Strategic Doing™
A Public Engagement Process For Preserving Delaware's Traditional Maritime Communities

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What if I told you there’s a public engagement process out there that can help you to…

1. Take a group of diverse individuals
2. Develop a “framing question”
3. Identify assets people are willing to share
4. Connect the assets (form a network)
5. Select an opportunity and define a successful outcome
6. Define a pathway project and reach agreement on an action plan
7. Map a successful outcome and identify key next steps
... and do all this in two hours by asking four simple questions!
Think, Behave, and Do Things in New Ways!

Developed by Ed Morrison

• Regional Economic Development Advisor
• Purdue University
Where are we going?

Outcomes

How will we get there?

Pathways

We are here

https://www.pcrd.purdue.edu/signature-programs/strategic-doing.php
Focuses conversation on four basic “rules” or questions:

Where are we going? (outcomes)
1. What could we do together?
2. What should we do together?

How will we get there? (pathways)
3. What will we do together?
4. When will we meet again?

Basis

- Strategic Planning effective in hierarchical organizations
- Strategic Doing™ is designed for situations in which nobody can tell anybody else what to do
- Collaboration is the only way to move forward!
THE ISSUE

Across the US, communities, water-dependent industries, and the public face conflicts over access to beaches, shorelines, and waterways. Fishermen and water-dependent businesses are being displaced, and coastal communities are at risk of losing their working waterfronts.

**Resilient Coastal Communities** is a long-term NOAA/Sea Grant goal

- invigorate coastal communities and economies
- foster increased resiliency and productivity
- ensure that seafood harvest, production and recreational fishing opportunities continue to support vibrant coastal communities and economies

Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative
Delaware Sea Grant’s Working Waterfronts Initiative

- Assess the prevailing socioeconomic conditions of Delaware’s working waterfronts; this includes provision of a baseline study and characterizing the existing state of these communities, which will assist in identifying the main areas of concern.
- Analyze the impacts of the prevailing environmental conditions on the socioeconomic structure of the study sites.
- Develop a strategy and an action framework for establishing resilient working waterfront communities
Anticipated Outcomes/Benefits

• **Short-term**: A comprehensive profile (community structure, institution and infrastructure; economic conditions, demographics; community resources, etc.) of Delaware’s working waterfronts

• **Intermediate**: Increased awareness and understanding about the prevailing socioeconomic and environmental conditions in Delaware’s working waterfronts

• **Long-term**: Development of a sustainability strategy for Delaware’s working waterfronts

• **Performance measure**: Number of economic initiatives (e.g. working waterfronts preservation)
PHASE I

- Solicit and hire a graduate-level intern from UD.
- Identify Delaware’s working waterfronts; collect data and information from primary and secondary sources.
- Develop a comprehensive profile of the study communities, including an inventory of both the current and historical engagement in fishing and other commercial water-dependent activities in these communities.
PHASE II

- Hire a qualified consultant
- Develop a set of socioeconomic criteria for assessment.
- Design a questionnaire form and survey water-dependent communities and businesses to assess attitudes about factors affecting the local economy.
- Survey community and business responses regarding different forms of development activity (tourism, residential housing, condos, etc.) that have been discussed and/or proposed in and near working waterfronts and identify resource management issues.
- Assess socioeconomic impacts and identify main areas of concern.
- Develop a conceptual framework for sustainable development, including identifying future business infrastructure needs in communities to enhance profitability.
Survey Methodology

- Transform conversational and anecdotal input into qualitative data
- Developed questionnaire based on themes identified in meetings with community leaders
- Semi-structured interview technique (allows for open flow of ideas and exchange of opinions)
- Targets a diverse group of community members
- “Snowball” approach
Summary Report

1. Served as a needs assessment
2. Identified community aspirations
3. Suggested “Strategic Doing™” as a NEXT STEP
HOW CAN WE EXPAND AND ENHANCE DAY-USE TOURISM?
Dredging of Harbor Entrance

“The General Assembly gave us $800K for a dredge project two years ago, but we can’t get a straight answer from anyone about when this will begin!”
Road Signage

“People get lost. I see them driving up and down our streets all the time. They can’t seem to find our beach.”
Beach Signage

“We need to post information at the beach trailhead about upcoming events, the local environment, or what types of birds visitors might see.”
Boat Ramp “No Parking” Striping

“People park right in front of the boat ramp and make it difficult to launch/haul boats.”
Refurbish and enhance the maritime museum

“The maritime museum could be a destination attraction, but it needs a new sign, new exhibits, and a new lease on life!”
Bowser Beach BUCCANEER BASH

“We need an annual event that will attract people to Bowers!”
“When we have really high tides, people can’t even get to some of our shops or restaurants!”
Repurpose a 5-acre asphalt parking area

“This thing is an eyesore; it dominates the town’s landscape. Can we use some of this space for a picnic pavilion or open-air seafood market?”
• Concerns about continuity after UD’s departure, but “Strategic Doing™” committee remained active
• Continued to produce positive outcomes for Bowers Beach

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