FORWARD
Wayne County

Neighborhood Involvement & Community Engagement (NICE!)

Module 3: Sustainability and Resources

forwardwaynecounty.org

Module 3: Action and Results – "Sustainability & Resources"

Section 1: Idea to Action

What does the transition from "Idea" to "Action Plan" look like?

Forward Wayne County's *Idea, Evaluate, Action Plan* concept provides a framework for thinking about potential community placemaking projects. Ideas can be small or large, simple or complex – it's up to you! However, using this framework will help you step through the planning process. The goal of *Idea, Evaluate, Action Plan* enables all volunteers to share their idea in a way that others can understand; what it is, why it's important, who should be involved and how to move forward.

3 Steps to Go from Idea to Done

Here is a step-by-step guide to help community development organizations, neighborhood associations, and volunteers go from idea to execution. Having a brilliant project is great **IF** it gets executed, but that can be hard when you depend on volunteers. **Idea to Done**, is your guide to for taking ideas to evaluating to action!

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1. IDEA!

IDEA is the **SPARK!** It takes a spark to create a flame that ignites a fire. In IDEAS phase, you create a spark or idea for a community placemaking project.

Key components to an IDEA:

- ☑ *Why – Why is the idea worth pursuing?*

- ☑ *What - 1 to 3 sentences to state clearly what the idea is.*

- ☑ *Value – provide 2 to 4 sentences on the value it will bring to the community.*

2. EVALUATE

EVALUATE is like the **WOOD!** It takes wood to go from a spark to a fire, so start gathering your wood to build this fire. This phase, you are thinking about what steps it takes to bring the idea to life. Take a moment to consider some of the questions you may get from others.

Key components to EVALUATE:

- ☑ *What problem will this solve – Consider what community problem this project may solve.*

- ☑ *How – create a list of 3 to 5 steps of how this project could/should move forward.*

- ☑ *Who – include the resources that may be needed to bring this project to life.*

- ☑ *Hurdles – outline possible obstacles to getting the project done.*

3. ACTION PLAN

An **ACTION PLAN** is the **FIRE!** You had the idea spark, you put together an outline and presented to the **NICE! Group**, it is time to keep the fire burning.   In the PLAN phase, you are enacting a small group of people to help create the plan and work the plan.

Key components to a PLAN:

- ☑ *Outcomes – list the specific outcomes you expect when this project is complete.*

- ☑ *Resources – finish the comprehensive list of the people and roles needed.*

- ☑ *Timeline – draft milestones and dates.*

- ☑ *Metrics – include how you will measure success of the project.*

- ☑ *Cost – provide a cost estimate.*

Transitioning an idea into an actionable plan is essentially taking a large problem and breaking it down into a series of manageable steps. With the series of smaller steps, you are able to develop a detailed plan. While going through the *Idea, Evaluate, Action Plan* **here a few other questions to consider:**

1. What are the long- and short-term goals?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this idea/concept?
3. Who else (besides you) may be concerned about the problem you want to solve?
4. Who could your allies be in solving this problem?
5. What other organizations or institutions would be involved in this project?
6. Are there maintenance considerations for this project?
7. What's the equity lens we should be looking through?

Visualizing Health Equity: One Size Does Not Fit All, infographic by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Why is developing an Action Plan necessary?

Action plans detail what you intend to accomplish within a given timeframe. Action plans set a group up for success by providing a step-by-step process.

Action plans clarify tasks and help to make sure everyone is on the same page by making clear to whom those tasks are assigned and providing deadlines.

Lastly, having gone through the process of Idea, Evaluate, and Action Plan will help you when making a grant proposal.

How do I make an Action Plan?

We've created a sample action plan for you to use. However, you can make your own too! If you are going to make your own Action Plan here are few key pieces to include:

Tasks: Tasks need to be detailed and highly defined. This is to make clear exactly what needs to happen to achieve your vision.

Outcomes: This is the result of the task. It is especially useful to define the purpose of each task. Having a 'why' is a powerful motivator.

Owner: This is the responsible party for the task. Remember, this is a group effort so your name should not be next to every task.

Timeframe: Deadlines are crucial for staying on target to complete all of the tasks in a given Action Plan. Due dates ensure work is timely and not rushed.

Potential Partners: Potential partners are anyone who can assist you in completing a task. It is important to find out who has influence or could bring new ideas to your project.

Put it into practice: Practice an Action Plan

Below is a sample action plan for you to use. Take one of your project ideas and begin to fill in the sample plan below.

Action Plan Initiative:

Activity Details   **Budget: $**

Event date or project completion date:
Expect outcomes:
How we will measure success (metrics):
Chairperson/project lead:
Committee/project members:

Tasks/Steps What needs to be accomplished?	Outcomes What is the end result of the task?	Owner Who will accomplish this?	Partner Organizations Who can assist you?	Timeframe When does this need to be accomplished?	Cost / Amount Raise so Far	Progress/Status Update/Notes

Now list what information that you may not have thought about before reviewing this template:

Section 2: Tools & Resources

What are the tools & resources to make this work easier?

There are so many tools and resources available today that it can feel overwhelming! We've pulled together a list that fall into a few key buckets that will make this process easier.

Creative Placemaking Ideas and Resources:

If you are looking for project inspiration – we've got you covered! Here are several resources to access placemaking ideas.

- Art Place's Community Planning and Development
- National Endowment for the Arts – How to do Creative Placemaking
- Indiana Arts Commission

Fundraising: To get your project off the ground, you're going to need a way to finance its development. There are a few categories of sources from which you can raise money.

- Fundraising Platforms
  - GoFundMe

- Grants
  - Community Development Block Grants (Indiana's OCRA)
  - National Endowment for the Arts
  - Quick Impact Placebased Grant (in partnership with a Main Street Org.)
  - Wayne County's Community Foundation
  - Area, State, and National Foundations

- Traditional Fundraising
  - In kind donations
  - Business support
  - Community Events
  - Selling (T-Shirts, etc.)

Communication: Making sure that your communication efforts are done in a clear manner will help to engage others and draw them to your effort. As a community organizer, it is important to share the positive impact that you have on the community.

Developing a solid marketing and communication plan will help to relay your important message to its intended audience and share with them the great things that are happening in their neighborhood.

Ideas, software and ways to communicate and market your group, idea, or progress:

- Email (create an email for the project/neighborhood group/etc.)
- Nextdoor App
- Social Media
- Facebook Groups
- Newsletters (MailChimp)
- Surveys (Google Forms)
- Flyers
- Signs
- Virtual meeting platforms (Zoom, Google Hangout, etc.)

Project Management: Being able to effectively manage groups of people with varied backgrounds and experiences in an organized manner is essential to having a productive organization. Managing community projects doesn't require fancy software like Asana or Monday, instead – keep it simple with some of these ideas:

- Calendar (create a shared calendar using Google)
- Platforms (Trello, Excel)
- Action Plan Template in Word

Why should I learn about new tools & resources?

Tools and resources are available for free to assist with making the work of an organizing committee simpler, quicker, and more effective.

How do I know which tool or resource works best with my project?
The best way to find out which tool will work best for your project is to try them. However, starting with simple tools like word documents or excel spreadsheets

BRAINSTORMING
AND IDEAS

What comes next?

We've talked a lot about the idea and planning phase but, there's more to getting your project off the ground than just coming up with a great idea and building a plan. Let's get into what make a project sustainable.

Sustainability

Sustainable, according to the dictionary, means to be able to maintain at a certain rate or level, that it's able to be upheld. However, because of environmental and social problems societies around the world are facing, sustainability has been increasingly used in a specific way. Nowadays, sustainability is usually defined as the processes and actions through which we can avoid depletion of natural resources.
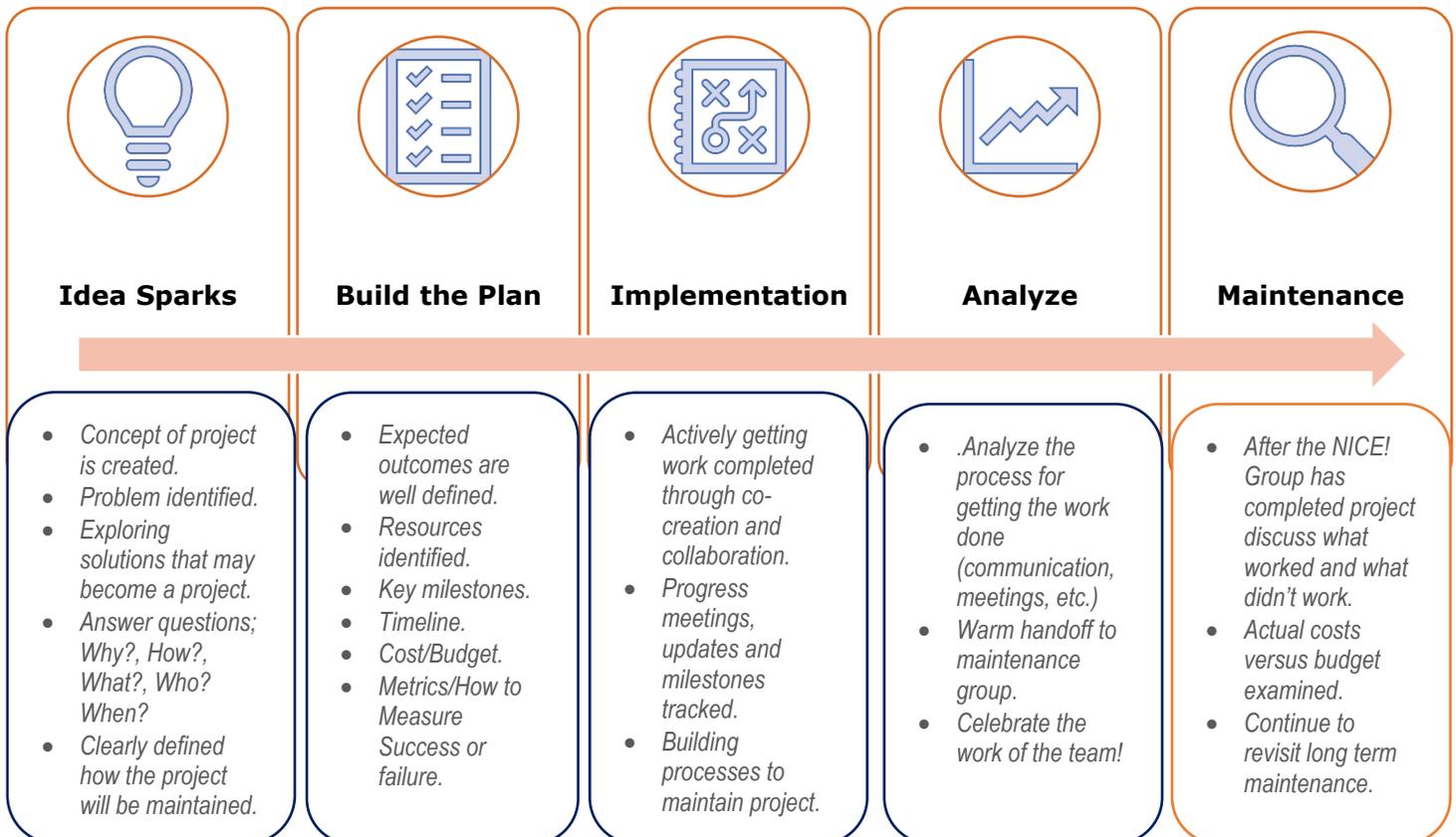
Sustainability is about thinking ahead.

For our purposes, we will use the term sustainable or sustainability as:

☑ the ability to **_maintain momentum_** of the project

☑ the way project will be maintained so its **_appearance and use over time is cared for_**

Sustainability built into the Phases of a Project:

Idea Sparks	Build the Plan	Implementation	Analyze	Maintenance
• *Concept of project is created.* • *Problem identified.* • *Exploring solutions that may become a project.* • *Answer questions; Why?, How?, What?, Who? When?* • *Clearly defined how the project will be maintained.*	• *Expected outcomes are well defined.* • *Resources identified.* • *Key milestones.* • *Timeline.* • *Cost/Budget.* • *Metrics/How to Measure Success or failure.*	• *Actively getting work completed through co-creation and collaboration.* • *Progress meetings, updates and milestones tracked.* • *Building processes to maintain project.*	• *.Analyze the process for getting the work done (communication, meetings, etc.)* • *Warm handoff to maintenance group.* • *Celebrate the work of the team!*	• *After the NICE! Group has completed project discuss what worked and what didn't work.* • *Actual costs versus budget examined.* • *Continue to revisit long term maintenance.*

Why should we think ahead?

Today, community developers need to be sensitive to the dangers and downstream consequences of development projects. We've seen the news stories about developers and investors, involuntarily displacing existing residents. We've also heard about gentrification up ending communities creating more harm than good.

To avoid this, it is essential that we think ahead when developing our strategies.

Creative placemaking truly endows a location with values, and we want these values to be community driven. However, there are still sustainability considerations and costs to think through when you're developing your project ideas.

How do we make it sustainable?

A project's sustainability is helped by the following:

Evaluate Phase: During the evaluation stage, go through how the project will maintain itself in 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, etc. Will it need to be repainted? Will it need managed differently based on seasons? What about future repair costs? When evaluating the project, build a mental model of how your project will appear when it's finished and then think through all maintenance needs.

Action Plan Phase: that will act as a blueprint for your work. Use your Action Plan to lay out steps to build a more sustainable project.

Maintenance Phase: thinking ahead when the idea first sparks will help you better forecast what will need to happen in the maintenance phase. Lay out the steps for keeping your project alive and functioning long after the final 'launch' day.

Key Partnerships: You are engaging key partners in active dialogue to see which role they would be best suited to play in your plan, ideally putting people in positions that accentuate their strengths.

Think of it like running a race!

Finish Line

Keeping the momentum maintained is like running a marathon and just like running a marathon you have to think not just about how you start the race but, also how you maintain your speed throughout the race.

Additionally, when runners run marathons, they often have a coach, cheerleaders, and a partner. All these people play important roles like, to guide the runner, cheer on the runner, and run with the runner.

Think of your work this way too. Who will be your support team?
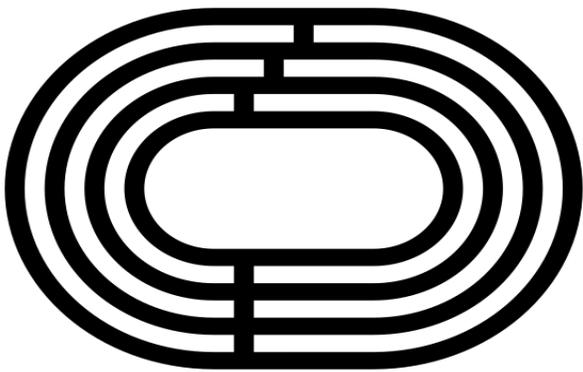
It's almost time to run your race!

Start by answering these questions:

1. What are your first steps in getting started on the NICE! process?

2. Who are your cheerleaders and will encourage you in this endeavor?

3. Who will be a coach to you or help advise you?

4. What will be your final steps?

5. What resources will you need?

6. Who will be like a training partner to you and run with you?

Section 4: Congratulation! You've Completed the NICE! Program

Thank you completing the Neighborhood Involvement and Community Engagement (NICE!) Program. This workshop was designed to enable residents throughout Wayne County to take community development into their hands. It's meant to build stronger neighborhoods, form new friendships, create beauty in the community by the residents for the residents.

We hope you take the learnings from this workshop and make the change you want to see in your neighborhood.

Looking for additional resources?

Inspiration:

☑ Greensboro, AL – This is a great example of using Assets Based Community Development.
☑ Hamilton, MO – Good example of one resident making a difference.
☑ Casey, IL – Another creative, innovative idea!
☑ Greensburg, KA – Here's a community 'Going Green'.
☑ 8TwelveCoalition

More about Asset Based Community Development and Collective Impact:

☑ ABDC Institute
☑ Collective Impact by FSG
☑ Stanford Social Innovation Review on Collective Impact

More on Community Development:

☑ StrongTowns.org
☑ Revitalize or Die