
**UW-Extension
Community Vitality & Place-making Team
Community Capacity Building In-service**

Community Capacity Building: Diagnosis & Roles

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Community Vitality & Place-making Team Workshop

Diagnosis Activity

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Diagnosis Case Study – Sleepy Falls WI

Sleepy Falls WI is a mid-sized town in an urbanizing Wisconsin county. Sleepy Falls lies in a fertile valley with a spring-fed lake, state-sponsored bike trail, and a championship golf course which in the winter converts to a cross-country ski venue. The Sleepy Falls population numbers about 23,000 people with about 8,000 families and 3,000 youth. Sleepy Falls was hit hard by the 2008 economic recession because most of the private sector economic base is concentrated in manufacturing, housing and retail small business. Sleepy Falls is the home to one of the world's largest bicycle manufacturers and the county boasts over \$1B in agricultural production and related economic activity. Tourism revenues began to rebound in 2013 after 16 straight quarters of decline. The largest employers in Sleepy Falls are the local hospital and school district. Both the hospital and school district are feeling financial pressure due to increased needs and fewer resources.

Sleepy Falls families pride themselves on their resiliency, but the economic downturn, housing foreclosures, and related mental health concerns have taken their toll on the community. The growing population of senior citizens is worried about their health care and ability to remain living in their community. Sleepy Falls youth are disillusioned at their future prospects and most can't wait to leave the community for a better life in the Twin Cities or Chicago. The only thing that keeps most youth going is the wicked fast DSL/wireless speeds at the local coffee shop and their ability to hang out in virtual environments and play massive online multiplayer games. Sleepy Falls High tech club won the Apple award last year for most innovative app creation and scored second place for their robotic drone in an Amazon.com STEM contest. Most Sleepy Falls adults commute 25 miles or more to work each day in the larger cities to their east and west. Given its proximity to the local interstate highway, Sleepy Falls saw an influx of upper middle class professionals during the housing boom. After the 2008 recession, there now exists a significant divide in socio-economic status among many Sleepy Falls neighborhoods.

Local Ag producers are enjoying record high milk prices and expanding their livestock operations to take advantage of the economies of scale. Sleepy Falls' cash grain operations can't produce enough bushels of soybeans and corn due to a severe drought in Nebraska and Iowa. Local producers are concerned about their future independence as markets have become increasingly integrated both vertically and horizontally. Many local residents are concerned about the environmental effects of these large farm operations. Some newer Sleepy Falls residents would prefer local zoning ordinances that place more restrictions on agricultural land and its use. Agricultural producers and others in the community have been advocating for some time now for farmland preservation regulations.

The local chamber director and her business roundtable are concerned at the loss of manufacturing jobs and the collapsed housing market. Yet, last week an entrepreneur and accredited microbrewer toured the community as she was considering Sleepy Falls for a brewery and bottling operation. There is some fear the bicycle manufacturer will relocate to Georgia because of more favorable tax structures and a highly trained workforce. The mayor and city council have been squabbling about how to address the falling property and sales tax revenues given the state imposed levy limits on municipal governments.

City leaders are perplexed about how to address the older adult needs and grow the local economy with such limited resources. Nonprofit organizations in the community are struggling to raise funds to meet the growing needs of individuals and families in the community. A growing malaise has fallen over the community even though they have many assets.

Local leaders approach the Extension office in the county because they'd like to re-engage the community in positive change and move the community forward. They've heard about how a neighboring community, Werocaroca (We Rocka Rocka), engaged in a visioning process to unite their residents and create a plan for the community's future. Sleepy Falls leaders figure if the Werocaroca community can do it, so can they, b'gosh! As the Extension team, you are putting together a diagnosis plan and meeting with community leaders tomorrow night.

Initial Considerations

**How does this opportunity align with local community vitality and your professional plan of work and/or local needs assessment?*

**How would you approach the diagnosis process?*

**What assumptions might you or the leaders make? How might those assumptions lead to either an accurate or inaccurate diagnosis?*

Diagnosis Methods & Principles

**What additional information might be needed?*

**How would you gather it?*

**What are critical principles to incorporate as part of the diagnosis?*

Scope of the Effort, Types of Approaches and Roles

** What scope or level of community capacity building might take place?*

**How many purposeful approaches might be needed?*

**What role(s) would Extension agents play?*

**What role(s) would community members play?*