

Strategic Plan Willits Economic Localization

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Recognizing that *WELL* needed to define its structure and goals, a community workshop, The Future of *WELL*, was held March 4th and 5th, 2006 whereby three committees were formed and empowered to provide this direction.

Membership – who we are
Strategic Planning – what we choose to do
Governance – how we choose and administer

The task of this committee, to devise a plan whereby the vision and mission of *WELL* would be brought to fruition, is the subject of this report.

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STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

The WELL Vision – An enduring local economy that provides health and security for our community.

The Mission of WELL is to foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by partnering with other organizations to watch for opportunities and vulnerabilities, incubate and coordinate projects and facilitate dialogue, action and education within our community.

WELL is our response to the problems that lie immediately ahead in connection with the end of cheap energy, rapid over-development and sprawl, lack of local job opportunity for youth, over use of increasingly scarce water supplies, the local effects of a changing climate, loss of biodiversity and habitat in Mendocino County, inadequate healthcare for many, and the rising cost of food and services that come from outside, among others.

We want visible actions, tangible new infrastructure and sustainable relationships among people, institutions and the planetary ecology. The number of tasks & strategies we have identified is large. Therefore, it is vital that we have a solid foundation of information, organizational structure and clear direction so that our actions are based on relevant needs and have a good chance of meeting those needs.

Towards this vision we have used the five focal areas from the March Future of WELL workshop of community, sustainability, localization, health and security, along with their accompanying goals as an overall guide for evaluating those projects which will further the mission of *WELL*.

In writing the strategic plan we recognize that WELL is a volunteer organization and we want to support the passions of our membership. We also recognize the value of objective measurable goals. In light of these two ideas we have evaluated the status of each team as described in the Governance Document and set one year goals for each team accordingly. Each team is empowered to determine how to achieve those goals.

The number and nature of projects we face are too large for any one organization to manage. WELL aims to nurture and encourage the many projects without regard to ownership. We will:

- Watch for opportunities and threats;
- Incubate projects in their nascent stage;
- Facilitate the development of partnerships with other organizations;
- Educate to inform and enroll.

Long Term Vision

These are WELL's main areas of focus and their corresponding goals as identified by the WELL community at the March workshop.

Community – Foster interactive relationships among the human and non-human residents of the 95490 zip code.

- Seek the common ground among the diverse segments of our community.
- Help members of our community find and grow into their most effective role towards achieving our common goals.
- Effectively communicate WELL's strategy for securing the prosperity that all segments of our community desire.

Sustainability – Endeavor toward an enduring culture that lives within the carrying capacity of our area.

- Where are we? Evaluate our current economy and lifestyles with respect to consumption of resources, generation of outputs (both products and byproducts), and the resulting impacts on natural and human systems.
- Where can we go? Study our potential for creating an economic system that closes the material loop to ensure a balance among raw materials, useful products, byproducts and natural systems.
- How do we get there? Civic projects and business activities, both proposed and existing, are evaluated with respect to these sustainable principles.

Localization – To the degree possible, produce what we consume and consume what we produce of basic goods and services.

- Determine the required industries and agriculture for our basic needs with respect to food, shelter, health, energy, transportation, water, and clothing.
- Facilitate new farms, gardens and cottage industries to fill those needs.
- Build financial capital and market systems for local production and trade of local products.
- Support the education of youth and community to create and maintain knowledge and skills to help create sustainable local economy.

Health – Maintain the well-being of the community through self-sufficient infrastructure and consideration of health issues in all our plans and activities.

- Foster affordable and available health-care for all members of the community.
- Integrate high tech medicine, low tech medicine and traditional care methods.
- Produce medicines and health care products locally.
- Develop a physical environment that supports health and education for healthy life choices.
- Promote healthy interpersonal interactions.

Security – Promote social cohesion of our community through planning, communication and preparation for all foreseeable emergencies, whether for natural, economic, infrastructural or social systems.

- Establish local, reliable and resilient infrastructure and back-up for water, energy, waste disposal and medical systems.
- Establish and maintain locally a reliable and resilient caching system for food and medical supplies.
- Support trained volunteer assistance for our first responder professionals.
- Develop local communication and distribution systems not dependent on fossil fuels.
- Consider how economic or disaster related refugees and immigrants can be relocated in our area sustainability.
- Teach our community that a sustainable local economy is the best strategy for both short and long-term security.
- Support neighborhood organization for emergency response.
- Encourage surrounding communities to take similar steps.

Organizational Strategy

The Governance Document calls for WELL to be organized around three groups:

- Coordinating Committee (elected, with governance powers and responsibility for coordinating all WELL projects)
- Support Teams (administration, research, outreach, media, events, funding, Liaison...)
- Project Teams (members, according to interest who have full support from the Support Teams and the Coordinating Committee)

Please see the Governance Document for details.

WELL is legally a program of the Renewable Energy Development Institute (REDI), a registered 501c3 with an office in downtown Willits. REDI's Board of Directors and WELL has a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) in place, available for review at the REDI office. Under the terms of this MOU, REDI acts as WELL's fiscal agent enabling WELL to apply for grants and receive donations using REDI's nonprofit status. Because REDI is WELL's fiscal agent, WELL is bound by all of REDI's operational responsibilities. Additionally, WELL and REDI share an employee who manages the office and is involved in communications. REDI provides WELL with institutional history and organizational expertise, and WELL is a great connector to the community.

WELL is a volunteer organization that welcomes and *depends*, on input and leadership from its members.

It is extremely helpful to hear from members regarding what you would like to plug into and what expectations you have for WELL. Feedback is most useful to us when it is written.

WELL welcomes feedback and ideas in the following ways:

- You may call the WELL office: **707.459.1256**
- Email can be sent to: spring@redinet.org
- Our mailing address is: **75 N. Main St. PMB 234, Willits, CA 95490**
- You may attend a **Coordinating Committee Meeting**. Please call the office or check the web site to obtain the schedule.

Priorities

At this point in time, for the organization as a whole, several priorities can be identified.

- Funding is a major issue for supporting staff efforts & administrative costs.
- Outreach – including **enrolling** new members, **communication** with existing Economic Localization groups, the public, the press, local government and the **WELL website** which is under revision and is key to updating and receiving input from the membership, and increasing awareness in the community on issues & events.
- Working on **research tasks** is critical to achieving our goals.

In the past twenty one months WELL has focused greatly on community education and developing itself as a resource on the issues. This effort has been highly successful. Outreach will continue to be a main focus, along with fundraising and research, both of which are areas that need an infusion of energy.

If there are members who are passionate or frustrated about an issue, or who have expertise to contribute and want to originate a project with WELL's support, or just are willing to do some footwork, please announce it to the Coordinating Committee.

Proposed Goals for the Sixteen Working Groups

Introduction

In order to achieve WELL's vision as stated above, we have proposed one year goals for each of WELL's sixteen working groups defined in the WELL Governance Document. We proposed these goals by considering the status of each working group today and identifying what each group can reasonably achieve in the next year. While we believe these goals are attainable, they will require that each working group member bring a strong personal commitment to the tasks at hand. Each group will function autonomously, deciding what path to take to accomplish their goals.

In order to measure progress, each working group will provide quarterly status reports to WELL, discussing paths chosen and milestones reached along the way. The first quarterly report will contain a plan of action for the coming year & criteria for evaluating progress. The reports can include discussion of additional resources needed and problems to be solved. At the end of the year we will review each group's progress and repeat the strategic planning process for the following year, allowing us to step back and measure our success.

We strongly encourage the Coordinating Committee to host workshops as needed providing project management & facilitation skills.

Administration

- Existing: 10 hours/week paid staff produces newsletter and speaker events, acts as a liaison to other Economic Localization groups, serves as internal communications hub and attends to general office communications. Jason Bradford is contributing an enormous amount of volunteer time as WELL's unofficial Executive Director.

- One Year Goals: 1. 40 hours a week of paid staff time to track teams. 2. Take care of financial tracking & insurance requirements. 3. Produce the newsletter. 4. Serve as internal communications hub. We hope to relieve Jason Bradford of his workload in the office. 5. Establish strategic liaison relationship with REDI.

Communication

- Existing: Posters and newsletters produced primarily by staff, and website maintained by volunteers.

- One Year Goal: Consistent distribution of fliers and newsletters, establishing bulletin boards throughout the zip code.

Events

- Existing: Primarily produced by staff with Steering Committee back-up and other individuals as inspired. Film Group produces periodic Film Series.
- One Year Goals: 1. Consistent production of films, speaker series and panels on a schedule determined four months in advance. 2. Produce RLNC at least once annually.

Media

- Existing: Website exists and is information rich but not too sexy, we have hours and hours of unedited film, many presentations have been developed – some have been given and some are posted, our main press is developed by reporters external to WELL.
- One Year Goals: 1. Enhance website. 2. Produce consistent press releases for events and WELL progress.

Funding

- Existing: \$500/month from Post Carbon Institute, occasional and decreasing event revenue, expenses exceeding income by \$ 400/month.
- One Year Goals: 1. Monthly income exceeds administration costs. 2. Ability to employ one full-time staff at \$15/hour - \$35,000, with sufficient excess to fund specific projects for a total annual income of \$70,000.

Liaison

- Existing: WELL staff inconsistent communication with the press, local government and other Economic Localization groups.
- One Year Goals: 1. Consistent communication with the city of Willits, the Brooktrails township, the county of Mendocino and other Economic Localization groups. 2. Communication with existing civic groups – this to be undertaken only after #1 is achieved.

Membership

- Existing: 40 active people organized into amorphous groups.
- One Year Goals: Enroll members and support them to commit to teams – filling each team with at least three members. All of the other goals are dependent upon this, so achieving this goal as soon as possible is critical to WELL's success.

Research

- Existing: Current inventories are partially complete.
- One Year Goal: All inventories complete

Water

- Existing: Current inventory is incomplete.
- One Year Goals: 1. Complete a needs inventory for agriculture and residential usage and identify acceptable sources. 2. Create water conservation program and educational outreach.

Food

- Existing: The food inventory is largely complete along with several supporting documents. There are lots of projects in motion with strong public support.
- One Year Goals: 1. Establish a coordinator for all existing projects. 2. Develop a “100-mile” diet stamp and program.

Transportation

- Existing: This group currently revolves around discussion of the railroad; preliminary work has been done to develop a car share network.
- One Year Goals: 1. Collaborate with the City of Willits to develop and accept an intermodal transportation plan for Willits. 2. Establish plug in stations for local electric vehicles (LEVs).

Energy

- Existing: The energy inventory is complete and the city solar project is underway.
- One Year Goals: 1. Complete a wind study of the Willits area. 2. Lend ongoing assistance to the city solar project.

Shelter

- Existing: Incomplete inventory, lapsed attendance of WELL meetings by experienced professionals, input was offered by this group to the hospital design.
- One Year Goals: 1. Partner with the Bank of Willits and REDI on the HELP and ELF programs. 2. Construct at least one alternative structure in Willits public space. 3. Produce a booklet describing a full range of alternative building technologies appropriate to the Willits area.

Health

- Existing: This is an active group with a largely complete inventory. They have established a demonstration Medicine Chest Garden and have hosted several workshops.
- One Year Goals: 1. Improve the collaboration of healthcare practitioners and facilities. 2. Develop a cooperative of people to steward the herbs on “our” town farm (at the Creamery, 475 E. Valley St.) and prepare them for use as medicines. 3. Duplicate the Medicine Chest Garden at several households in Willits.

Business

- Existing: This group doesn’t exist as a working group.
- One Year Goals: *In partnership with BALLE and the Chamber of Commerce:* 1. Develop a list of businesses needed to supply basic needs and services. 2. Outreach to and support existing local businesses. 3. Develop financing for new or expanded small businesses as listed in Goal 1.

Culture/Education

- Existing: This group doesn’t exist as a working group.
- One Year Goals: *In partnership with Nuestra Alianza,* 1. Develop process for translating all WELL documents into Spanish. 2. Develop education plan to support local and sustainable technologies.

Appendices

Introduction

In Appendix A we have included a list of current and envisioned projects drawn from WELL's March workshop. We have categorized these projects according to the teams named in the Governance Document.

In Appendix B we have included tools for evaluating and prioritizing this list of projects. We encourage each team to take advantage of these tools as they see fit.

Appendix A: A List of Current & Potential Projects

Team	Project - An asterisk denotes existing projects
Business	* BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Economy) network
Business	Identify & educate aimed at skills needed in local sustainable economy
Business	Establish skills training through mentorships/apprenticeships/internships
Business	* EBC (Ed Burton Co.) projects (gasifier, wood hauling, wastewater treatment, etc.)
Business	* O'Leary's
Business	* Farmer's Market
Business	* Bountiful Gardens
Business	* Solar energy companies
Business	Establish barter system
Business	Create local monetary system
Business	Create covered structure for swap meets/farmers' markets
Business	Create worm/bee nurseries
Business	Provide small business skills training
Coordinating Committee	Establish WELL governance process (Steering Committee role, decision making process)
Culture	Educate about economic localization/sustainable development in schools
Culture	Educate people about conservation & consumption reduction
Culture	Outreach to homeless, youth conservatives, native Americans, Latinos
Culture	* Grow CERT (Civilian Emergency Response Team)
Culture	* Willits Fest
Culture	* Brookside Elementary School vision & values
Culture	Provide local permaculture courses

Culture	Create non-denominational places for silence & meditation
Culture	* Barnraising
Culture	Create local martial arts/self-defense groups
Culture	Publish all materials in Spanish
Energy	* Home energy localization program
Energy	* Wind survey
Energy	Ensure basic civil infrastructure operates on renewable energy
Energy	* City Solar Project
Energy	Create biofuel distribution
Events	* WELL sponsored workshops
Events	* RLNC (Regional Localization Networking Conference)
Events	* WELL speaker series
Events	* Sustainable film series
Events	* Are We Prepared Panel
Food	Create a general plan for food
Food	Change agricultural zoning laws
Food	Establish agricultural land trusts
Food	Establish food storage cooperative for small farmers
Food	Establish partnerships with high school agriculture department
Food	Establish partnerships with the Grange and agricultural land services
Food	Teach backyard gardening classes with an eye on self-sufficiency
Food	Establish a funded demonstration farm in Willits
Food	Establish local farms/dairies
Food	* Local producers of eggs, milk, honey, vegetables & meat
Food	* Grateful Gleaners
Food	* Community gardens
Food	* Brookside Farm
Funding	* Bank of Willits economic localization fund
Funding	* Grange & WELL fundraiser
Health	Encourage collaboration among all types of health care practitioners
Health	Educate practitioners in the balance of allopathic & traditional approaches to care

Health	Offer nutrition education
Health	* Workshops on local herbs & medicines
Health	* Willits WELLness Network
Health	* Wellness panel
Health	* Demonstration herb garden
Health	Create community supported health care
Health	Create local herb farms & herb distribution
Health	Create mental health support
Health	Create single payee insurance for all
Health	Produce eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures locally
Liaison	* Talks to community organizations
Liaison	Outreach to other communities
Liaison	* Brooktrails Greenbelt Management Plan & emergency Preparedness
Liaison	* Green Mapping Project
Liaison	* Partnerships with REDI, MELC, & Ecology Action
Liaison	Create & execute vetting process for all proposed Willits development
Liaison	Get city to adopt "green" building code
Liaison	Remove cell towers
Media	WELL website
Media	Publish e-letter & newsletter
Media	Create audio/video library of educational information
Media	Broadcast info on Channel 3
Media	* Willits News articles
Media	* WELL/REDI (Renewable Energy Development Institute) library/video archive
Media	* Radio shows
Membership	Define WELL membership definition, cost & voting rights/responsibilities
Membership	Provide education on conflict resolution & working together
Membership	Provide leadership training
Process	Help existing community agencies to identify localization projects
Research	* Complete resource inventory
Research	Create a comprehensive waste management plan

Research	Write position <u>papers</u> on values
Research	Send delegation to Cuba to learn their ways
Shelter	Train people in alternative shelter construction
Shelter	Encourage construction of housing using resource conservation
Shelter	* Natural builders
Shelter	* Co-housing meetings
Shelter	* Advise green hospital architects
Transportation	* Create ride sharing including outlying areas
Transportation	* Pedestrian & bicycle plan draft of One Town One Vision
Transportation	* Railroad groups
Transportation	* REDI electric vehicle projects
Transportation	Create human powered transportation
Transportation	Create light rail
Transportation	Create walk/bike paths
Water	Establish protection of local watershed & wilderness areas
Water	Ensure reliable source of water

Appendix B: Tools for Evaluating & Prioritizing Projects

I. Project Prioritizing from Simple to Complex

This process simply evaluates the degree of difficulty necessary for any project. Since personal motivation often comes from seeing a successful completion, it is recommended that there be a 3:1 ratio of simple to complex projects chosen.

Examples of various project criteria along the easy to difficult continuum might include:

Easy	Difficult
Volunteer	Paid Positions
Low budget – Out of pocket	High budget – Funding Required
Short time frame	Long or multiple time frame
Use of current and/or local resources	Need for new and/or imported infrastructure
Project Examples	
Gleaning Club	New Businesses
Backyard Garden	Festivals
Solar Oven Workshop	New Transportation
Making Herbal Remedies	New Energy Systems
Pot Luck Gatherings	New Farms

II. Project Requirements

This process evaluates the quantity of energy and material necessary to implement the project using the following as a starting point for discussion:

1. Strategy
 - a. Is this a short or long term project?
 - b. How long will it take to get it going?
 - c. Is this project already active?
 - d. Does it require research or community education to activate?
 - e. Does it require seed work now in order to facilitate action latter?
 - f. What will be our measure of success?
2. Skills
 - a. Who is motivated to oversee this project?
 - b. Do we have the knowledge and experience necessary to begin?
 - c. Do we need to recruit assistance?
3. Structure
 - a. What decision making process will be required?
 - b. What frequency of meetings is necessary?
4. Resources
 - a. What investment of time and money will be required to start and to operate this project?
 - b. Will it become self funding?
 - c. What resources are currently in inventory?
 - d. Are there insurance requirements?
 - e. As necessary is this coordinated with the fiscal agent?
5. Results

- a. What percentage of the community will it serve?
- b. Does it encourage an interactive relationship among diverse groups of the community such as age, ethnicity, church groups, etc?
- c. Will it further our image?

III. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

This is a three-step process that filters the inventory data on a focal area to help translate them into projects to achieve our vision of economic localization.

First, use the strengths and weaknesses filters to ascertain where indicators meet our vision and sustainability criteria (strengths) and where they fall short (weaknesses). For example, maybe the water supply is of high quality, and abundant, but relies on non-renewable energy for its treatment and distribution.

Second, spelling out the threats to the local economy and community of continuing with these weaknesses builds the case for change.

Third, look at the opportunity side of a threat to generate ideas for projects. For example, discovering the vulnerability of the water supply to a disruption of grid-based electricity services not under local control can lend support to a project to solarize the water system.