



Community Conversation Notes

Group: United Way Agency Heads

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Participants: 12

The following information was contributed by staff and volunteer leaders of United Way agencies, including the American Red Cross, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, Danville Cancer Association, Danville Family YMCA, Danville Lifesaving Crew, God's Storehouse, Goodwill, Legal Aid, PATHS, and United Way.

What are Danville's treasures – the things (whether physical places or intangibles like community character) you love about the city and want to see continued, protected, or improved as Danville plans for the future?

- Dan River
- Riverwalk Trail
- Downtown revitalization
- History of Danville
- Millionaires Row
- Technology focus
- Access to health care
- Recreation opportunities
- Dan Daniel Park
- Averett University and Danville Community College
- The Institute of Advanced Learning and Research
- Public schools
- Public safety
- Danville Regional Foundation and other foundations
- Community Market
- Science Center
- Community support of nonprofits
- Non-profit sector
- Goodyear
- Chamber of Commerce
- The arts

What are the community's unmet needs – things not now in place that would improve the general quality of life in Danville or the business environment?

- A more positive attitude about the community from front-line personnel in stores, restaurants, and service businesses
- Greater personal ownership of the community
- Closing the housing market gaps in both rental and owner-occupied units
- Quality of housing at income levels, including for entry-level housing
- More supportive community relationships
- Improved public transportation opportunities to get people to medical treatment, jobs, and classes
- More job opportunities for lower skilled workers
- Lack of coordination among job training programs and lack of apprenticeship opportunities for blue collar workers
- Poor awareness of opportunities and community assets
- Lack of services and facilities to deal with those subjected to domestic violence and sexual assault – shelter, coordinated services
- More recreational opportunities
- Perception of crime downtown
- Improved public relations on public safety issues such as traffic control
- Limited health care dollars

What are the opportunities that, if seized upon now, have potential to contribute to a better quality of life or business environment if used wisely?

- Make the most of the Dan River – for recreation, business, and quality of life
- Encourage more upbeat attitudes about the community – implement something like the Disney Institute training for front-line personnel
- Undertake a community marketing campaign including internal and external audiences; engage in non self-serving promotion of the community
- Expand public transportation services; increase community awareness of transportation services
- Strengthen community partnerships

- Use the government access channel to promote city as a whole and inform the public about important issues; use the Community Conversation video to educate public
- Use technology assets; expand the nDanville broadband fiber network to close the digital divide
- Market nDanville as a community resource

What are the top priorities the City of Danville should focus on during the next fiscal year? What strategies should be used to implement these priorities?

Pursue River District Development

- ▶ Fully commit to moving forward with the plan
- ▶ Continue planning for subsequent phases, keeping residents, businesses, etc. involved and updated
- ▶ Educate the community and promote business in the River District; grow what's there now and recruit new businesses
- ▶ Commit money to a significant catalytic public improvement project that will entice private development
- ▶ Promote, encourage and reward those that are a part of the River District; make aggressive use of business incentives
- ▶ Bring the actual river to life, places like the Crossing, Newton's Landing, YMCA, Dan Daniel, and Memorial Drive
- ▶ Continue to enhance recreational opportunities around the river; possibly constructing a walking bridge or a pier across the river, installing fountains that children can run through in a part near the river
- ▶ Preserve the District's "treasurers"

Improve employment opportunities for the Danville area

- ▶ Actively recruit not only the high-tech industries, but also manufacturing industries that can hire lower-skilled workers with basic educations
- ▶ Make new business recruitment a priority; hold municipal departments and employees accountable for this
- ▶ Become more business customer focused; be more business friendly
- ▶ Remove impediments -- Look at the regulations/departments that restrict or stop private sector growth; eliminate regulations; reorganize departments to streamline and improve business interactions

Improve public outlook and attitude

- ▶ Market the City, both in and outside of Danville
 - Hire a marketing firm to run a campaign promoting the City and its people
 - Do something to combat the negatives; focus on “bright spots”
 - Better explain the City’s progress at meeting our needs to become a better place to live
 - Educate citizens on City’s assets, especially our youth and frontline service employees
 - Use schools, churches, media to share positives about City
 - Engage the entire community all the way to the neighborhood level
- ▶ Develop a training program for frontline staff, business owners, and managers on public relations, attitude, and communication; use Disney Institute or Grand Canyon city model.

Expand and improve public transportation services

- ▶ Work with and subsidize local employers to partner on transportation services
- ▶ Enable and subsidize use of school buses to transport students to afterschool activities
- ▶ Educate public as to exactly what public transit services are available; use utility bill inserts, public service announcements, newspaper advertisements, etc.
- ▶ Support transportation access to affordable quality health care

Support public education

- ▶ Ensure that we have quality instruction by paying our educators fair wages to attract qualified talent and instructors that are passionate about their mission
- ▶ Support early education strategies, like Virginia Preschool Initiative
- ▶ Make higher education more accessible

Improve housing opportunities

- ▶ Emphasize the availability of affordable entry-level housing
- ▶ Encourage developers to build more entry-level single-family homes.
- ▶ Reduce the cost of residential utilities; promote alternate energy sources

Expand partnerships -- The community has gained momentum, but needs to continue this working together. In “trying times” where dollars are tight but needs are high, organizations, both for profit and not for profit, will need to continue to partner.

- ▶ Facilitate opportunities for non-profits to partner; reward those that do
- ▶ Promote better coordination and public awareness of organizations that offer similar or complimentary services, i.e. the Free Clinic and PATHS

Eradicate property blight -- Ramp up efforts – demolishing or restoring the old, rundown houses helps remove obvious problems

Break the cycle of poverty -- Develop more detailed requirements for continuation of government public assistance funding in various levels of support. There seems to be a pattern of continuation of assistance in some areas as opposed to putting the thumb on the pulse and helping the individual come out of the pattern of poverty and dependence and becoming a more productive citizen, contributing towards paying taxes and economic growth.

Expand entertainment offerings --_An indoor enclosed arena, such as a civic/convention center would be a great addition to our area. The Carrington Pavilion is a wonderful facility, but its use is limited because it is an outdoor venue.

Become more youth oriented -- Focus on quality of life for young people (late high school to young professionals); deep research about what young people here want; marketing effectively what is already here.

Address the City’s budget problems

- ▶ Use a zero-based budget process
- ▶ Reduce cost of services provided
- ▶ Look at productivity and cost
- ▶ Consider looking at a four-day work week for some services such as trash and refuse collection -- many companies have gone to four 10-hour days to cut down on fuel and wear and tear on vehicles
- ▶ Reduce management expenses

Become more youth oriented -- focus on quality of life for young people (late high school to young professionals); deep research about what young people here want; market effectively what is already here.

What sort of choices and tradeoffs are we willing to make, especially in this era of economic challenges and budget shortfalls?

Note: Rounding errors may affect totals.

<u>Service Area</u>	<u>% Vote</u>	<u>Budget Options</u>
General municipal services	8%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain current municipal service levels
	17%	Reduce service levels as necessary to maintain current property tax rates
	75%	Combine property tax rate increases and service level reductions
Police protection	50%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain the current level of police protection
	8%	Reduce police protection levels as necessary to maintain current property tax rates
	42%	Combine property tax rate increases and police protection level reductions
Fire & emergency medical response	33%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain current fire and emergency medical response levels
	50%	Close one of Danville's fire stations in order to maintain current property tax rates
	17%	Combine property tax rate increases and service level reductions
Support of the pre-K through 12 public education system	42%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain current educational service levels
	25%	Close a school and reduce educational service levels to maintain current property tax rates
	33%	Combine property tax rate increases and educational service level reductions
Industrial development & recruitment	33%	Raise property taxes as necessary to develop industrial sites and buildings and recruit new businesses to Danville
	33%	Put industrial development and recruitment on hold for the next few years in order to maintain current property tax rates
	33%	Combine property tax rate increases and more

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<u>Service Area</u>	<u>% Vote</u>	<u>Budget Options</u>
River District revitalization		modest industrial development efforts
	50%	Raise property taxes as necessary to construct new riverfront parks and landscaped sidewalks, restore blighted buildings, and recruit new businesses to the River District
	30%	Put River District revitalization efforts on hold for the next few years in order to maintain current property tax rates
	20%	Combine property tax rate increases and more modest River District revitalization efforts
Blight eradication	10%	Raise property taxes as necessary to demolish hundreds of abandoned, dilapidated buildings and impose stronger code enforcement measures to combat building and property blight
	20%	Put blight eradication programs on hold for the next four years in order to maintain current property tax rates
	70%	Combine property tax rate increases and more modest blight eradication efforts
Parks, trails & landscaping	20%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain Danville's parks, landscaped street intersections and rights-of-way, and trails
	50%	Close some parks and reduce maintenances service levels as necessary to maintain current property tax rates
	30%	Combine property tax rate increases and maintenance level reductions
Streets	10%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain current street conditions
	20%	Reduce street maintenance as necessary to maintain current property tax rates
	70%	Combine property tax rate increases and more modest street condition reductions

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<u>Service Area</u>	<u>% Vote</u>	<u>Budget Options</u>
Recreation & culture	0%	Raise property taxes as necessary to maintain recreation programs, community centers, and the branch library
	70%	Reduce programs, hours of facility operations, and/or close community centers and the branch library in order to maintain current property tax rates
	30%	Combine property tax rate increases and service level reductions