



Adding Value to the Strategic Planning Process

Enhancing the Community and Economic Development Strategic Planning Process to Meet Specific Needs of Navajo Nation Chapters

Building Communities has completed 60 community and economic development strategic plans across the United States since 2012, including five with Navajo Nation Chapters.

In performing the work at Navajo Nation, several unique needs and circumstances arise that can lead to refinements and expansion of the process to add value and benefit to Navajo Nation and its Chapters.

As Building Communities “ramps-up” to serve 17 additional (in addition to Bodaway-Gap) Chapters throughout the Western Navajo Agency, the following additional elements to the planning process can be added for such benefit to the Chapters, Navajo Nation, the Navajo Hopi Land Commission and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

1—Messages from Navajo Nation

The leadership at Navajo Nation (the President’s Office and relevant divisions and departments) can provide special messages and updates related to key initiatives such as Decentralization, new and existing community and economic development programs and initiatives by the Tourism Department. Updates on the Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) and its relevance to local strategic plans can be shared. Initiatives and priorities of the BIA can be presented.

2—Connection with CLUPs

Ideally, the strategic direction created for Chapters through the community and economic development strategic planning process informs local land-use planning (CLUPs) of the specific need for land designations for infrastructure, housing, commercial and industrial development. Existing CLUPs can be reviewed prior to Plan Week, and referenced during the strategic planning process and plan writing phases. With additional financial resources, **Building Communities can also perform an update of each Chapter’s CLUP.**

3—Jump-starting the IRMP Planning Process

As has been discussed with the Navajo Hopi Land Commission, the Integrated Resource Management Plan process can be significantly more relevant to local Chapter leaders if the Chapters have a plan and direction of their own from which to relate to the IRMP process. While the community and economic development strategic planning process focuses primarily on the *built environment*, the IRMP process focuses primarily on the *natural environment*. Nonetheless, there is an interface between the two processes related to land-use planning, priorities expressed by grazing officials and the implementation of specific strategies such as Value-added Agriculture. **A proactive measure could be taken to integrate the IRMP process into the Building Communities process**, thus adding to the outreach and community engagement objectives of the BIA and NHLC.

4—Targeting Future Navajo Nation Investments

Ideally, Chapters will desire to implement their strategic plans, yielding a need for human, financial and technical resources for such implementation. **This presents an opportunity for Navajo Nation and its various community and economic development programs to target their resources for these strategic investments.** Proactive engagement with leaders at the Divisions of Community Development and Economic Development could expedite the implementation of plans and ensure the strategic use of Navajo Nation resources.

5—Attracting the Attention of Outside Funders

Rarely do multiple communities (Chapters, in this case) collaborate for broad, regional strategic planning. Even rarer is a proactive effort to draw the attention of outside funders early in the process.

Building Communities and key leaders at Navajo Nation have an extensive set of government and foundation connections that could be informed of this regional planning collaboration and invited to analyze the process with the potential of directing financial resources for plan/project implementation once the plans are completed. The general needs of tribal communities combined with the compelling story of the Bennett Freeze sets the stage for interest by a national audience.

Building Communities:

Designing the Strategic Planning Process for Optimal Benefit for Navajo Nation and its Chapters