

# *Speak Out Lexington*

## **KEY QUESTIONS**

1992 -2000

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## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1992 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

What's going on with your job and your family?

### *Questions:*

1. When you think about the whole economy in Lexington, how do you think it is going right now?
2. How does the present economy in Lexington affect your work, your workplace, or your job search right now?
3. In relation to your work or your search for work in the next six months to a year, do you expect things will improve, are you expecting things to stay about the same, or are you expecting that things will get worse?
4. In general, how do you feel about the possibilities for getting and keeping a job you like in Lexington/Fayette County?
5. Do you have any suggestions to make about improvements that would make a positive difference in your work or search for work right now?
6. What issues are you aware of today that you and others face in working to maintain a strong home, household, or family?
7. Are there any of these issues you consider to be more important than the others?
8. Think about all the institutions and organizations in society, including government, that are there to support households, families, and home life. What suggestions do you have for ways they could be most helpful?
9. Do you have particular suggestions for ways your local government could improve its services to households and families?
10. Looking ahead a little, in the next six months to a year, do you believe things will get worse for families and households, stay the same, or get better?
11. How do you think the people in your neighborhood or community are doing in terms of their work and their homes, households, and families?
12. Think about Lexington's future. Think about the year 2010, about 20 years from now. What are your greatest hopes? What are your greatest fears?
13. Imagine for a moment that you could make a wish and it would be granted. What would you wish for on behalf of yourself and your household or family? What would you wish for on behalf of your neighborhood or community?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1993 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

How do we build a stronger sense of community in Lexington-Fayette County?

### *Questions:*

1. What can we as a community do to meet the needs of our families? Of these ideas, which should Urban County Government address?
2. What are your neighborhood's strengths?
3. What would make life in your neighborhood better?
4. What aspects of our larger community do you value most?
5. What would make life better in Lexington-Fayette County?
6. What should Urban County Government do to address the priority items in questions 4 and 5?
7. Consider the actions you already take for your neighborhood and your community. What motivates you to take those actions?
8. All of us see things that need doing in our neighborhood and community, yet we don't always do them. What keeps you from doing things you see that need doing?
9. Communities hand down both values and property as a legacy from one generation to the next. What would you like our generation's legacy to be to the future citizens of Lexington-Fayette County?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1994 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

What kind of community do we want?

Or

How can we build a safer community?

Organizers and participants in *Speak Out Lexington '94* could choose from two different topics: "What kind of community do we want?" (An agenda-setting discussion) or "How can we build a safer community?" (A problem-solving session.)

### *Questions for "What kind of community do we want?"*

1. What do you consider an important factor in a strong community?
2. When you consider this item [restate it] in Lexington-Fayette County, how well are we doing? Is it working well now to keep our community strong and productive? Is it working somewhat but needs change? Is it not working at all?

[Repeat steps one and two until the group has generated a complete list.]

3. Of all the areas you have discussed that need work or need to be changed, which are most important to you, and why? [The group identifies its top three.]
4. What changes need to be made in Lexington-Fayette County in each of these three priority areas?
5. For the strongest possible community, who should take responsibility for making these changes you have chosen as most important?
6. Would you like to add anything else?

### *Questions for "How can we build a safer community?"*

1. How safe do you feel in your daily life?
2. What makes you feel safe in Lexington-Fayette County?
3. What makes you feel not safe in Lexington-Fayette County?
4. Describe how your life would be different if you lived in a truly safe community.
5. What changes would have to be made to make Lexington-Fayette County a truly safe community?
6. Who needs to take responsibility for making these things we identified in question number 6 happen?

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1995 KEY QUESTIONS***

*Theme:*

Creating unity within diversity: How can we heal racial and other divisions within our community?

*Questions:*

1. How do racial and other divisions harm our community?
2. What are you and people you know doing to work on healing racial and other divisions in Lexington?
3. What more are you willing to do to work on healing racial and other divisions in Lexington?
4. How can we use our institutions more effectively to work on healing racial and other divisions? By institutions we mean our schools, government, religious institutions, civic organizations, corporations, neighborhood associations, and non-profit organizations.
5. Individuals can take many practical actions to heal racial and other divisions. Of the actions we have talked about here, which are most likely to be useful as suggestions for the poster? (A poster reflecting our community's best ideas to be produced community-wide)
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1996 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

Building permanent prosperity for our whole community

Note: Speak Out 1996 was an experiment -- an attempt to deepen the public participation in a community visioning process called *New Century Lexington*. We picked three key topics on which *New Century Lexington* had produced some initial goals and ideas, and invited each Speak Out group to pick one of the three topics as its starting point. Within its time constraints, the group could then make further choices about whether to address additional topics. The resulting question list is lengthy and challenging to understand as stand-alone text.

### *Questions:*

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

[At this point, participants chose their first topic -- either (1) Diversity and Inclusiveness; (2) Jobs and Economic Foundations; or (3) Education.]

### 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.

[Participants addressed three follow-up questions here and after each "idea" in each of the three topics.]

- 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 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.

[Three follow-up questions]

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### 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.

[Three follow-up questions]

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.

[Three follow-up questions]

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### 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.

[Three follow-up questions]

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.

[Three follow-up questions]

### 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?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1997 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

How can we *all* take part in our community's big decisions?

Note: The format for Speak Out Lexington 1997 differed from that of previous years by asking participants to think about how our community goes about making decisions about issues we face, rather than about a specific issue facing our community. The Speak Out sessions consisted of three sections: Community Bonds; Public Spaces; and Big Decisions. The first section, Community Bonds, engaged participants in a game that centered around how people build "civic capital." The other two sections consisted of traditional dialogue sessions.

### *Sections*

#### Community Bonds

In the Community Bonds game, participants earned civic dollars for attending the *Speak Out* session and for other things they had done in the community over the years. The group then added up its total holdings. The goal of this cooperative game was to contribute to the big community goal of \$250,000 in previously unrecognized civic capital.

- Step One: On the tally sheet provided, give yourself five civic dollars for attending this Speak Out session. Now place a five in each box opposite a question listed on the handout to which you answer "yes." Add your civic dollars for this page. That is your First Tally.
- Step Two: Now pull your chairs into small groups of five or six people each. Turn to the page in the Citizen Handbook. Think of ways — large or small — that you have contributed to civic life. Write these civic actions down in the blanks and tell your cluster members what you listed. Anything that helps bind the community together counts. Add anything that you would have put on the original list if you had been the one making it.
- Step Three: Add five civic dollars for each of the things you have added to your own list. Add five more for each thing someone else suggested that you have also done. Now add up these dollars. This is your Second Tally. Write this tally on a small corner of paper. Tear it off and give it to the Reporter.

Step Four: Here is the Group Tally so far. What are some of the kinds of civic activities that you reported? If you hear any additional activities from another cluster that also apply to you, write them down and give yourself five additional civic dollars. How many people added dollars? Here is the new total.

Step Five: You can see that as people take individual action to connect with other people or to do something for the larger good, it matters. At the end of the session, you learn about some ways to generate huge dollars between now and our target date.

### Public Space

Question 1: Name and address of spaces and places in our community that you use?

Question 2: What happens there?

Question 3: Who uses this space?

Question 4: How many of this group have been there in the last six months?

Question 5: Is the space primarily used for personal connections or for community projects and work?

Question 6: In what places do we gather to have conversations about community and neighborhood matters?

Question 7: Where are decisions made about our community?

### Big Decisions

Question 8: What are some recent examples of big decisions that have come to your attention? These might be ones that are now being made, or are likely to be made in the future.

Question 9: Now we need to choose one of these as an example of a significant future decision you want to help make. Any one of these decisions will do, so let's see if we can quickly agree on one to use. Any suggestions?

Question 10: What can you do so that more people can be players and help make this decision?

Question 11: What would make it more likely that you can be a player?

- Question 12: Do any of the civic connections that you listed during the game make it more likely you can take part? Which ones?
- Question 13: Do any of the public spaces make participation easier? Which ones? If you become more of a player, where would you expect to go to make big decisions?'
- Question 14: What other ideas do you have about how more people can become players in our community's big decisions?
- Overall Question: Is there anything you would like to add, or to ask?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1998 KEY QUESTIONS***

*Theme:*

What's going on with young people in our community?

*Questions:*

Question 1: What is it like to be a young person in Lexington?

[Possible follow-up questions if needed.]

What are the positive aspects?

How does the experience here compare to other places?

[After general conversation:]

What common themes would you like to note?

Question 2: What do adults not know about young people that they need to know?

Question 3: What are your major concerns about young people?

[After the concerns were listed, some were combined as participants deemed appropriate. Participants then voted on their top three major concerns, and were asked the following question about each of the three concerns.]

Question 4: What would you like to see happen for young people?

[Optional Question]

Who are the most influential people in young people's lives?

Question 5 : What else would you like to say about what's going on with young people?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1999 KEY QUESTIONS***

*Theme:*

How can our community be more connected to our schools?

*Questions:*

Question 1: When you think about grades K-12, what do you care the most about?

What are the top three things you care most about?

Question 2: What prevents our community and our schools from being more connected?

What are the barriers on the community side?

What are the barriers on the school side?

Question 3: How can these barriers be overcome so that our community is more connected to our schools?

What can schools do to overcome the barriers?

What can the community do to overcome the barriers?

Question 4: What can you — and people like you — do to help our community be more connected to our schools?

Question 5: What else would you like to say about how our community can be more connected to our schools?

## ***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 2000 KEY QUESTIONS***

### *Theme:*

How can we fulfill our promise to young people?

Speak Out Lexington 2000 focused on the Assets approach to youth development, which is based on research by the Search Institute. The “developmental assets” consist of 40 basic building blocks that help young people make a healthy transition to adulthood. Speak Out participants used the list of 40 Assets to answer these questions.

### *Questions:*

#### **Question 1**

- a.) On the Asset list we have handed out, please indicate with a checkmark the Assets you experience now as a young person or that you experienced when you were a young person.
- b.) Please indicate with a star the category of Assets (either internal or external) that you are most interested in talking about in this Speak Out session.

#### **Question 2**

Please share which category of Assets you chose, and why you chose it.

#### **Question 3**

- a.) For those of you who put checkmarks next to any of the Assets in this category, would you like to share some of the ways these Assets were/are available for you as a young person?
- b.) In what ways are the Assets in this category now available for the young people in our community?

#### **Question 4**

What can you do as an individual to assure that young people in our community have the Assets in this category?

#### **Question 5**

How can we encourage other individuals or organizations to help build the Assets in this category in young people?

#### **Question 6**

Now that we've talked about some aspects of the Assets approach, what is one idea or suggestion that you found most interesting or useful from this session?

**Question 7**

Is there anything else you would like to say about building Assets for the youth in our community?