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# CC348 Goals for Community Revitalization : Priorities and Action Plans

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# PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

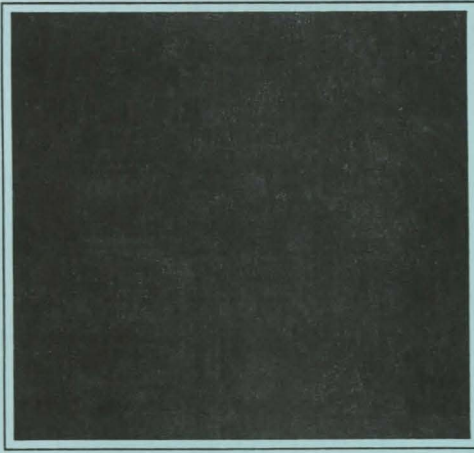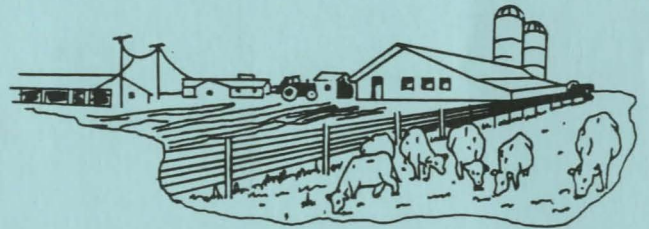**By Paul H. Gessaman**
**Extension Agricultural Finance Economist**

# GOALS FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

by Paul H. Gessaman
Extension Agricultural Finance Economist


This is the third in a series of three circulars that you and other members of your community can use to be more effective in:

- assessing the present situation and conditions in your community;

- identifying your community goals (your descriptions of future conditions and outcomes you want for the community); and

- developing and implementing action programs for attainment of your community goals. *

Before you and others in your community complete the activities described in this circular, you should complete the first two circulars in this series. (Information from the self-assessment (first circular), and goals identified using the second circular are background for priority-setting and action plan development.) If you've not completed the first two circulars, please arrange to do so before starting in to complete this one.

The first section of this circular provides an overview of the priority-setting process -- your workshop facilitator will provide additional instructions. A form for recording and evaluating high-priority goals is included. The second section identifies procedures for developing action plans for attaining community goals and provides forms for recording actions plans developed in this workshop.

## SETTING PRIORITIES

As workshop participants set priorities, they select the community goals that will receive preference when time, effort, funds, and other community resources are allocated. Thus, priority goals are goals whose attainment is deemed to be the most important and/or urgent, and they are selected from goal listings developed in workshops using the first two circulars in this series.

In most cases, small groups that use the second circular will identify more community goals than it is feasible to attain at any one time. Through priority-setting, the persons in a workshop using this circular will select a subset of those goals as ones they believe are the most important and/or urgent to attain. By setting priorities, they make it feasible for decision makers to concentrate resources on attainment of high-priority goals.

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* In the terminology used in this circular, designs for goal-attainment activities and efforts are called "Action Plans."

<u>The</u> <u>Priority</u> <u>Setting</u> <u>Process</u>:

The process for priority setting presented in this circular assumes you
are using it under these conditions:

- Participants are in two or more small groups with persons in each group
  being able to talk with each other and to contribute to general discus-
  sion in the meeting room.

- From their involvement in previous workshops, persons in this workshop
  know about the self-assessment insights and the lists of high-ranked
  goals developed in previous workshops and recorded by group recorders.

- Each group has a list of high ranked long-term community goals and a
  list of high ranked short-term community goals as identified by persons
  in the goal identification workshop(s).

- Each small group has a recorder who uses an extra copy of this circular
  to compile a "Record Copy" of priority goals, action plans, and related
  information about the group's activities in this workshop.

- Each small group has a second recorder who uses newsprint sheets or a
  flip chart for recording goal lists and vote counts taken during the
  group's activities.  The recorder will report during general discus-
  sions, or when information on actions and decisions is to be shared.

A simplified version of the nominal group process will be used as a prin-
cipal priority-setting "tool."  Many people have used the nominal group pro-
cess -- maybe you used it as you ranked community goals in your small group.
If you have the written description from that workshop, please read it again.
If you need a copy, ask your workshop facilitator for one.  Then, listen to
the workshop facilitator's verbal instructions and you'll be ready to contrib-
ute to the priority-setting activities.

Priority setting in a workshop setting with community participation usu-
ally requires a series of decision activities (steps).  Details will vary
depending on participants' preferences, and on the workshop facilitator's mode
of operation.  Steps often included in priority-setting are:

<u>Step One - Examine the Goals</u>:  Each group examines and discusses the
list of high ranked long-term community goals placing particular attention
on these issues:  Are there two or more goal statements with meanings
that are so similar that they should be combined?  And, are there goal
statements for which intended meanings are not clearly evident?

<u>Step Two - First Workshop Discussion</u>:  The recorder reports any group
recommendations for combining goals and/or for additional explanation of
the meaning of goal statements.

<u>Step Three - First Selection of Priority Goals</u>:  The workshop facilitator
gives verbal instructions for use of the simplified version of the nomin-
al group process and initial selections of priority goals are completed.

Step Four - Evaluate Priority Goals:  Each long-term goal selected in Step Three is evaluated by answering these questions.  (Use the Goal Evaluation Form that starts on this page to develop your answers.):

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in and will commit resources to attain?

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based commitment to the goal-attainment effort?

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain other high-priority goals?

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the conflict(s) be resolved?

- Overall, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

Step Five - Second Workshop Discussion:  In a general group discussion, the recorder for each small group shares its assessments from Step Four.  If additional information is needed, persons with that information are asked to share it with all who are present.

Step Six - Set Priorities:  Following the general group discussion, all those present use the simplified nominal group process to select their high priority community goals.

Step Seven - Set Priorities for Short-Term Goals:  Repeat Steps One through Six with the list of high-ranked short-term community goals.  In Step Four, be sure to consider the effects of attaining short-term goals on community capability to attain its long-term goals.

When high priority community goals have been selected, an interest group is identified for each and the members of each group develop an action plan for attainment of the goal.  If the number of high priority community goals is large relative to the number of interested persons, it may be necessary to do a second selection in which the participants decide on a small number of goals that will be worked with first.  When action plans for those goals are developed and being implemented, additional groups can be formed to develop action plans for the community goals selected in the priority-setting, but not included in the first action plans.

Goal Evaluation Form:

Use the sets of lines in this form to evaluate each community goal that was given priority in the first selection of priority goals (Step Three).  Write in a brief version of each goal and individually answer the five questions.  (At this time do not make an entry on the line labeled, "Our Priority For This Goal Is.")  Share your answers with others in your small group and have the recorder enter group assessments in the "Record Copy."  Questions are worded so "Yes" answers usually will be favorable, "No" answers may indicate potential problems.  If you have quite a few "No" answers, you may need to reconsider.  Now, go on to Steps Five, Six, and Seven.

Record your priorities on the "Our Priority . . . Is" line for each goal.

3

A Priority Long-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

A Priority Long-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

4

A Priority Long-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

A Priority Long-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

5

A Priority Short-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

A Priority Short-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

6

A Priority Short-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

A Priority Short-Term Goal Is: _____

_____

_____

Our Priority For This Goal Is: _____

- Is this goal one that community leaders and other citizens will believe in
and will commit resources to attain?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If the community tries to attain this goal, will there be broad-based com-
mitment to the goal-attainment effort?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- Will actions to attain this goal be free of conflict with efforts to attain
other high-priority goals?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- If attaining this goal will conflict with attaining other goals, can the
conflict(s) be resolved?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

- In an overall sense, will attaining this goal be good for our community?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

## ACTION PLANS FOR COMMUNITY GOAL ATTAINMENT

When community goals have been identified and priorities set (priority goals have been selected), the nature of a desired future has been identified. You've made substantial investments of time and effort. Even if you're pleased to have made progress, you will want more evidence of results.

The next step is to claim the payoff from your investments -- to develop action plans that identify the persons, resources, and activities that will make it possible to attain priority goals. Action plans identify outcomes, indicate the persons who will create those outcomes, and specify the nature and timing of community resource commitments. A goal is only words on paper until people commit themselves and their resources to its attainment.

The design for progressing where you are to future conditions of goal attainment is your action plan. The remaining pages of this circular provide duplicate copies of an outline you can use in designing action plans. Be sure your action plans are written as only written plans will be effective guides for goal attainment efforts.

As you develop action plans, stimulate participation by as many persons as possible. Your planning will be more effective and participants will have increased commitment to the community and its goals. Here are some principles to remember:

- In each action plan, clearly identify both the long-term goal that gives overall direction to the intended activities and the short-term goal that is to be attained.

- For large and/or long-term efforts, develop action plans for short-term elements that directly contribute to attainment of the long-term goal. Be certain that each of these action plans is a feasible undertaking. (Plans that appear to be "impossible" usually are impossible.)

- Be sure many of the persons who will implement an action plan take part in its development. Participation in planning will build commitment to implementation, and commitment drives all goal attainment efforts.

- Ask for realistic commitments of community resources (human, financial, and physical resources) before indicating they can be used to implement an action plan. "Pie in the sky" commitments will cause great frustration, and will produce only very minor results.

- Focus on attaining high-priority goals. When high priority goals have been attained, identify a new set of goals, set priorities again, and community commitment will be renewed.

When action plans are completed, implement them to make the desired future a reality. Remember that a one-time implementation is not enough. Progress must be recognized, problems dealt with, and commitments renewed. Thus, a continuing organizational unit is needed if long-term community goals are to become realities. It may be a local service club, an organization of business operators, a community self-help group, or other such unit. By whatever name, the organization will be effective if its members can dream dreams, identify goals, set priorities, and take action to create the desired future.

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# ACTION PLAN FOR ATTAINING COMMUNITY GOALS

A SHORT TITLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____ DATE _____

THE LONG-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE SHORT-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE START DATE IS: _____ THE COMPLETION DATE IS: _____

## THE WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN OF THIS ACTIVITY

| WHO (the person responsible) | WHAT (the task to be done) | WHEN (task to be completed by) |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

## RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

| RESOURCES NEEDED (labor, $, consultants, equip., etc.) | RESOURCES NOW PROMISED (what resource, who will supply, when supplied) | POTENTIAL ADDED RESOURCES (type of resource, source) |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

ACTION PLAN FOR ATTAINING COMMUNITY GOALS

A SHORT TITLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____ DATE _____

THE LONG-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE SHORT-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE START DATE IS: _____ THE COMPLETION DATE IS: _____

THE WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN OF THIS ACTIVITY

| WHO | WHAT | WHEN |
|-----|------|------|
| (the person responsible) | (the task to be done) | (task to be completed by) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

| RESOURCES NEEDED | RESOURCES NOW PROMISED | POTENTIAL ADDED RESOURCES |
|-----|------|------|
| (labor, $, consultants, equip., etc.) | (what resource, who will supply, when supplied) | (type of resource, source) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

10

ACTION PLAN FOR ATTAINING COMMUNITY GOALS

A SHORT TITLE FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____ DATE _____

THE LONG-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE SHORT-TERM GOAL FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THIS ACTIVITY IS: _____

THE START DATE IS: _____ THE COMPLETION DATE IS: _____

THE WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN OF THIS ACTIVITY

| WHO | WHAT | WHEN |
| (the person responsible) | (the task to be done) | (task to be completed by) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

| RESOURCES NEEDED | RESOURCES NOW PROMISED | POTENTIAL ADDED RESOURCES |
| (labor, $, consultants, equip., etc.) | (what resource, who will supply, when supplied) | (type of resource, source) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |