Flora, Susan Fey, Corry Bregendahl and Jennifer Friel. PDF format (1,081 kb) <http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/projects/benedum/casestudysummaries.pdf>

Dayton's strategy for the future was extremely community-focused; they wanted community members to decide how the town's future should look. When they decided on their five big ideas, they probably had intended impacts

mapped out as well, which is important for any community planning effort: when choosing action steps, there should be consideration made for what the community hopes to gain from them.

### **Do you have the right structure?**

As the planning group considers the provocative propositions and strategy declarations, we must also ask the question, where in our existing structure will these efforts live? Often, these new strategies require adjustments to the existing structure, so there is some clear focus within the organization—a home if you will—where responsibility and resources are allocated to ensure implementation of the strategies. For each provocative proposition or strategy declaration adopted by the planning group, identify where in the existing structure there is a place for this effort to reside or decide how to revise the structure to assure a home for each effort.

In Figure 11, list the strategy you want to work on under the appropriate capital. Then fill in the potential impacts under the capitals. If you cannot think of an impact for

every capital, then leave that space blank and move on. Use Figure 10, a sample table based on the case of Dayton, Washington, to guide your work.

**Figure 10. Sample Table**

<b>Natural Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Cultural Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Human Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Social Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Political Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Financial/Built Capital Strategy</b>
Focus on large healthy trees as an attribute to encourage community pride, tourism, and more planting. Exploit the potential scenic beauty of the river.	Mobilize the Historical Commission to help revitalize the town.	Community leaders invite the community to participate in revitalization	Community leaders invite volunteers to help with projects and take ownership.	Get LID passed	The community is given a new look and feel, based upon ideas from the community
<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Downtown becomes more desirable, residents plant more trees. Residents are more able to access the Touchet River from the footpath. Encourages tourism (financial) and community pride (cultural).	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents appreciate and preserve local culture (cultural) and support local businesses (financial)	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents have enhanced their communication skills and are more able to articulate their ideas and make them happen (human capital). Both bridging and bonding social capital is formed as residents work together on strategies and access external resources (social capital). LID is passed (political capital and cultural capital—we can make a difference).	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents are interacting with each other more often (social capital). They develop a can-do attitude (cultural capital). They access internal and external resources (financial capital).	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> LID passes and residents are becoming more involved in town issues (political capital). Community has resources to support revitalization (financial capital). People work together to create change (social capital and cultural capital).	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Renovated businesses in the downtown are thriving due to increased tourism (financial capital). New developments increase community pride (cultural capital). Local businesses and homes increase in value (financial and built capital). Tourism brings increased opportunities for bridging social capital.

**Figure 11. Strategizing for the Future**

<b>CAPITAL:</b>	<b>Natural Capital</b>	<b>Cultural Capital</b>	<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Social Capital</b>	<b>Political Capital</b>	<b>Financial/ Built Capital</b>
STRATEGY:						
POTENTIAL IMPACTS:						

**Strategy 7: Monitoring Progress with the Community Capitals Framework**

*Deliver*

After the group completes the strategy table, people can work on an action plan to implement the strategies. Coupled with implementation is measurement. For each objective, strategy, or goal in the plan, you will need

to identify indicators to help you measure progress. The Community Capitals Framework also provides a mechanism for setting up a monitoring system. Once you have identified key indicators, select those that require the least work to collect; yet provide meaningful information on the impact of the strategy. You will also want to figure out who will collect the data for measurement.

**What is an indicator?**

An indicator is something we can measure to determine change. Indicators may be broad brush statistics like average household income or per-capita income. Because we may have trouble linking what we are doing to these statistics, we may choose something like the number of power cut-offs. If we are successful in increasing family self-sufficiency, for example, then we can expect there will be less power cut-offs. Or, we can look at yearly tax data by zip code. If our program helps more people access earned income credit, we would expect to see that change in the yearly tax tables.

**What is impact?**

In evaluation, impact sometimes refers specifically to how systems or institutions change in response to implementing a particular strategy. Here, we use it broadly to list the outputs (actions, events, programs, etc.), the outcomes (how people benefit from those actions, events, programs, etc.), and impacts (how systems change as a result of the action, events, programs, etc.)

If Dayton decided to monitor their progress using indicators to measure impacts, they could easily look at how each capital was impacted in the community. Did festivals help to improve cultural and social capital? Did the renovation of store fronts impact built and financial capital? What did the planting of trees do for the community’s natural capital?

These are initial questions that might turn into indicators. Figure 11 provides an example of how they might have measured their impacts.

Figure 12 provides an example of how a community could monitor and evaluate the progress they have made through their development work.



**Figure 12. Monitoring Progress Sample Table**

<b>Natural Capital</b>	<b>Cultural Capital</b>	<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Social Capital</b>	<b>Political Capital</b>	<b>Financial/ Built Capital</b>
		<p><b>STRATEGY:</b> The community is given a new look and feel, based upon ideas from the community.</p>			
<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents are more able to access the Touchet River from the footpath.</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents are appreciating local culture.</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents have enhanced their communication skills and are more able to articulate their ideas and make them happen.</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents are interacting more often.</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Residents are becoming more involved in town issues.</p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Renovated businesses in the downtown are thriving due to increased tourism.</p>
<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> Families are spending more time fishing together on weekends.</p>	<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> Participation across groups in festivals and community centered events.</p>	<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> One new idea from the community is implemented each year.</p>	<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> Number of community members attending festivals and community centered events.</p>	<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> Voting records of 18 year olds.</p>	<p><b>INDICATORS:</b> Revenue made from outside visitors and tourists.</p>
<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b> Who will collect the data? How?</p>	<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b></p>	<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b></p>	<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b></p>	<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b></p>	<p><b>COLLECTION PROCESS:</b></p>

Finally, in Figure 13, we include a worksheet that uses Appreciative Inquiry to reflect on what is happening

and provide opportunities for people to learn from their successes and from each other.

**Figure 13. Monitoring Progress**

<b>Capital:</b>	<b>Natural Capital:</b>	<b>Cultural Capital:</b>	<b>Human Capital:</b>	<b>Social Capital:</b>	<b>Political Capital:</b>	<b>Financial/ Built Capital:</b>
STRATEGY:						
POTENTIAL IMPACTS:						
INDICATORS:						
COLLECTION PROCESS:						

**Strategy 8: Debrief: Using Appreciative Inquiry in Formative Evaluation**

1. Define: What do you want more of in your project?
2. Discover: Ask those involved in your program to interview each other to learn more about what is working well.
  - a. Ask for a story about what is working well: who was involved, when, where, etc.?
  - b. Ask what was it about that situation that made it work so well?
  - c. Share this information and discuss it. Come up with those things that need to be in place for the program to operate well (readiness factors) and the positive core of what makes the program work (success factors).
  - d. Discuss how to use this information to improve program delivery.
3. Dream: Include questions about the future in the interview such as:
  - a. Ask what would our program look like if we were even better at doing the things you mentioned in your story? Who would be involved, how, why, when, where?
  - b. Share three wishes you have for the program, what would they be?
  - c. Share this information in your group and develop a picture or poster of that future.
4. Design: In conversations with those involved in your program:
  - a. Develop strategies for moving the program forward.
  - b. Discuss what would be needed to successfully implement these strategies.
5. Deliver: Work on strategies for implementation:
  - a. Decide what needs to happen to be successful.
  - b. Identify who will do what to make it happen
  - c. Do something immediately to take a step closer to that future
  - d. Celebrate successes

# Conclusion

The activities we suggest provide a way for residents and leaders to think broadly and deeply about their community using the Community Capitals Framework. Our approach relies on appreciating the assets that already exist in communities and determining ways of investing those assets to create strategies to help all the segments within the community prosper. Throughout this issue, we have offered you several ways to advance your community development efforts. First, we discuss the importance of looking at assets to build excitement and advance your vision for the future. Second, we offer you an approach to asset mapping using Appreciative Inquiry. This approach

offers one way to work with community members to envision and follow through with community goals. Then, we show you how to incorporate the Community Capitals Framework into the AI process to help leaders frame their planning activities more inclusively. Finally, we offer several activities and worksheets for you to use with your own community, including how to monitor and evaluate your work effectively. The activities outlined in the issue can be adapted to map progress toward goals, participation, and the impact of community work on other systems and partners.

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