

Assessing and Building Capacity Utilizing the Community Organizer Tool

The forgotten part of many strategic planning exercises is an honest assessment of the capability of the organization or community to do anything at all. Just because a community wants to do—and should do—certain strategies does not ensure the capacity to get the work done. This is where the Building Communities **Community Organizer Tool** comes in.

While it is generally true that more staff is better than less staff, and bigger budgets are better than tighter budgets, there are specific *capacity elements* than can be objectively measured—and then increased based upon the willingness and ability of the community.

The table below introduces each of these *seven elements of capacity* with respect to business development and community development.



Monday

- What You Should Do
- Strategy Selector Tool



Tuesday

- What You Want To Do
- Community Meeting



Wednesday

- What You Can Do
- Community Organizer Tool

Seven Elements of Capacity		
Business Development		Community Development
Business Development Strategy	#1	Vision and Strategic Plan
Local Staff and Team Development	#2	Project and Issue Advocacy
Industrial Land and Infrastructure (example)	#3	Active Effective Organization
Targeted Industries	#4	Capable, Professional Staffing
Marketing	#5	Dedicated Community Volunteers
Prospect and Lead Management	#6	The Right Attitude
Closing the Deal	#7	Community Advocacy

For each of these capacity elements, it is possible to define various scenarios that describe varying levels of capacity—existing capacity and desired capacity.

The figure at right looks specifically at Business Development Capacity Factor #3, Industrial Land and Infrastructure. For this capacity element, one of the Factors (#3c) is the dynamics behind industrial land ownership. Four scenarios are presented (10, 7, 3, and 0 points) that typify circumstances within a community.

This is but one of 60 capacity factors that will be examined. During the Community Organizer session, the steering committee will examine these 60 factors, and determine the existing and desired capacity of the community.

If selecting strategies is the steering wheel of the strategic planning car, then capacity assessment is the gas pedal.

Capacity Factor 3c. Industrial Land Ownership

The ownership of the land, and indeed the motivation of the potential land seller, is a key factor in the real availability of industrially zoned land. Ideally, the community has control of land that is truly available, properly zoned, competitively priced, and served with the infrastructure consistent with the needs of expanding and prospective businesses.

10 points = community has total control of land availability; ownership of property is motivated to sell property consistent with community objectives; land is competitively priced

7 points = community has total control of land availability; ownership of property is motivated to sell property consistent with community objectives; price of land may obstruct or delay transaction

3 points = uncertainties exist as to the motivation of the seller to sell land for development purposes consistent with community goals

0 points = community has virtually no control (via ownership or relationship with owner) of industrial land