



Comprehensive Plan Section 2 – Summary of Board Process

2.1 History and Composition

The Youth Violence Reduction Act, E2SHB 2319, which established the Networks by an act of the 1993/1994 Washington State Legislature, included:

- A focus on providing for grass-roots community input on the structure and direction of publicly supported services for families and children;
- An effort to assure that input in planning community responses to the needs of families included input from varied community sectors;
- Direction to state agencies to respond to expressed community concerns by active participation in the Family Policy Council and by responding to the Networks' Comprehensive Plans.

Each of the state's Community Networks - 53 were organized in all - was charged by the Legislature with developing a plan to reduce youth violence and related problems in its area over the next 10 years. These Comprehensive Plans will guide the Networks in supporting the efforts of citizens, community based agencies, and local government in finding solutions to the problems facing families and children in local communities.

Key South King County community and agency representatives met in late 1994 and early 1995 to organize a network, recognizing early on that the South King County area had an identity and interests that were quite distinct from those of communities in the balance of King County.

Several groups led the discussion about the best network structure for South County, including the Family Support Consortium, the South King County Youth Violence Committee, and the South King County Council of Human Services. During these discussions, consensus emerged that residents would be best represented by decision-making and control at a scale lower than the county level. Ultimately, King County formed seven distinct Networks, with the South King County Network including the school districts of: Kent, Renton, Highline, South Central (Tukwila), Auburn, Federal Way, Enumclaw (including Black Diamond), and Tahoma (Maple Valley). Vashon was invited to join the South King County Network, but elected to form their own organization.

The first meeting of the South King County Network was held in February 1995, and beginning in March 1995 the Network Board assumed a twice monthly meeting schedule. This schedule has continued throughout the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Over the course of its first year, the Network's board membership changed significantly. As the commitment required of Board members became clear, some initial members found that they were not able to balance these commitments with other responsibilities to their jobs, families and communities.

The Board also experienced change in its composition as it established itself, developed working norms, and defined its purpose. As a result of this process of Board development, active membership on the Network Board declined to a low point in the fall of 1995. The Executive and Membership committees worked together to develop a strong outreach component during the winter of 1996, and by early spring the Board was nearly up to full complement again and had renewed energy and commitment. A successful Board retreat in April yielded a number of recommendations that will be integrated in the Network's two year workplan in order to ensure continued Board health.

The membership of the Network board is summarized below:

Racial/Ethnic Distribution	Occupation Area
African American	Business
Asian/Pacific Islander	Law Enforcement
Caucasian	Parks/Recreation
Hispanic Origin	Social Services
Native American/Alaska Native	Education
Other	Student
Age Distribution	Homemaker
0 - 18	Retired
18 - 25	Other
26 - 44	Residency
45-60	Auburn
60+	Enumclaw
Sex Distribution	Federal Way
Female	Highline
Male	Kent
Parental Status	Maple Valley
Parent	Renton
Non-parent	South Central (Tukwila)

2.2 Establishing A Vision

The Network Board for South King County established a mission statement in the fall of 1995 that expressed its view of its role as a Network. The Network hesitated to develop a specific vision statement, since the Board saw the Network's role as discovering and articulating the common priorities of South King County communities.

The South King County Community Network works with communities to improve the lives of children and families in South King County.

Over the course of its 1995/1996 planning process, the Network sought to understand and incorporate local community priorities in its vision statement. Its planning completed, the Network's core outcome statements express that vision:

Families will have the skills and capacity to provide clear expectations, standards and beliefs to their children, which will result in healthy behaviors by those children. and

All children and youth will have the support and guidance they need to develop clear standards and healthy beliefs.

2.3 Recommendations for Continued Work

As the Network completes the first phase of planning, and moves into the second full year of working together as a Board, it will build on relationships and goals it has established. This work has both internal Board focus and external community action focus. In summary, the following areas will be integrated in its workplan:

Areas for continued work on Board development

Continued Board development, and a specific workplan to address these areas, were identified at the Board's annual retreat in April, 1996. The three priority areas are:

- Balancing committee work and formal full board review in carrying out Board function.
- Strategies being explored:
 - Change of meeting frequency and structure
 - Change of meeting day
 - Reinvigoration of committee structure with all members serving on at least one committee.
- Strengthening mechanisms to ensure communication with and input from the community.
- Strategies being explored:
 - Re-establishing the communications committee;
 - Board members reporting back periodically to the entities which appoint them;
 - Establishing a communication/outreach plan to the community;
 - Conducting topic-specific focus groups on the priority problem areas.
- Increasing Board cohesiveness through orientation, training and team building.
- Strategies being explored:
 - Regular team-building opportunities in Board meetings;
 - Calendar of orientation for new members;
 - Valuing volunteer recognition and appreciation
 - Changing meeting structure to increase communication and joint work.

Areas for work in the community

Areas for work in the community arise from priority outcomes the Network has identified, and from areas in which planning needs to continue. These include:

- Working with appropriate community sectors to identify specific objectives to pursue and a contracting process which will allow the Network to pursue them effectively.
- Working with local and state agencies to explore the impact of decategorization in the four priority areas set by the Network - youth violence, youth substance abuse, child abuse and neglect and domestic violence.
- In concert with other funders, the South King County Human Services Outcome Group and other community development groups, identify community benchmarks for progress in the priority areas identified by the Network.
- Continue to build cooperative relationships with local coalitions, providers and community organizations in order to increase the responsiveness of the Network to local conditions and concerns.