



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY SCAN

Key Components and Principles



What is a Community Opportunity Scan?

In a nutshell, a Community Opportunity Scan (COS) is an opportunity to discover where God is at work in your community and how your church may join Him in that work. A COS also helps churches:

- UNDERSTAND its community and itself
- DISCOVER and AFFIRM the unique gifts and assets that God has placed in the community and the church
- OPEN doors to exciting new ministries and/or partnerships that will bless the surrounding community and the people in it
- Become more EFFECTIVELY involved in its community
- LOVE its community in new and exciting ways

Points to Ponder

- ♦ Why does your church want to do a COS?
- ♦ What do you hope will be the outcomes?

Getting Started – The Key Components of a COS

1. **Building a Team** – Generally a team of about 5-8 people can work on the COS process. Identify gifts and roles that each person has and will contribute to the COS team.
2. **The Importance of Prayer** – Prayer helps to ‘prepare the soil’ – in the hearts and minds of your church and its members, as well as those in the community you hope to reach. Prayer Walking is a wonderful way to seek God’s leading and also learn about your community. (See Prayer Walking Guidelines on our website.) Ongoing prayer for the community you are discovering, the COS team, and the church community is vital to this process.
3. **Defining the Community** – Identify a geographical area around your church for you to focus your scan on. (This could be city-wide or neighbourhood-based.) Or, identify a particular ‘people group’ to focus your conversations around.
4. **Gathering Information/Data** – Demographic data helps give a general sense of who lives in the community and may also be helpful in determining your approach to conversations with those who live in the community.
 - a. **Community Interviews** – A key piece to the COS is the process of *listening* to your community through conversations/interviews, as opposed to sending out

Points to Ponder

- ♦ Are there any roles missing? Do we need to invite someone else to join?

Points to Ponder

- ♦ How shall we make prayer a central part of the COS process?
- ♦ Who can we invite to help make this happen?

questionnaires for people to fill out, or simply reading information about a community. These conversations will help your church discover the strengths and assets of your community.

- i. Listening demonstrates authenticity and an openness to be shaped by your community. It also makes your community aware of you.
- ii. Through conversations you will begin to establish relationships that can then be developed over time
- iii. Through conversations you will uncover people's hopes and ideas for your community, as well as the ways they can contribute

Points to Ponder

- ♦ What other sources of statistics can we gather?
- ♦ Who can begin to summarize some of the key findings?

5. **Involving the Congregation** – Communication is key! Discuss ways to keep the congregation aware of, praying for, involved in and supportive of the process. Be as specific as possible.

Discerning Ministry Opportunities

1. **Summarize the Findings** – Pray through the information gathered and discern what may be some key areas to focus on. Put together a detailed report, being sure to capture the main themes, comments, discoveries and opportunities. (Remember to include the “intangibles”; attitudes, priorities, etc.) Opportunities flowing out of the COS can be varied, including:
 - a. Starting a new ministry
 - b. Partnering with another organization, church or community ‘player’
 - c. Reshaping existing church ministries in light of information gathered.
2. **Implementation and Monitoring** – Consideration at the beginning of the COS process should be given to what will happen with the COS information (report) when it is completed. Who will be responsible for implementing any recommendations? Who will give oversight and accountability?
3. **Moving Forward** – How will your church continue the process of listening to your community after the scan itself is completed?

NOTES

- ♦ *The process of doing the COS – getting out into the community, meeting new people, representing the church with a listening posture – is as important as the outcomes the scan may reveal.*
 - ♦ *Find creative ways to involve other members of your church.*
- ♦ *Leadership of the church should be supportive of and linked to this process so that it falls in line with your church's vision and mission.*
 - ♦ *The COS is not an evangelism tool.*

