

Community Heart & Soul®

Name of CHS Project/City, State: Envision Victor, Victor, ID

Population: 1928

Challenge: Transportation, economic development, downtown developments, civic engagement, land use

Focus: Civic engagement, bridging divides, comprehensive plan and land use planning

Key Tool: Digital storytelling, social networking, Community Viz® visual preference surveys

Brief Description/Summary of Community:

Victor is the largest town in Teton County, Idaho. Conveniently located 25 miles from Jackson, Wyoming, 20 miles from Teton Village and 90 Miles from Yellowstone National Park, Victor offers a wide range of year-round activities for outdoor enthusiasts.

Local Condition:

Practical realities, cultural distinctions, rapidly shifting demographics, simmering resentments, and even weather combined to create a tense atmosphere in Victor.

Many longtime residents are descendants of Victor's late 19th-century founders. A dramatic population increase in the 2000's shifted the town demographic, creating tension between long-time and newer residents. Land prices soared and unchecked development stretched from Teton Pass to Jackson, Wyoming, burying the town in an avalanche of subdivisions and development proposals.

Volunteer and Community Response:

A strong group of partners initiated Envision Victor and a Project Coordinator was hired to serve as the project leader. Their first step was to engage the community with tasks and products designed to make Envision Victor (EV) visible and generate brand recognition. Approaches included organizing competitions to design EV slogans, logos, postcards, stickers and banners. The project slogan, "*Victor. What's it to You?*", reflects differing resident views toward change and the project. To help bridge the divide between long-time residents and newcomers, EV leaders worked to build relationships across perceived divides using storytelling.

Heart & Soul Outcomes:

The community galvanized around the Heart & Soul statements and, according to the evaluation report, a higher degree of trust exists among residents with differing views

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than existed before the EV project. EV helped people make connections between resident values, land use, and growth patterns.

More people participation in planning discussions, with 40 public events attended by 550 individuals, representing 29% of the town's population.

H&S Statements were used to guide the Main Street design, update the Capital Improvements Plan, and rewrite the town's Comprehensive Plan.

The project demonstrated the benefits of non-traditional planning and engagement tools and processes, including the use of storytelling and story circles, keypad polling, and visualization.

