



## OPINION: Editorial

April 29, 2007

### New visioning process bringing people together

By EDITH SHELLEY  
COMMUNITY VOICE

What do Chattanooga, the South Bronx, Jacksonville, and Delray Beach have in common?

They have used a broad and inclusive visioning process to help turn around declining economies, under-performing schools and an eroded quality of life in their communities.

Community visioning is both a process and an outcome. It is different from other forms of planning because it is strongly geared to community values. An improved quality of life is a visible indicator of a vision's success, but beyond that it gives the community a new way to solve problems and meet challenges.

Traditional planning strategies often pit neighbor against neighbor because of concerns about losing valued community attributes. Our residents are diverse and more demanding of public planning processes. The ratifying of "done" plans without the participation of those most affected will no longer work. Planners, public officials and citizens are turning to visioning to bring everyone together to plan the community they want.

The Daytona Beach Visioning Steering Committee was appointed by our City Commission in the fall of 2006.

We have been tasked with producing a blueprint for Daytona Beach's future through an interactive and inclusive resident and stakeholder public participation process. This plan is to define a coordinated vision with associated strategies and specific recommendations to improve and preserve the quality and vitality of life in Daytona Beach.

#### REACHING OUT

Steering Committee members met monthly from September to December and have been meeting twice a month since January. The city hired Performance Consulting in January to facilitate this process. We developed a community matrix to ensure that all areas, neighborhoods, and zones would be represented as we reached out to form a Stakeholder Group. This group must be as diverse as possible and represent every major interest and perspective in the community. It also represents the city's demographic diversity. It is important to note that the Stakeholders are not simply to serve as advocates for their own interests. They are to participate as citizens with a stake in the quality of life in the whole community. Broad representation is challenging, but we are up to the challenge.

On May 5 at the Lemerand Center, Building 310, on the campus of Daytona Beach Community College the Steering Committee will be hosting a Communitywide Visioning Meeting from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. This meeting will kick start the community process with an action packed agenda.

#### WHY GET INVOLVED?

How can we work together if we do not first come together? We will determine shared values and build a common knowledge base. What does Daytona Beach need to stop doing? What does Daytona Beach need to keep doing? What does Daytona Beach need to start doing?

Action teams will be formed to address areas of concern and interest. These teams will meet through the summer. They will work on goals and strategies that will form sections of the overall vision plan. All of these meetings will be publicly noticed. Citizens are encouraged to participate throughout the whole process. The Steering Committee is addressing ways to keep the public informed every step of the way. Rough content drafts will be posted on the Visioning link on the city Web site to enable citizens to respond and add suggestions and ideas. Our goal is to keep this process as transparent as possible.

### **WILL THIS BE DIFFERENT?**

The failed vision of 2005/2006 has energized a community to action. Neighborhood groups have been meeting across our community. They meet individually and collectively. They are coming together to address issues of concern in their immediate neighborhoods and in the community at large. They are going door to door to invite their friends and neighbors to take part in the new vision process. This is an exciting time to be involved in the city of Daytona Beach.

Everyone is looking for action. Change is happening. Put away thoughts like, "Nothing I say matters" or "We've done this before and nothing happens." Well, we have not done it this way before. This is a new beginning for our city. It is up to us the citizens of Daytona Beach to come together to make Daytona Beach the city of choice -- the place we choose to live not the place we have to live.

A successful vision process raises up citizen champions and community groups who accept ownership, commit to action and take responsibility for the continued implementation of the vision. It is inspirational and not mitigation driven. It clearly articulates the desired community values and hopes for the future.

Daytona Beach is a city poised on the edge of opportunity. We as a community can either fall off that edge or proactively embrace the opportunity to work together to decide the future we want and plan how we will achieve it. I look forward to seeing you on May 5.

*Shelley chairs the Daytona Beach Visioning Steering Committee and is a member of the city's Planning Board. She has lived in Daytona Beach for 27 years.*

### **DAYTONA BEACH VISIONING**

- **WHAT:** Communitywide meeting to establish visioning goals and form committees.
- **WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday.
- **WHERE:** Lemerand Center, Building 310, Daytona Beach Community College.
- **WHO:** All residents and people with businesses in the city are invited. Participants, who do not have to register, are encouraged to stay the whole day but do not have to.

[Print This Page](#) | [E-Mail This Article](#) | [Search](#) | [Subscribe](#)

[HOME](#)

[NEWS](#)

[BUSINESS](#)

[SPORTS](#)

[RACING](#)

[ENTERTA](#)