

Windshield Community Survey

DESCRIPTION. A windshield community survey is basically riding in a car or van with persons who knows the area. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the community's social/economic profile, so that your church (or district) can better connect with and respond to the people as it makes disciples of Jesus Christ.

BENEFITS. A windshield community survey helps to the following:

- Broaden the awareness and understanding of church development in a particular area with more than one person.
- Increase the intentionality to act upon church development needs among persons within the local area.
- Increase the knowledge of a specific ministry area and points to follow-up data gathering and conversations.
- Participants begin to see the linking bridges among their observations and knowledge.

PROCEDURE. Choose a specific date and time to survey your community. Have a team from your church (district) join you in spending 30-60 minutes driving around your area. Ask people to note things such as the following:

- The type of structures—their ages, single-family vs. multi-housing, businesses vs. residential, high density vs. scattered density, etc.
- The type of businesses—old or new, blue-collar or white-collar or pink collar, factories or agriculture, government or private, large employer or small, etc.
- The homes, their yards (e.g. toys visible indicating young children at home; are they new or used), the type of cars (or lack of cars). The neatness of their lawns. The care they give their cars.
- The gathering spots. Does life take place on porches, on street corners, or inside. Are there bars, schools, churches, workout gyms, etc. What time of day?
- The people. What do their clothes say? What do you hear (e.g. kind of music, cries of babies, pets, etc.)? Is there a predominate age? What ethnic groups appear to be present? What languages (written or spoke) are present? What educational level?
- The churches. What kind of ministry appears to be going on in each? What kind of people do you think attends? Why? Do they appear to be growing or declining?

Debrief as a group immediately after the windshield survey. Write a summary of what you saw. Give a profile of the people. What do you suppose are their primary issues and concerns? What appears to be the spirit of the community? Its self esteem? How might a church reach these people? Where is God at work? Who's falling through the cracks? What is your biggest learning? How should your church (district) respond?