

SPEAK OUT



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1996

Final Report

April 1996

Dear Fellow Citizen:

In its fifth year, Speak Out Lexington asked our community questions about economic development, education, and equity. These questions were related to the ongoing efforts of New Century Lexington, which served as a partner for this year's effort.

Speak Out Lexington 1996 has been a community effort that could not have taken place without the time, effort and commitment of hundreds of volunteer moderators, reporters, and group contact people who organized and led Speak Out sessions.

I hope this report adds to your understanding of the interests and concerns of your fellow citizens throughout the community, and that you will be inspired and challenged to help in every way you can to make Lexington-Fayette County an even better place to live.

Sincerely,

Pam Miller
Mayor

PM/lyh

***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1996 IS A PROJECT OF
LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

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Ashland Neighborhood Association
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Bethsaida Baptist Church
Bluegrass-Aspendale Residents Council
Bluegrass-Aspendale Teen Center
Bluegrass NOW
Bluegrass Sierra Club
Black and Williams Headstart
Bridgadoon Neighborhood Association
Bryan Station Senior High School
Bryan Station Student Council
Calvary Baptist Potluck Group
The Carnegie Center
Central Kentucky Jewish Federation
Chamber of Commerce
Claymont Neighborhood Association
Community Action Council
Covenant Church
Democratic Women's Discussion Group
Donovan Program
Downtown Lexington Corporation
Dunbar Senior Citizen Center
Eldercraftsmen/Community
Reinvestment
Elliott Family/Friends
Fayette County Detention Center
First District Residents
First United Methodist Church
Gainesway Neighborhood Association
Gardenside Kiwanis
Golden Kiwanis of Lexington
Good Shepherd Episcopal
Greater Lexington Democratic Women's Club
Griffin Gate Neighborhood Association
H. H. Greene Headstart
Health Department
Henry Clay Student Council
Kentucky Utilities
Kentucky League of Cities
Kentucky-American Water Company
Lafayette Law and Justice Class
League of Women Voters
Lee Meyer and Friends
Lexington Arts and Cultural Council
Lexington Academy of Senior
Professionals
Lexington Apartment Association
Lexington Bluegrass Central Labor Company
Lexington Breakfast Club
Lexington Community College
Lexington Community College Human Ecology Class
Lexington Community College Faculty and Staff
Lexington Covenant Group
Lexington Friends Meeting
Lexington Public Library Staff
The Manchester Center
Mediation Center of Kentucky
Metro Industries
Micro City Government
Mother to Mother
Ohavay Zion Synagogue
Pralltown Development Corporation
Professional Secretaries International
Professional Women's Forum
Second Presbyterian Church
Sixteenth District PTA
Skills and Training to Enhance Adolescent Maturity (S.T.E.A.M.)
Speak Out Lexington Moderators Group I & II
Southern Hills United Methodist
Strader Headstart
Suburban Women's Club/ Shiloh Adult Education
Superintendent's Student Advisory Council
Todds Station Neighborhood Association
Trinity Headstart
United Way
University of Kentucky
University of Kentucky Medical Center
University of Kentucky Social Work Seminar
Virgina Place
Westside Headstart
The Women's Center Board
WKYT Sales Staff
Women's Center of Central Kentucky
Write Around Here

Encouraging Civic Talk

The purpose of Speak Out Lexington is to encourage public conversations about issues that matter to people in Lexington-Fayette County. Speak Out Lexington -- a five year old project of Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government and its citizens -- began as a way for people to share ideas and provide advice and suggestions to Urban County Government about key community issues. In succeeding years, both citizens and government began to envision the purpose of Speak Out more broadly, as a way for our whole community to become more able to take advantage of opportunities and solve problems. The most important continuing results of Speak Out sessions are that individual citizens and small groups of citizens encourage and inspire each other to take part in the life of our community in new ways.

When experts speak of "civic capital" they refer to the kinds of results Speak Out is producing -- an increase in the number and health of our community's neighborhood and civic organizations, a new sense of belonging and civic commitment that many people involved with Speak Out have discovered, and a new interest among some involved citizens in assuming community leadership positions and serving as elected public servants. The foundation for all of these valuable community improvements is the many small Speak Out conversations themselves, and how people change as a result of them. In 1996 those conversations took place between January 10 and March 15 in 89 sessions all around the community.

Speak Out retains a portion of its earlier purpose, which is to provide information and guidance for interested policy makers in the community. This second purpose drives this report. The report presents an analysis and summary of the work of the substantial number of Lexington-Fayette County citizens who raised issues, made suggestions, and offered help in addressing community problems in their Speak Out sessions. This report is intended to provide policy makers a look at what Speak Out participants are thinking, and to reflect back to citizens a composite view of what people said across the 89 sessions.

A Worthy Experiment Yielding Mixed Success

In 1996, Speak Out Lexington undertook something new, joining forces with New Century Lexington, an effort devoted to developing a shared community plan for the local economy. Both Speak Out Lexington and New Century Lexington considered this a worthy experiment, an attempt to bring some of New Century Lexington's most important ideas to a much broader group in the community for deeper and broader consideration, and an opportunity to build new alliances

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

between the business community and citizens deeply interested in assuring the community's future prosperity. In some ways, this experiment succeeded. Through Speak Out conversations, well over a thousand people examined New Century Lexington ideas relating to prosperity and generated ideas of their own. Many reported getting new ideas and new energy for addressing issues relating to diversity, jobs, and education. The experiment was less successful in engaging members of the business community, as business people, in the conversations. While members of civic and advocacy groups, organizations associated with religious institutions, neighborhood groups, and other groups undoubtedly included business people as members, the number of businesses that conducted Speak Out sessions within a business framework was quite small.

The agenda and format for Speak Out Lexington 1996 resulted in significant differences from previous years. Speak Out Lexington 1996 groups chose from among three topics jointly identified with New Century Lexington as important aspects of community prosperity: Diversity and Inclusiveness, Jobs and Economic Foundations, and Education. Some groups addressed multiple topics; some addressed one at greater length.

This year the questions were based on ideas developed by New Century Lexington, and were not as open-ended as the questions in previous years. Some groups had difficulty with the meaning of the specific ideas presented, while others chose to discuss related issues. More groups modified the agenda more frequently and in more significant ways than had been the case in previous years. This was especially true of the education topic; groups that chose to address education often discussed issues that were far from the specific ideas proposed in the agenda.

The differences among groups is consistent with the spirit and intention of Speak Out, for which the first priority is to ensure that each group has the civic conversation it most wants to have. In 1996, however, the wider range of topics does mean that there are few general conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the results, and that conclusions that are drawn are sometimes based on a small proportion of participating groups.

Regardless of the topic chosen, two important overall themes relating to prosperity emerged during the Speak Out 1996 sessions. They are described in the following section.

Community Prosperity and Community Ownership

Groups chose from among three topics related to community prosperity:

- *Diversity and Inclusiveness,*
- *Jobs and Economic Foundations, and*
- *Education.*

SIGNIFICANT THEMES

Nearly every Speak Out Lexington 1996 group addressed the opening question: *What does prosperity mean to you?* In nearly every group, most answers to the question fall within three categories:

Having enough money and other fundamentals of well-being for one's self and one's loved ones, with a little extra for security:

- ✓ Having a good standard of living
- Feeling safe and secure
- ✓ Having a good family life
- ✓ Enjoying health -- mental, physical and spiritual
- ✓ Experiencing financial and economic growth
- ✓ Having children protected, looked after, and guided

Extending the sense of abundance into additional areas of satisfaction and contentment:

- ✓ Having a higher standard of living
- Having time to think about things outside basic survival
- ✓ Having good friends
- ✓ Having peace of mind
- ✓ Being happy -- whatever makes you happy
- ✓ Having the opportunity to dream and achieve the dream
- ✓ Having the opportunity for religious and artistic expression

Living in harmony with a community of other people who also enjoy prosperity and abundance; making a valued contribution to community well-being; benefitting from well-run community services and

amenities:

- ✓ Having a sense of community working together
- ✓ Being able to participate and communicate and be heard
- ✓ Having a community that can and does take care of all its citizens
- ✓ Having community resources (parks, libraries, educational opportunities)
- ✓ Having good public transportation
- ✓ Having a vibrant downtown, one that is aesthetically pleasing
- ✓ Having a well maintained infrastructure (roads, utilities, services)

For people in a significant number of groups, prosperity also means the absence of negative characteristics, particularly the absence of violence, physical threats, and discrimination and prejudice that block some citizens from full participation in community life. One dramatic statement of this definition of prosperity came from a group of young people. This is their list of responses:

- ✓ Successful
- ✓ Wouldn't be crowded

- ✓ Segregation (none)
- ✓ Everyone get along
- ✓ More places for teenagers
- ✓ No worries about walking down the street
- ✓ No guns (none)
- ✓ Families getting along together
- ✓ Marijuana should be legalized
- ✓ Guns, no, none
- ✓ Alcohol should not be legal
- ✓ Drive at 14 years of age
- ✓ Drop out of school at 12 years of age
- ✓ Lexington needs a Skate Park
- ✓ More recreation in neighborhood for teens

Prosperity Depends Upon Ownership

Taken all together, Speak Out participants identified four attributes of prosperity:

- Personal and family well-being
- Abundance that goes beyond the basics
- Living in community with others who also experience abundance
- The absence of destructive forces such as prejudice and physical fear

These four aspects of prosperity all point in the direction that one participant indicated: "Everyone needs ownership of the community. Lexington has many examples of lack of ownership. The feeling of ownership is what makes a prosperous community."

In many different ways, people in most Speak Out 1996 groups suggested that a strong sense of ownership is necessary for generating personal, family, and community prosperity. This leads to a second major theme -- that there are several important conditions or thresholds -- that a community must create before its citizens can work together in the spirit of ownership that makes a whole community.

Ownership Depends Upon Crossing Important Thresholds

People focused on these four thresholds regardless of the specific topic their group considered.

- ***Welcome everyone at the table.*** Speak Out participants spoke often and at length about the different ways in which Lexington-Fayette County community life excludes many people. Speak Out 1996 participants particularly identified a need for continuing work to enlarge the community's "civic table" to welcome African-Americans, other ethnic groups that

"The feeling of ownership is what makes a prosperous community."

are not part of the white mainstream, young people, and people presently excluded because they lack education or high status jobs.

An undercurrent of distrust for traditional leadership ran through many of the sessions. A number of groups, particularly those made up of young people, wondered if anyone in power would care enough to listen to them. Across all types of groups, the reports suggest that some participants feel left out and ignored by community leaders, and do not expect this to change. This view may account for some groups' rejection of some of the ideas moderators presented for consideration. The sense of a significant divide between themselves and the community's decision makers comes through in the number of groups that expressed concerns that even valuable new civic efforts may suffer or fail because the implementers -- whom they presume will be traditional leaders -- will exclude people from the "civic table" who are not presently recognized as powerful.

- ***Engage youth in civic life.*** Within each topic, both young people and adults spoke with particular strength about the exclusion of young people from real community decision making efforts. People suggested that adults take on the responsibility for changing this situation through finding ways to address obvious logistical barriers such as transportation and meeting times, and through increasing genuine commitment to bringing youth to the threshold of community participation.
- ***Create opportunities for everyone to have decent work.*** Speak Out participants see reasonable work at reasonable pay as a threshold requirement for an attitude of ownership toward the community. Many participants in many groups emphatically stated that reasonable work does not have to be in the professional or highly educated categories to be respected and respectable.
- ***Provide solid education fundamentals.*** People in Speak Out Lexington 1996 focused extensively on the importance of equipping both young people and adults with the education fundamentals for good work and good civic participation. Nearly all student groups, and many of the adult groups, reported that increased student access to computers, and wider use of computers beyond word processing, is a threshold issue.

Participants suggested another significant fundamental: providing

"People in Lexington feel they are not part of the 'in' groups on appointed committees There are 'clubs' in Lexington society."

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

students tangible evidence that the community values education and young people enough to keep school facilities in good repair. A number of student groups pointed out the impossibility of their eager participation in community life if the community cannot and will not demonstrate that it values them by ensuring that their basic school facilities are adequate. Students in several groups asked how they could be expected to commit effort and energy to a community that continues to allow their schools' already deteriorating physical facilities to continue declining, while investing heavily in first class facilities for other students in other parts of town.

Lots of Work to Do and Lots of Willingness to Do the Work

For Speak Out Lexington '96 participants, diversity and inclusiveness are themes that run through all topics. Groups discussing Education or Jobs and Economic Foundations often focused on themes that pointed out ways to increase the number and types of people who participate fully in the good life in our community.

In groups that chose to talk specifically about the Diversity and Inclusiveness topic, the moderators presented one question and two ideas developed by New Century Lexington (see green sheet, pages 17-18, for full text). Thirty-nine groups addressed some aspect of the Diversity and Inclusiveness topic. Here is a summary of the results:

Diversity Question: *How important is it for people from all walks of life to be at the table when community decisions are being made?*

Of the 35 groups that addressed the Diversity Question, more than four out of five groups (83 percent) reported considering it important for people of all walks of life to be at the table when decisions are being made in the community.

Diversity Idea 1: *Provide leadership training annually to a diverse group of people.*

Of the 31 groups that considered this idea, more than half of the groups (58 percent) would like to see the idea implemented. In many groups, however, enthusiasm for the basic idea is tempered by concerns about who would choose the new leadership candidates, and how that process could avoid the blind spots and tendency toward exclusiveness that many see as hallmarks of the present leadership structure.

Here are some of the suggestions people made for implementing this idea:

- ✓ Do it at a time of day when people can come.
- ✓ Provide day care and transportation.
- ✓ Involve young people through YMCA, Scouts, religious organizations, and especially organizations that already have racial diversity. Get their ideas on who the leaders are and include those leaders in the training.
- ✓ Make it possible for busy, overworked people to take part. Develop a subsidy to reimburse the wages hourly people will lose when they participate.
- ✓ Make sure the training happens all over the community. Move it into all types of neighborhoods, instead of conducting it at a central downtown location.

Diversity Idea 2: *New Century Lexington partners and other civic organizations could increase the diversity of their decision-making bodies.*

Of the 27 groups that considered this idea, more than three out of five groups (63 percent) want to see this idea implemented.

While most groups responded positively to this idea, a few did not.

And even in groups that responded positively, most reports indicate that people value the idea, but have concerns about implementation. In the groups that disagreed with the ideas, people's reservations outweighed their belief in the worth of the idea itself. Two big reasons underlie most of the worries and concerns about implementing the diversity ideas:

- In a substantial number of groups, people describe Lexington as a "closed society" run by a small, elite group of people who are not interested in opening their ranks to others.
- People in many groups expressed a concern that Lexington and its leaders do not comprehend the full extent of the community's diversity.

Here are some of the suggestions people made for implementing this idea:

- ✓ Praise, recognize, and reward those organizations that already have diverse participation, or those that move successfully in that direction.

"The training must be carefully designed to met the needs of potential leaders. It must be a different kind of training . . . a participatory kind of training."

"'Qualified' means one who is truly committed, not just educated."

JOBS AND ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

- ✓ Organize a process that is like the Kentucky Commission on Women model: find out what positions are open and actively solicit for diverse resumes.
- ✓ Consider life experience, and not just education, as a standard for qualification.
- ✓ Attend to racial diversity on these boards and don't stop there. For genuine inclusiveness, boards also will reflect diversity in gender, age, sexual preference, and socioeconomic status.

A Single Grand Vision of Prosperity May Be Hard to Get, But We Agree on the Value of Internships for Young People

The Jobs and Economic Foundations topic includes one question and two ideas developed by New Century Lexington. (See green sheet, pages 17-18, for full text.) Here is a summary of the results.

Jobs and Economic Foundations Question: *How important is our community's lack of shared vision for its economy?*

Of the 42 groups that considered the Jobs and Economic Foundations topic, the reports suggested that 39 addressed the opening question directly. More than half of the groups (54 percent) viewed the lack of vision as a significant challenge. Five of the 42 groups either viewed the lack of vision as not a problem, or expressed reservations about the idea that one unitary vision for a community's economy could accommodate the diversity of interests in Lexington-Fayette County. Even within groups that identified the lack of shared vision as important, people expressed concerns about the practicality of developing a unified vision. More than one group echoed the sentiments of one civic group that reported, "We have a shared vision of a basketball team, but not of other things."

Jobs and Economic Foundations Idea 1: *Bring the community's many different groups, organizations, and businesses together for productive discussions, with the goal of reaching agreement on economic directions.*

Of the 24 groups that reported discussing this idea, one third reported viewing it positively. Only one group reported disagreeing with the idea outright, although one other group had at least one member expressing reservations. The group reports indicate that most of the conversations about this idea included some aspect of concern about its

implementation. Primarily, groups focused on the difficulty of doing the actual work to bring the diverse groups in the community to a common table to create a vision. One neighborhood group said, "The whole community is diminished when any voice is not heard. They must think about what they are missing by not listening to everyone -- not about listening to a quota of different people. They may think they are doing well, but they aren't."

Here are some of the suggestions people made about implementing this idea successfully:

- ✓ Make the process consensus based.
- ✓ Track participants to encourage them to stay in the process for the long run.
- ✓ Have fair facilitator and moderators.
- ✓ Vary the times and days of sessions.
- ✓ Use mail-in and internet access to draw in additional people.

Jobs and Economic Foundations Idea 2: *Create more opportunities for students to explore more job or career options, including internships for all high school students who want them.*

Of the 22 groups that reported considering this idea, 91 percent of the groups supported it. The reports included a number of personal testimonials by individuals who had found their life-long interest, or launched their present career, as a result of participating in internships in high school or college. In the small number of groups where participants expressed concerns about this idea, those concerns were based on the fear that involving students in work experiences too early would take away from their exposure to basic academic work. In one group of coworkers, the group reported that it would rather "see schools stick with the current curriculum and save internships for after high school or in college, or as an alternative to college. [Internships] would need to be in addition to the basics, but the core curriculum should not be altered."

In a few groups, people considered whether they want students in this community to be involved in a "European" model of education, in which some students participate in intensive training for trades while others head toward higher education, with the decision being made fairly early. A few groups valued the model, while a few other groups feared it would require channeling young students too soon into one set of options or the other. People in one group of members of a religious institution said, "This doesn't seem very fair or American."

"We need to make people want to talk about the issue -- make it enjoyable."

"This is a dynamite idea."

One of the most frequently stated reasons for group support for this idea is that internships are a way of re-valuing the work of students who are not going to college, or who are not going to college right away. In a substantial number of groups, people expressed an interest in reassigning respect and dignity to trades and crafts that do not require advanced education. One group spoke for many others when members said that they support internships because they "remove the stigma from non-college bound students." A group of college students began with a similar idea, and added to it: "Place no stigma on co-op students, but require all students to be 'college prep'."

The prevailing enthusiasm for the idea of internships resulted in several suggestions for successful implementation:

- ✓ Smooth out the logistics: people perceive that schools need to add staff to manage internships well and businesses need to create more opportunities to meet students' needs.
- ✓ Create more publicity about internships. Build on and draw upon the experience of existing efforts like the Experienced-Based Career Education programs already available in some highschools.
- ✓ Find a way to offer incentives for businesses to offer internships, because it costs money for businesses to do internships well.

We Have No Consensus Yet on Education Directions for Prosperity

Most groups that discussed education did not confine themselves to the topics proposed by the questions in the guide. While some groups stayed closer to the agenda than others, the comment of one group reporter is indicative: "People felt very strongly about KERA...it was brought up immediately and people addressed it like it was one of the issues we were here to discuss." KERA was the single topic not on the agenda that was most discussed by groups.

Based on the session reports, it appears that for many people the link between education and jobs in the community is not an easy topic. Often the first comment or two would be about the idea proposed, and then the discussion would become broader, or focus on a related topic or issue. People found a number of other aspects of education at least as compelling to discuss as the ideas proposed in the questions.

When people did talk about the ideas on the agenda they focused on those ideas in connection with other considerations. The response to the importance of an idea was usually not just to the idea *by itself*. Rather, each idea raised questions for participants about allocation of resources, and questions about other ideas that might be as good, or better, for achieving the same goals or other goals of education. Even when they responded positively to the ideas, people often raised questions about how the idea is presently being implemented or how it might possibly be implemented in the future, or they pointed out what barriers they foresee in implementation. As a participant in one high school group put it, "Even teachers can't agree on whether education should be broad or specific."

For the education topic, Speak Out Lexington 1996 moderators were equipped with one question and two ideas developed by New Century Lexington. (See green sheet, pages 17-18, for full text.) Here is a further summary of the results.

Education Question: ***How important is the challenge of seeing that our schools meet the wide range of different students' needs for job preparation?***

One of the indications of the varied approaches used by 54 groups talking about education is that only 35 of the groups addressed this opening question. Of those 35 groups, 31 groups, or 90 percent, considered the challenge important.

"We have lots of opportunities already here. There are lots of inexpensive programs but how do you get people to take advantage of them?"

Reports from student groups reflected their present experiences and their concerns about students whose needs are not being met. While some in the adult groups spoke about the importance of the issue, they were more likely than students to speak about competing needs, or different functions of education. For example, one civic group report stated: "Education should have value in and of itself, not just to serve business." Others suggested that this a responsibility that belongs to the community as well as the schools.

Education idea 1: ***Match student learning opportunities to assessed workplace needs, present and future.***

Of the 41 groups that considered this question, 83 percent supported the idea. Of the seven groups that did not support it or did not reach agreement, five were groups of coworkers.

People frequently mentioned the need for more computers in schools, and for more computer education. People also expressed concerns about issues of equity, including the potential for the negative aspects of tracking, and the perception of second-class status for vocational education.

Those who were less supportive of the idea feel that it detracts from what they see as the more essential tasks of the schools, such as teaching the basics, or stimulating creative thinking, or training in problem solving, or teaching how to learn, or teaching personal responsibility. For some, the key question is whether schools should offer education or training.

Here are some suggestions from Speak Out participants:

- ✓ Expand access to computers and students' use of them.
- ✓ Foster increased respect for vocational and technical education, and for the students in these fields.
- ✓ Invest more heavily in providing equitable education opportunities for all students. Particularly, remedy facility inequities by addressing the physical condition of Bryan Station High School and some of the other Northside schools.

Education Idea 2: ***Provide opportunities for students to practice citizenship, including peer mediation and community service.***

Of the 28 groups that reported considering this idea, 64 percent supported it.

No one objected to students being more prepared to be active citizens, and many saw potential benefits for the students directly as well as to the community. One civic group suggested that such programs are "a great way to connect education with the outside world."

Of the ten groups (36 percent) that did not reach consensus or reported difficulties with the idea, seven were student groups. The primary objection in some student groups appeared to stem from the direct references to peer mediation, with which some students reported having negative or disappointing experiences. Other students praised peer mediation, but this issue seemed to prevent students from reaching ready consensus.

Here are some of the suggestions Speak Out participants made regarding implementation of this Education idea.

- ✓ Make these programs voluntary. (This was the prevailing view; a few groups suggested that mandatory programs are effective.)
- ✓ Involve the whole school, not just selected students, in learning and practicing effective conflict resolution.

"Schools can't make students ethical citizens if the home and the community don't back it up."

Appendix A

SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1996 PARTICIPANT STATISTICS

Total Number of Individuals Attending	1295
Total Groups Reporting	89
Number of Surveys Received	1093

AGE		AGE	
14 or under	103	45-54	143
15-17	227	55-64	109
18-24	104	65-74	99
25-34	105	75-84	33
35-44	148	85 or older	0

GENDER	
Male	390
Female	703
RACE	
White	854
African-American	201
Asian	7
Other	15

Speak Out Lexington 1996 Participant Statistics, continued

NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED IN LEXINGTON-FAYETTE COUNTY			
0-5	213	11-20	365
6-10	126	21 or more	351

ZIP CODE OF RESIDENCE	
40502	180
40503	191
40504	57
40505	91
40506	5
40507	11
40508	133
40509	48
40510	1
40511	63
40512	1
40513	26
40514	43
40515	59
40516	2
40517	94
Outside	70

Appendix B

Speak Out Lexington 1996: **Building Permanent Prosperity for Our Whole Community**

Overall Question 1: We will begin with an important question: What does the word "prosperity" mean to you?

The moderators asked participants the following three questions after presenting each idea under the topics Diversity and Inclusiveness, Jobs and Economic Foundations, and Education:

- What do you think of this idea?
- [If people like this idea] How could we as citizens help make this idea happen?
- What would it take to make sure this idea involves and benefits the whole community?

Diversity and Inclusiveness

In a truly healthy and prosperous community, the leadership of public and civic organizations must be diverse, and must listen to all citizens. The goal is for people from all walks of life to be at the table when decisions are being made.

Diversity Question 1: How important an issue is this for our community?

Diversity Idea 1: Every year, a diverse group of people could be given leadership training. These could be people who have leadership potential but are not yet recognized as leaders.

Diversity Idea 2: New Century Lexington partners and other civic organizations could be encouraged to include qualified people from all walks of life on their boards of directors, advisory councils, and in key decisions.

Jobs and Economic Foundations

Many people agree that our area needs to have a strong economy, keep good jobs, and be competitive with other places. Most agree we need a wide range of stable, well-paying jobs so that our people will not feel they have to leave. But we as a community have not yet agreed on a vision to guide us to that stronger economy.

Jobs Question 1: In our community, how important a challenge is this lack of shared vision?

Jobs Idea 1: Bring the community's many different groups, organizations, and businesses together for productive discussions, with the goal of reaching agreement on economic directions.

Jobs Idea 2: Create more opportunities for students to explore different job or career options, including internships or apprenticeships for all high school students who want them.

Education

In the area of education there are many opportunities and challenges for us to address if we are to create permanent prosperity for our whole community.

Our job market changes rapidly and demands lots of different skills. Many people feel that our schools do not meet the whole range of different students' needs for job preparation.

Education Question 1: How important is this challenge for our community?

Education Idea 1: Determine what skills are needed in workplaces, now and in the future. Then design learning activities inside and outside school to help students develop those skills.

Another education challenge that faces us is this: Tomorrow's citizens and leaders are in school right now. We need to help them become ethical leaders and capable, responsible citizens who will share in the work of building permanent prosperity for our community. Let's take a look at one idea for responding to this challenge and perhaps add some of our own.

Education Idea 2: Provide opportunities for students to practice citizenship through programs like peer mediation, voluntary or required community service, or student citizenship organizations.

Closing Questions

Overall Question 2. Of all the ideas we have discussed, which are most important for building permanent economic prosperity for our whole community?

Overall Question 3. What new ideas have you gotten about how you can personally contribute to our community's future prosperity?

Overall Question 4. Is there anything else you would like to add?