

# Workshop Goals

## Goal 1

The participants will identify what they feel are the unique characteristics and challenges of their community. This could be done through a photographic survey of their community where they are given cameras ahead of the workshop and asked to take a certain number of pictures of what they like about their town, and what they don't like. The pictures could be developed before the conference and available in hard copy format so that an exercise could be conducted to work in groups using the photos to identify strengths and weaknesses. Through guided discussion they could talk about design principles that might be used in their community to strengthen the positives and address the negatives. This would require some up front "education" on basic design principles and how design can be used to highlight assets.

## Goal 2

The participants will have an understanding of the tools available to them and how those tools can be used to meet the goals set above. The participating towns all have Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances, and Subdivision Ordinances. However, some of these documents have not been updated for decades. Most of the towns do not have full time staff that is fluent in those documents, however. In many cases there are no requests for zoning or subdivision action for years at a time. When the requests do come in, the planning commissions and boards are challenged to be able to deal with the applications simply because they have little experience and understanding of their processes.

## Goal 3

The participants will become familiar with techniques such as the Low Risk, High Return strategies used in the Neighborhoods First project for Brainerd, Minnesota, and the Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper methods proposed by the Project for Public Spaces and other similar projects. The budgets are limited for small communities, so limited that in some cases meeting the most basic needs of the community is a challenge. This would allow them to have some immediate success, with small investment, that could bolster enthusiasm for future projects. This could also help to create interest from other community members not previously engaged and help accomplish Goal 4.

## Goal 4

The participants themselves will become more excited and invested in their communities and will gain skills in passing that enthusiasm along to others in their community. This may happen naturally through the above three goals, but it is important that the participants are conscious of the need to keep involving more residents in the process. Also important is the involvement of participants of all different ages. Young people who participate in their community develop a sense of civic responsibility and tend to have lifelong interest in community issues.

## Goal 5

The participants will all know where to look for further resources, both informational and financial. It would be helpful for the participants to have some input from local organizations that work with rural communities and to be aware of other learning opportunities might be available and what opportunities for grants and other funding might be available. Some discussion of fundraising techniques would be helpful as well. If there are opportunities for communities with similar goals to collaborate on planning or grant applications, it would be great to foster those relationships.

## Goal 6

Each participating community will return to their community not only with what they have all learned together, but also with an idea, proposal, goal, etc. that is specifically tailored to their community – a tool box, so to speak. It is important that the participants are able to apply all of the discussion above to their particular circumstances, assets, and challenges. Each community should have a clear vision of what the next step is for their town.