Workshop Memo

A Summary of the Public Kick-off Workshops
September 12, 17, & 19, 2012

One City, One Vision
Community-driven Strategic Plan
Anniston, Alabama

October 30, 2013

ONECITY ONEVISION

October 15, 2013

To: Vaughn Stewart, Mayor, City of Anniston
           Toby Bennington, City Planner, City of Anniston
           Ann Welch, Steering Committee
           Ellen Bass, Steering Committee
           Carol Cleghorn, Marketing, City of Anniston

From: Jamie Greene, AIA AICP

Re: One City, One Vision Public Kickoff Workshops

This memorandum summarizes the Public Kick-off Workshops conducted for the City of Anniston. It is organized into the following structure:

I.   Overview
      A. Purpose
      B. Workshop Format
      C. Major Outcomes

II.   Workshop Results
      A. What we heard?
      B. Who we heard from?

III.   Appendix
      A. Treasure database
      B. Input database
      C. Exit questionnaire Summary
      D. Presentation PowerPoint
      E. Participant Packet

Attached to this memo is the input gathered from the public workshops. The results of the workshop will be discussed at the October 30th Steering Committee Meeting.

I. OVERVIEW

One City, One Vision kicked off with three public workshop taking place in different parts of the city.

September 12 – Anniston City Meeting Center

September 17 – Hodges Recreation Center

September 19 – Carver Recreation

all workshops ran from 6-8pm

Participants were seated in groups of eight and each group had a table leader who recorded the ideas, feedback and discussions that were had at each table. The table leaders ensured that the group stayed on topic and everybody had a chance to be heard.

Each meeting was kicked off by a youth performance. At the September 12th meeting participants were treated to a performance by the Anniston High School Marching Band. At the September 17th meeting the Donoho Cheerleaders kicked off the meeting and on September 19th participants enjoyed the Cobb Elementary School Children's Choir.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the public kickoff workshops was three fold:

1. To inform the public of the impetus for the project;
2. Share initial input gathered from the Community Survey (2011) and the Listening Sessions (2013); and Stakeholder interviews (2013)
3. Engage citizens in a brainstorming activity to gather feedback and ideas about major topic areas.

B. WORKSHOP FORMAT

The workshop had three distinct parts:

1. Introduction and Reflection – introductions and the welcome were given by the Mayor, City Council members and Steering Committee members. The participants were then asked to reflect on Anniston and fill out a "treasure card", writing down what they treasure most about Anniston. Those cards were then collected and displayed for all to see at the end of the meeting.

2. Setting the Stage – a short presentation of background information was shared which included; purpose of the meeting, what is a vision, and highlights of what we learned from the Community Survey, Listening Sessions and stakeholder interviews.

3. Small Group Work – participants worked in small groups to 1) Clarify - discuss topics and identify driving issues within topic areas; 2) Gaps - identify any missing issues/topics and then identify driving issues within those topic areas; 3) Priority – identify where to start and suggest an action.

C. MAJOR OUTCOMES

1. Nearly 500 people attended one of the workshops – This is very impressive turnout for a community of Anniston's size.
2. Over 2,700 pieces of input were collected – These pieces of input (individual comments, ideas etc.) were collected from the work which took place in the small groups as well as input from youth at the Anniston High School focus group.

3. Workshops had a high satisfaction rate (99%) – people felt their ideas were heard, they were comfortable working in their small group and they would like to continue to participate in the process.

4. Roughly 255 people indicated that they wanted to continue to helpful to One City, One Vision by filling out an "I want to be part of the solution card" which asked for their area of interest and contact information.

II. WORKSHOP RESULTS

The remainder of this memo summarizes the input gathered during the workshops. The results are organized into two sections with corresponding subsections:

A. What we heard?
- Clarify
- Gaps
- Priority
- What do you treasure most about Anniston?

B. Who we heard from?
- Outreach
- Demographics
- Motivation
- Satisfaction

A. WHAT WE HEARD?

In total, 1,207 comments were collected during the three different workshops relative to step 1 (clarify). 487 comments/issues were identified relative to step 2 (gaps) and 190 comments were listed as part of step 3 (priority) of which there were 93 distinct actions identified. We received 403 treasure cards containing 885 individual treasures from the treasure card activity.

Clarify: Identifying the Driving Issues

In the first step of the small group work, participants were asked to discuss the driving issues behind the five top topics that were heard in the Community Survey and Listening Sessions. These topics provided a starting point and a way to organize the input into general topic areas. Out of the 1,207 total comments, the following list shows the breakdown by topic area.

- Education/schools (356 comments, 29%)
- Economy/Jobs (269 comments, 22%)
- Transportation (201 comments, 17%)
- Leadership (192 comments, 16%)
- Social Services (189 comments, 16%)

After five minutes of silent individual idea generation the table leader recorded each participant's responses. The group's ideas were recorded onto a large table recorder sheet. The following represents the overall themes of the responses for each topic area along with the frequency with which they were mentioned:

Education/schools (356 comments, 29%)
Within the Education / Schools topic eight sub-topics emerged which are listed here with percentage and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Curriculum (90 comments, 25%)**
   - Vocational training - 42%
   - General curriculum (higher standards) - 24%
   - More special programs (Arts and Music, Special Ed, cont. ed, after school) - 17%
   - Life Skills - 11%
   - Early childhood development - 6%

2. **Facilities (54 comments, 15%)**
   - Consolidation / too many schools
   - Updated technology

3. **Administration / Leadership (48 comments, 13%)**
   - Leadership at school and district level (stricter/enforcement of rules, truancy, safety)
   - Leadership at City level (more collaboration between city and schools)

4. **Parental Involvement (39 comments, 11%)**
   - General lack of parental involvement
   - No support programs for parents
   - Better communication

5. **Image / Media / Community Perception (31 comments, 9%)**
   - Local media is problem
   - Community perception is wrong / misleading
   - Poor morale and pride
   - Better community support (kids don't feel supported, leading to poor morale and pride)

6. **Teachers (24 comments, 7%)**
   - Quality (leading to higher pay)
   - Accountability
   - Dedication / care of students
   - Stability / turn over

7. **Funding (21 comments, 6%)**
   - Lack of funding
   - Transparency

8. **Performance (12 comments, 3%)**
   - Dropout rate
   - Truancy
   - Evaluation of teachers and students

- Higher standards

Economy / Jobs (269 comments, 22%)

Within the Economy / Jobs topic five sub-topics emerged which are listed here with percentage and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Education (63 comments, 23%)**
   - Need better system to support jobs/industries
   - More options (vocational, trade, technical)

2. **Need to attract new and diverse businesses (34 comments, 13%)**
   - Local, specialty stores, more diversity
   - Downtown

3. **Remove barriers to doing business in Anniston (28 comments, 10%)**
   - Hard to get loans, lack of tax incentives, process/city hall difficult, lack of regulations
   - Perceptions/image (bad place for doing business)

4. **Develop McClellan (28 comments, 10%)**
   - Develop McClellan / leverage opportunities

5. **Funding sources (13 comments, 5%)**
   - Need outside funding sources / grants

Transportation (201 comments, 17%)

Within the Transportation topic three sub-topics emerged which are listed here with percentage and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Bus service and system (63 comments, 34%)**
   - Frequency and routes
   - Extended hours
   - visibility, clarity of system / confusing
   - infrastructure – bus shelters, stops, better signage

2. **Road Infrastructure (56 comments, 28%)**
   - Finish bypass
   - Maintenance
   - Image / clean up

3. **Pedestrian and Bike infrastructure (22 comments, 11%)**
   - Better and more sidewalks
   - Bike lanes

Leadership (192 comments, 16%)
Within the Leadership topic three sub-topics emerged which are listed here with percentage and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Feel positive about current leadership (31 comments, 16%)**
   - City government has improved
   - "on the right track"

2. **Engagement with community (29 comments, 15%)**
   - Leaders need to be engaged with citizens
   - Councilman more involved in their wards
   - More engagement between city and board of education

3. **Youth development (19 comments, 10%)**
   - Need youth leadership development opportunities
   - Involve young people in city operations
   - Put youth on boards and commissions

Social Services (189 comments, 16%)
Within the Social Services topic two sub-topics emerged which are listed here with percentage and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Coordination, consolidation and communication of services (35 comments, 19%)**
   - Duplication of services, need consolidation
   - System confusing, don't know where to go
   - Services need to communicate internally amongst themselves and externally to the public better

2. **Youth and Elderly Services (34 comments, 18%)**
   - Need more youth services (more youth programs, early headstart, mentoring)
   - Need more services for the aging population (transportation, prescription delivery, recreation opportunities for seniors)

Gaps: Identifying the missing issues
In the second step of the small group work, participants were asked to identify any critical issues that were missing and record them. They were then to discuss the issues as a table/group to drill down and identify the driving issues. The four top gap topics are listed below with corresponding percentages and driving issues bulleted below.

1. **Place (37 out of 49 tables, 63%)**
   - Too many abandon buildings and properties – need rehabilitation
   - Clean up the public realm (better sidewalks and roads, reduce trash and billboards)
   - Appearance and safety of downtown
   - Enforcement of ordinances to keep up certain standard of care
   - Concern about PCB site
   - Take advantage of natural surroundings, promote trails etc.

- City wide recycling

2. **Safety (28 out of 49 tables, 47%)**
   - Police - better communication, better response time, more visibility in community, more diversity
   - Get kids off the streets, focus on youth
   - Unfair judicial system
   - Racial divide

3. **Arts and Culture (25 out of 49 tables, 42%)**
   - Need more things to do in Anniston (movie theater, arts and culture, music, youth activities)
   - Need to leverage and promote the good things already in Anniston (trails, museum, natural assets)

4. **City Image (14 out of 49 tables 24%)**
   - Anniston needs to tell its story better
   - Promote positives
   - Unity within city (live up to One City, One Vision)

Priority: Where to start

In the third step of the small group work, participants were asked to review the list of topics previously listed/generated in steps 1 and 2 and then choose the topic they think should take priority. They were then instructed to generate an action for that priority topic. After working silently for 5 minutes, each participant went around the table one at a time and shared their priority topic and action item. The top priorities and distilled list of action items are listed below. People offered 190 comments during this exercise of which 93 distinct actions were identified.

1. **Education / Schools (29%)** *actions are listed in no particular order*
   a. Consolidate schools and combine with County system
   b. Convert Board of Education from elected to appointed positions
   c. Create a vocational/career tech program/school
   d. Create a program to increase/encourage parental involvement (meetings, support, resources)
   e. Create a positive advertising campaign to address public perception of schools
   f. Develop a plan with current industries to offer programs to prepare students for jobs in the community
   g. Implement program similar to "Get Caught Studying" (by Reverend Nettles)
   h. Develop methods of community outreach to emphasize value of education
   i. Internship program with business communities
   j. Create adult re-education program
   k. Put more counselors in schools (start career guidance, life skills and parenting skills early)
   l. Build tutoring into the school day
   m. Start an education mentoring program by corporations
   n. Create magnet schools within county system
   o. Expand public library reading program to neighborhoods
   p. Get the surrounding colleges more into the community schools
   q. Start a Pre-K program
   r. Use community volunteers to help teachers (with non-teaching tasks) and provide reading and homework help
   s. Create after school programs
   t. Change passing grade standards to be higher (from 50 to 70)
   u. Develop Ft. McClellan as vocational school

      v.   Create incentive program for students to study/do well in school

2. **Economy / Jobs (27%)****actions are listed in no particular order**
   a. Complete the Veterans parkway
   b. Professional advertising campaign that promotes Anniston in positive way
   c. Hire a person solely focused on bringing in industry
   d. Turn Ft. McClellan into industrial park
   e. Promote Anniston Airport for general and corporate aviation / develop its potential
   f. Develop and implement skills based training / curriculum in partnership with industry and businesses
   g. Require city employees to live in the community they are representing
   h. Review taxation / build tax base
   i. Hire an economic developer
   j. Industry – Occupational tax too many people, so don't live in the city?
   k. Create a restaurant district in downtown
   l. Create "entrances to the city"
   m. Create incentive programs for small business (revolving load funds, 1 stop shopping for licenses)
   n. Develop a research triangle between JSU, Auburn and Alabama
   o. Create a Co-op program for local businesses
   p. Provide tax incentives for new businesses to come to Anniston
   q. Create a program for business owners to hire felons who want to start over (tax incentives)
   r. Create a "one stop" shop for doing business at City Hall
   s. Develop a marketing campaign for the museums to jump start tourism
   t. Develop McClellan as retirement community
   u. Create a hotel / convention center
   v. Develop a hotel and convention center at McClellan
   w. Create walking trail map that promotes natural assets (Ladiga etc.)
   x. Get Anniston's assets listed in Alabama tourism book
   y. Build a minor league baseball stadium to attract a Braves farm team (Fits with Braves desire to bring minor league teams within 3 hours of Atlanta)
   z. Start program to give incentives to people who will clean up a storefront and open a business

3. **Leadership (9%)****actions are listed in no particular order**
   a. Create program to increase communication between city and community
   b. Host more community meetings
   c. Create legislation to require standards to maintain property, buildings, public realm

4. **Transportation (8%)****actions are listed in no particular order**
   a. Rework bus schedules to make them shorter
   b. Finish bypass
   c. Create transportation options for the elderly
   d. Create a way for public to report issues with roads or infrastructure
   e. Improve bus shelters/infrastructure
   f. Add more signs to direct people to Anniston
   g. Get new busses / renovate the busses
   h. Expand transit into surrounding areas for jobs (Jacksonville, Oxford)

5. **Social Services (6%)****actions are listed in no particular order**
   a. Create programs to help homeless
   b. Use incarcerated inmates to build and fix up homes

c. Retiree program to help in schools (tutoring, reading etc.)
d. Develop a summer youth program
e. Centralize all social services – one place to register
f. Create a recycling a center
g. Promote "free activities" in city

6. **Misc.** *actions are listed in no particular order*
   a. Hire PR person
   b. Develop Community Cultural calendar to bring people to the city
   c. Remove excess billboards
   d. Use radio for Mayor to address certain issues and update community on future plans
   e. Start a program to deal with vacant and dilapidated buildings
   f. Designate historic districts

7. **Youth (From Anniston High School focus group)** *actions are listed in no particular order*
   a. Clean up more areas (south Noble Street)
   b. Create a career readiness program
   c. Redevelop Ft. McClellan
   d. Finish bypass to hopefully bring in more jobs
   e. Create more things for young people to do (Art programs, The fair (bring back), Dance and music school, Music programs in elementary school, Go Cart course, Arcade, Tutoring classes at centers (not just basketball),
   f. Develop more places for youth to volunteer
   g. Put all sports in one complex
   h. Create more stores and retail
   i. Develop more services for the homeless
   j. Build a casino that gives money to the schools
   k. More community events like concerts and have them take place in different parks in the community.
   l. Build a $1 movie theater
   m. Create a "young person's club" (a place to dance and hang out with friends))
   n. More summer programs for teens
   o. Host block parties
   p. Get school productions (plays, programs etc.,) out into the community
   q. Develop program that connects interests of students to professional assistance (authors, songwriters, musicians etc.)
   r. Create more career days at school
   s. Bring back Sheriff's Dept. game truck (Stitches?)
   t. Clean up vacant lots (put community gardens there)
   u. World Changers program should be year round (could work to redevelop nuisance housing)

What I treasure most about Anniston

The following statements reflect the "treasures" offered by participants at the workshops. Appendix A includes the verbatim responses from 403 unique treasure cards. In total there were 885 specific treasure identified (many people listed more than one treasure) and they have been organized into the 13 categories below. The percentages in parenthesis indicate the share of that category to the total cards received. These were themed based upon subjective judgment and the percentages are listed in order of most number to least number of people who mentioned a treasure falling into that category on their treasure card.

The themes identified from the treasure cards were then used to create a series of value statements and an overall vision statement for the City of Anniston. These values will be touchstone for the strategic plan as the specific action items are developed.

People (236 cards, 59%)
- Relationships among people
- Kind and caring folks
- Southern hospitality

Natural setting (114 cards, 28%)
- Backdrop of mountains and trees
- Beautiful scenery for residents and tourists

Proximity (84 cards, 21%)
- Easy interstate access
- Reasonable drive time to two major metro areas

Opportunity / Potential (81 cards, 20%)
- Optimism about the potential for progress, including improved job opportunities, development of Fort McClellan
- City has more potential than currently expressing

History (78 cards, 19%)
- Unique historical assets (places, traditions and events)
- Personal history attachment

Attractiveness / special places (59 cards, 15%)
- Quality of appearance (architecture, historic houses)
- Quintard Avenue major reference point

Institutions (48 cards, 12%)
- High quality museums and libraries, museums
- Proximity to higher education institutions
- Cultural center for East Alabama

City Services (41 cards, 10%)
- Safety service and programs
- Friendly staff
- Program offerings

Education (35 cards, 9%)
- Traditions and reason for community coming together

Leadership (28 cards, 7%)
- New leadership and their principles

Religion / Church (26 cards, 6%)
- Support identity for community
- Place to come together and be supportive

Downtown (25 cards, 6%)
- Unique, historical place
- Potential

Recreation (23 cards, 6%)

- Biking and walking trails
- Place to come together
- Access to natural environment

B. WHO WE HEARD FROM?

The workshops gathered input from approximately 500 participants (200 people at the first workshop, 200 at the second workshop and 100 at the third workshop). That number does include volunteers and table leaders, but not some staff and participants who did not sign an attendance sheet. Of the 500 people in attendance, 18% percent reported they had participated in the Get Moving Community Survey in 2011 and 30% had participated in a Listening Session conducted earlier in 2013.

Outreach

In order to let people know about the choice to get involved in One City, One Vision and attend one of these workshops the planning team, steering committee and staff conducted several outreach tasks:

Press
1. Print ad in Anniston Star
2. Print ad in Star Plus
3. Online ad www.Annistonstar.com
4. Letters to the Editors (5 weeks leading up to public kickoff workshops)

TV/Radio
1. Local TV Station TV 24, "Calhoun County's Most Wanted" - promoted the workshops

Social Media
1. Facebook ad campaign (30 days prior to public kickoff workshops)
2. Weekly posts

Electronic/Email
1. Multiple email blasts weeks of 9/3, 9/9, 9/16

Community Events
2. July 28 Anniston Musicfest at Zinn Park. Business cards distributed
3. August 3, Army Materiel Band Concert at Montieth Park- Business cards distributed
4. August 3, The Woodstock 5K Race on August 3. Business Cards and Bracelets distributed

General Publicity
1. Workshop Posters – hung in the City buildings
2. Rack cards – distributed to schools, churches and businesses around town
3. Yard signs – placed at prominent intersections, outside recreation centers and schools as well as in individual's personal yards

The following are a summary of key points about workshop participation based upon the exit questionnaire responses. We received a total of 345 exit questionnaires, which is a 75% return rate. Please see Appendix C for full exit questionnaire responses.

Demographics

The exit questionnaires provide insight into the demographic makeup of participants. This information is *not* intended to offer statistical validation of the process, but to understand the characteristics of those that

participated (The exit questionnaire data reflects only those who responded, not all participants). Also, since not all participants answered every question, there may be variation in total responses among different topics.

Age. Forty percent of participants were older than sixty-five years of age. Twenty-seven percent identified as being between the age of 55-64. Only sixteen percent identified with being younger than 44 years old. While a much larger percentage of the participants were older, this does track with Anniston's census data which indicates that the population in Anniston is an older, aging population.

Race. Sixty percent of participants identified as White / Caucasian and thirty-four percent identified as Black / African American. This distribution differs from Anniston's census data which indicates Anniston has forty-five percent White / Caucasian and fifty-two percent Black / African American.

Income. The highest percentage of participants (forty-one percent) identified themselves as having household incomes exceeding $75,000 per year, while only six percent reported earning less than $10,000 per year. Compared with the Census, this distribution of income is significantly above the averages for the community. The Census indicates that nineteen percent of Anniston's residents make more than $75,000 per year and nineteen percent make less than $75,000 per year.

Educational Attainment. A significant number of participants (sixty-six percent) identified as having a degree at or above a bachelor's. This included thirty-two percent of participants with a Masters or Ph. D. Twenty-one percent of participants identified as having some college. Compared to the Census, the meetings educational attainment statistic's skewed higher than what would be expected. The Census counts twenty-one percent of Anniston's residents with bachelor's degree or above.

Motivation

The exit questionnaires polled participants about their interests and opinions about the workshops. The results indicate overwhelmingly high levels of satisfaction.

a. How did you hear about this workshop?
- 38% of respondents indicated that they heard about the workshops through word of mouth
- 21% percent of respondents indicated that they heard about the workshops through a newspaper article

b. Why did you choose to attend the public kickoff workshops?
Participants had a variety of motivations for attending the workshops.
- The majority of respondents expressed a "love" and "care" about Anniston and "want to see the city improve".
- Specific motivations that were cited most frequently were:
  - Want to be part of the solution
  - Desire to learn and understand issues;
  - Desire to share ideas;
  - Concerns over youth/children;
  - Felt it was their civic responsibility;
  - They had been personally invited.

Satisfaction

	YES
Were you comfortable working in today's small group?	99%
Did you feel your input was heard and recorded accurately?	99%
Will you continue to participate in the planning process?	99%

	Too Long	Too Short	About Right
Rate the workshop length.	5%	2%	94%

III. APPENDIX

The following pages contain the verbatim responses from the public kick-off workshops organized into databases. The appendix is organized into the following structure:

A. Treasure Database A1-A18
B. Input Database B1-B66
C. Exit Questionnaires C1-C12
D. Presentation D1-D4
E. Participant Packet E1-E9