

Community Cooperation, Pride & Civic Involvement

Introduction

During the recent Reality Check Workshops, topical experts and members of the public worked together in small groups to examine a particular topic in-depth. During the two-hour workshops they worked with a trained facilitator to complete the following exercises:

- 1) Review of Ideas. Participants reviewed all of the ideas related to their topic that were collected during the community Idea Gathering Sessions.
- 2) Critical Questions. Participants engaged in a discussion of two Critical Questions, which had been identified by the *Vision for Staten Island* Steering Committee. The facilitator recorded the results of the discussion on flipchart paper, and then helped the group summarize major areas of agreement and disagreement.
- 3) Implementation Recommendations. At the end of the discussion period, each participant wrote down two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps to help Staten Island achieve its vision for their topic.

The results from the Community Cooperation, Pride & Civic Involvement group are provided below. Note that responses have been recorded verbatim, and some errors may remain due to handwriting legibility. Responses are numbered for reference purposes only; this does not indicate any sense of priority.

Quick Brainstorm:

What are the special things about Staten Island that make us proud?

1. Great parks
2. Great youth program and schools (colleges)
3. Good adult program
4. Great waterfront
5. Interfaith cooperation on Island is great
6. Increasing multicultural community
7. Desirable place to live
8. The best of both worlds: small town and big city
9. Great school system
10. Great music and literary tradition
11. Overcoming Willowbrook. Excellent services for special needs children and adults
12. Quality of life
13. Lowest crime rate

Critical Question 1:

What are the current barriers to reaching our goals of civic pride and community involvement?

1. People come and go all the time/transit
2. Nativism
3. Not enough sense of “place,” poor resources and outreach
4. Educate people that live on the Island about what the Island has to offer
5. Political lack of diversity
6. Lack of unified goals
7. Funding for all programs
8. No local control with government issues
9. Breaking materialist mind set
10. Fear and ignorance of people
11. Lots of issues and unwelcoming/racism
12. Easier for people to get involved
13. Lack of civic responsibility

Critical Question 1 SUMMARY:

1. No local control with government issues
2. Lots of issues and unwelcoming/racism
3. Lack of unified goals
4. Nativism and transit
5. Lack of civic responsibility

Critical Question 2:

How can we bridge the gap between North Shore and South Shore and instill unity and community pride at the borough-wide level?

1. Education
2. Improving transportation
3. Using cultural institutions to link north and south
4. Geography
5. Have an event that everyone wants to attend
6. More joint projects between schools, institutions, festivals
7. Communities are divided
8. Communication with community outreach
9. Lack of resources flowing on the Island
10. An issue all Islanders can take part in

Critical Question 2 SUMMARY:

No summary was provided.

Implementation Recommendations:

Consider the draft vision statement, the ideas gathered from the public, and your group's discussion of critical questions. Please recommend two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps that you would recommend to help Staten Island achieve its vision for your topic.

1. End racism, etc
2. Affordable housing throughout Island
3. Education – teaching cultural diversity and respect
4. Create a single, unified gateway (via web, most likely) to feature all of the ways that people can get involved – events, volunteerism, board service
5. Stop trying to get “A” to go to or engage with “B” and figure out a unique, cool “C” that all groups can get behind
6. Place-based, civic pride and responsibility curriculum, including community treasure hunts/passbooks (passport books), cleanups, plantings, etc.
7. Better communication of ideas and opportunities through the web, ads on buses/beaches/other public places, etc.
8. The implementation of more local control which would lead to better funding
9. Organize activities bringing the north and south together

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