



Imagine Anderson

A Report to the Community October 2008

SECURING THE FOUNDATION

The mission of Imagine Anderson is to carry out the community goals created in the Vision 2026 plan. A 19-member implementation board has been seated to assist and facilitate the advancement of the Imagine Anderson vision plan. This board is representative of the geographic areas of Anderson County, as well as the community sectors outlined in the 20-year vision plan. This leadership team meets on a monthly basis.

Accomplishments of the Implementation Board to date are:

- 1) Developed a formal committee structure to address the Imagine Anderson goals
- 2) Secured the endorsement of the Imagine Anderson Vision Plan from Anderson County Council, City Council, Anderson County Municipal Association, and the Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce.
- 3) Applied with the SC Secretary of State and obtained the 501(c)3 Nonprofit Corporation status for Imagine Anderson.
- 4) Seated a Finance Subcommittee to establish a plan for the hiring of staff, as well as an initial five-year funding strategy for Imagine Anderson.

Community Participation

In addition, 10 working committees have been established which include approximately 70 community volunteers. To date, these community volunteers have already realized a significant purpose of Imagine Anderson: to bring all sectors of the community to a common meeting table to discuss challenges and collaborative solutions. The committee structure is as follows:

Economic Development Committee

Cultural & Community Resources and Tourism
Industrial Recruitment, Partnerships,
Information and Awareness
Small Business and Young Professionals
Transportation
Workforce Development

Education Committee

Change Subcommittee
Curriculum Subcommittee
Health & Wellness Subcommittee
Safety Subcommittee
Workforce & Jobs Subcommittee

Growth Management Committee

Health and Human Services Committee

Access to Healthcare
Drugs, Violence and Teen Issues
Emergency and Protective Services
Health Promotion
Housing
Senior Citizen Issues

Leisure Committee

Recreation Committee

Committees began meeting in the last quarter of 2007. Currently, all committees are seated and meeting on a regular basis, with the exception of Growth Management, which is planned to be active by Fall 2008. All committees are open to the community and active participation is both welcomed and encouraged.

COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To date, several Imagine Anderson committees have had success in addressing the goals of the Vision Plan. Notable accomplishments are:

Economic Development Committee

As a result of addressing goal Econ23, the **Economic Development Committee** hosted an Economic Development Summit on August 21, 2008. Over 60 attendees from our elected officials, existing industry, economic development partners and education leaders participated in the event to gain a greater awareness about the economic development process, how our community can prepare for positive economic development, and the value and need for economic development incentives. The subcommittee hopes to host a second event which will be open to the general public.



Education Committee



The **Safety Subcommittee** hosted a NIMS (National Incident Management System) training during August 5 - 7, 2008, which was attended by 50 school officials. This training was a partnership between Imagine Anderson, Anderson County Sheriff's Department, and Anderson County Emergency Services. Our audience was the five Anderson County school districts with the goal of developing and adopting a common emergency response consistent with NIMS. This consistency refers not only between the schools, but also with law enforcement and emergency services. The intended result is to establish a common protocol for emergency response with everyone "speaking the same language".

In response to Education Goals Ed12 and Ed14, the **Curriculum Subcommittee** has been busy developing a resource list across all five school districts, which identifies existing programs/resources regarding business partnerships, mentoring programs, volunteer programs, and partnerships with Tri-County Technical College, Anderson University and Clemson University. In addressing goal Ed10, the subcommittee is "overlying" the course offering catalogs from all five districts to determine if any gaps exist and to identify areas of possible collaboration.

Similar to the Curriculum group, our **Health & Wellness Subcommittee** has initially focused on determining existing community resources related to early childhood development and school readiness, child care, teen pregnancy, literacy, and after-school programs. Instead of a resource list, the subcommittee will develop an Asset Map which will identify both the existing resources, but also where these resources are located in the community. The Asset Map is a fluid document and will provide a visual concept of tangible and intangible resources and how they are connected (i.e. serves as a “road map” to help mobilize community efforts). Another important focus is the connection between these issues and positive economic development.



The **Workforce & Jobs Subcommittee** has initiated open and honest dialogue between the education and business communities. The group has acknowledged that the business community is the consumer of the education product which is our high school students & graduates. The group is identifying the expectations of the business community in terms of a qualified workforce, as well as identifying how the business community can partner with the education sector to help meet these growing expectations. Again, these issues are directly linked to economic development....developing and sustaining a qualified workforce is a critical component for industry recruitment and expansion.

The **Change Subcommittee** is patiently awaiting the results of the education study being conducted by the Strom Thurmond Institute at Clemson University. The results of this report, in addition to the efforts of the Education Task Force directed by Dr. Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education, will provide much guidance in addressing the goals. Topics of interest include technology, equal opportunity and access, funding alternatives, and coordination/collaboration of resources.

Health and Human Services Committee

The **Health and Human Services Committee** collaborated with Region 1 Public Health (SCDHEC) to provide input needed to complete the LPHS (Local Public Health System) Assessment for our community. In addition, the subcommittee was a collaborative partner in the NFP (Nurse-Family Partnership) grant application for Anderson County. The subcommittee was supportive of the approval by County Council to implement the 800mhz communication system for Anderson County (HHS10).



Currently, the main topics of focus include increased home ownership opportunities for citizens (HHS1), the establishment of a juvenile center (HHS3), installation of security cameras in downtown Anderson and identified city parks, the creation of a VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster), and the possible implementation of a 211 information and referral system.



Leisure Committee

The **Leisure Committee** has been an active community voice and advocate for continued opportunities for our citizens. The committee was supportive of the implementation of Downtown Sounds, a weekly summer entertainment series for downtown Anderson, as well as the creation and ongoing success of BalloonFest. One goal is to recruit and train community volunteers for event and/or stage set-up and management skills, which will offer skilled manpower to entertainment venues coming to Anderson....possibly pursuing a partnership with the Leadership Anderson Alumni to access a ready pool of volunteers.

Recreation Committee

The **Recreation Committee** began their work with the main focus of bringing all recreation providers together to collaborate and share resources. After much conversation with recreation volunteers and directors from throughout Anderson County, it was determined that the greatest common challenge is the lack of quality recreation facilities. All parties researched and explored possible solutions, and it was unanimously decided a countywide hospitality tax in the unincorporated areas of Anderson County would provide the source of funding needed to overcome this challenge. Currently, all but two of our municipalities have existing hospitality-tax ordinances. And it is important to note that this proposed county-wide ordinance will not impact these municipalities. The committee continues to work diligently on this proposal to gain countywide support, as well as the needed approval from County Council. One important element will be the development of a county-wide master plan for recreation, which will be used to prioritize projects and establish an implementation timeline. Currently, the City of Anderson is finalizing a master plan which was funded by hospitality tax revenue. If approved, a percentage of the revenue from the new county hospitality tax would be used to fund a master plan for Anderson County.



LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next few months, Imagine Anderson will continue to move forward with the Vision Plan. In particular, our continued progress will focus on:

- All committees will continue to grow, meet and address the goals of the Vision Plan.
- The Imagine Anderson website will be redesigned and reactivated for implementation needs.
- The Implementation Board will move forward in the hiring of a director for Imagine Anderson, as well as finalize commitments for an initial five-year funding strategy.

However, the most critical component of Imagine Anderson's continued success will be our ability to secure the needed funding to hire a program director and support the work of our committees. Imagine Anderson is grateful for the financial support of our current donors (recognized below), but to realize long-term success, we need both financial and volunteer support from a broader base of the community: business, government, and individuals. This single fact will be paramount to our overall success.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For questions related to this progress report, for more information on Imagine Anderson or to join a committee, please contact Cindy Hopkins at 864-226-3454 or chopkins@andersonscchamber.com.

Imagine Anderson Vision Investors

Special thanks to these organizations whose financial support has made the development and current implementation of Imagine Anderson possible.

Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce
Anderson Area YMCA
Anderson County
Anderson County Library
Anderson County School District 1
Anderson County School District 2
Anderson County School District 3
Anderson County School District 4
Anderson County School District 5
AnMed Health
Anderson Independent-Mail
Anderson Journal
City of Anderson
Civic Center of Anderson
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Duke Energy
Fairway Outdoor Advertising
Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center
Hospice of the Upstate
Martin Advertising
Innovate Anderson
Piedmont Natural Gas Company
SENIOR Solutions
Tri-County Technical College
Westside Community Center

**A vision without a plan is just a dream.
A plan without a vision is just drudgery.
But a vision with a plan can change the world.**