Visioning Report

City Visioning

As part of a larger process to update the City of Troy's Comprehensive Plan, community visioning sessions were conducted. This document provides a report on the results of this process.

The graphic shown above was developed to help identify Troy's Visioning Process and the Comprehensive Plan Update.

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The Comprehensive Planning Process

The City, through the Planning and Development Department, initiated a process to update the City's 1989 comprehensive plan. By the fall of 2003, considerable information had been gathered by the Planning and Development Department and by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC). Private entities such as GEM Real Estate Group, Inc. had also been hired to examine relevant economic market trends in the city. Information in the following areas have been compiled: demographic, housing, transportation, economic, land use, community facility, recreation/open space, utility and natural resources/physical characteristics.

Given the large assembly of data and information on the City, the next step in the comprehensive planning process involved reaching out to residents to help define and shape a new vision for the City. This step was taken in two public meetings which sought to involve participants in thoughtful discussions about how to shape the future of the City. The first visioning session was held on Thursday, September 25, and the second session was held on Tuesday, October 28.

First Visioning Session

The City of Troy convened a visioning session at the Troy Senior High School on Thursday, September 25. Planning & Development Director Jim Dando welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 7 PM. Mr. Dando introduced Gregg Harris of his staff, other city department representatives and Poggemeyer Design Group consultants, Randy Mielnik and Paul Tecpanecatl.

The stated purpose of the meeting was to solicit public input into the future vision of the City of Troy. This vision would lay the groundwork for the establishment of future goals, strategies, and objectives for the new updated comprehensive plan. As this evening conflicted with an evening football pep rally, and other events, turnout was lower than expected and original plans to break into groups were set aside in favor of a large group presentation and discussion. Attendance was approximately 20 people and Mr. Dando began the evening with a powerpoint presentation on the information and trends compiled by city planning staff, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission and others. Afterwards, Mr. Dando opened the meeting for comments and questions. The following material provides an overview of issues raised and discussed:

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Community Aesthetics

One participant opened the session with the statement that as a recent transplant from Pasadena, California he liked what that city had done, which was burying underground all of the overhead utility wiring. It was a major undertaking, but well worth it. He suggested that Troy should look into this.

Transportation Issues

In regards to transportation issues, the following comments and suggestions were made:

- More thoroughfares were needed given the crowded conditions of Main Street
- More east/west roadway connections were needed
- More bikepaths/recreational trails were needed to connect Troy to Piqua, Tipp City and Concord Twp.
- More paths/trails were needed along the River as well as connections to recreational areas
- Downtown merchants should consider discounts to bikers
- It is somewhat dangerous to ride your bike downtown, more safety measures should be instituted
- Emulate what Dayton has done, allowing bikers on buses and having storage capabilities on the bus for the bikes
- City should pursue purchasing unused railroad right-of-ways for recreational trails

Greenspace and Farmland

Current zoning and rezoning cases troubled some residents in that development was occurring at the expense of greenspace and farmland. With the loss of agricultural land for development, this would cause more run-off problems.

Wetlands and Drainage

In a related issue, a resident inquired what the City's role should be in the protection of the watershed. Mr. Dando responded that the sole function of the Miami Conservancy District was to protect the watershed from a regional perspective. Troy has initiated a well-head protection ordinance and a clean water initiative.

The issue of storm water run-off has been a growing problem for some in Troy. The City has looked at dry basins, detention basins and other mechanisms to address run-off problems. Currently, the City requires larger corridor areas with natural or man-made swales through voluntary participation from developers to address drainage issues, run-off problems and flooding. Annexation adjacent to Concord Twp. has also caused run off problems with newer development. This has caused some flooding along McKay, 718 and Wilson.

Mr. Dando added that in 1998, Miami County updated their comprehensive plan, which excluded the cities but that the plan covered drainage issues and storm run-off problems. Better cooperation between the county and city was seen as needed to better address these run-off and flooding problems.

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Issues Raised at Visioning Session #1

Troy should focus on aesthetic issues such as burying utility lines and preserving trees.

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Greenspace and Farmland preservation is important, along with wetlands and drainage.

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There are a wide range of transportation matters to attend to, including the need to make Troy more walkable.

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There is a growing concern over the supply of affordable housing and the level of housing choices that exist.

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Developing better relationships with local developers was noted as a means to achieve community goals.

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Pedestrian Connections

The issue of sidewalk condition and the need for new sidewalks was noted. Specifically, it was pointed out that some City sidewalks needed repair and some areas needed connecting with new sidewalks.

Tree Preservation

Troy, being a tree city, has an ordinance that requires review of all tree removals that have a diameter of 4" or more.

Affordable Housing

Next, the issue of affordable housing was briefly discussed. There seemed to be a growing need for it, but most new single-family residential development involved large lots and big houses. Mr. Dando mentioned that GEM Realty was preparing a market study for the City and hopes to use the findings in the City's comprehensive plan update. A couple people asked what the City was doing to attract more residents into the City. Mr. Dando stated that apart from the Miami Co. CHIP program, not much else. A local builder suggested that the City should cultivate relationships with local developers in that it would be of mutual benefit to both. Local builders have more of a community interest than out-of-town ones. A question about housing values was asked. Mr. Dando stated that the average selling price in Troy was about $98,000 and that new homes in the area start at about $200,000.

Plan Updates

A question as to how often the City's plan should be updated was responded by Mr. Dando. Every five years was seen as appropriate. As with any plan, not all of the recommendations get carried out and some are just plain ignored because of changing attitudes. Troy being a statutory community must follow the Ohio Revised Code. This becomes troublesome in regards to property acquisitions, dispositions, leases, etc. To become a charter community, the initiative must go before the electorate for approval.

With no other comments, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Second Visioning Session

The City of Troy convened a second visioning session at the Troy Senior High School on Tuesday, October 28. Planning & Development Director Jim Dando welcomed everyone and began the meeting at 7 PM. Mr. Dando introduced Gregg Harris of his staff, City elected officials, other city department representatives, and PDG consultants, Randy Mielnik and Paul Tecpanecatl.

With almost seventy people in attendance at the October 28th meeting, Mr. Dando stated that the purpose of the meeting was to solicit public input into formulating a vision for the future of the City of Troy. This vision would lay the groundwork for the establishment of goals, strategies, and objectives for the new updated plan. Mr. Dando next asked Gregg Harris to give a short presentation of some of the relevant data and trends occurring in Troy and Miami County. Mr. Mielnik followed with a brief overview of the purposes for having a good vision statement for a comprehensive plan, the importance of public engagement, and the need for consensus. Next, Mr. Tecpanecatl explained the small-group process. Each of the 8 groups (one for each topic area) would need to assign a recorder and presenter. For no more than one hour, each group would have to identify three attributes, in priority order, of what the City should include in its Vision Statement for that particular topic. Further, each group needed to formulate applicable benchmarks to gauge progress in attainment of those attributes. At the end of the hour, the entire audience would be reconvened and each small group would make a presentation on their recommendations.

The eight topic areas were:

1. Neighborhoods/Housing
2. Economic Development
3. Downtown
4. Landscaping/Historic Preservation/Gateways & Signage
5. Urban Design
6. Transportation
7. Environment/Open Space/Parks
8. Public Facilities & Services

The products of the group discussions were as follows:

1. NEIGHBORHOODS/HOUSING

The top three attributes and relevant benchmarks in priority order from this group were:

1. To close the gap between the haves and have nots in regards to housing, there should be more economic incentives for those Troy households in the lower 25% of the housing market to become home owners.

   Benchmark(s):

   1.1.1 1% increase in owner-occupied housing

   1.1.2 Revitalization of neighborhoods

2. Develop a balance of renovated/rehabilitated housing in the central city neighborhoods and new construction in the outlying areas. This would maintain and strengthen Troy's tax base.

Benchmark(s):

1.2.1 Number and type of housing units available

1.2.2 Number of revitalized central city neighborhoods and number of new residential developments in the outlying areas.

3. Develop policies that encourages balanced residential growth taking into account conservation design principles and new urbanism concepts.

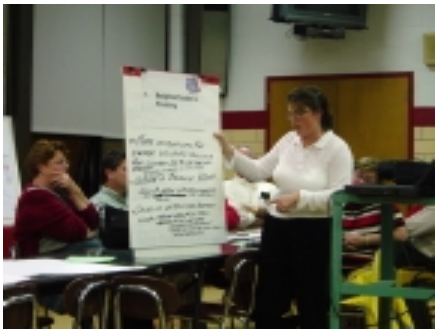
Benchmark(s):

1.3.1 Adoption of conservation design principles in subdivision regulations

1.3.2 Allowance for smaller residential lot sizes

1.3.3 Blending of lot sizes in residential zoning classifications to accommodate different land conditions

Following is the listing of the other attributes formulated by the Neighborhoods/Housing group.



A. There is a growing housing gap between the haves and have nots.

B. Land Price versus House Price.

C. Inner City quality of homes versus suburbs of Troy (important regarding the future tax base of the City).

D. How much housing does Troy want?

E. Revitalization of central city housing is important.

F. Mentality of lot size, bigger is not always what consumers want.

G. Conservation development is important.

H. Encourage smaller lot sizes per land quality.

I. Blending of various lot size requirements in each residential zoning classification (within each zoning classification there should be some latitude regarding lot sizes given the type of land conditions, e.g., flood plains, hillsides, wetlands, wooded areas, etc.)

J. Develop criteria together for positive long-term health of Troy.

K. Environment counts.

L. Concerns raised for PMI buildings.

M. Focus on older neighborhoods versus Downtown businesses.

N. More incentives needed for owner-occupied housing for lower 25% of housing market.

O. Create a balance between old and new development.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Following are the priority attributes and benchmarks under this category.

1. Improve telephone communications within Troy.

Benchmark(s):

2.1.1 Improved reliability

2.1.2 Better cell connections

2.1.3 Reduced cost of telephone lines

2.1.4 High-speed fiber optic communications

2.1.5 Local bandwidth capacity and cost

2. Focus education on emerging technologies from elementary school through college.

Benchmark(s):

2.2.1 Diversity of courses offered

2.2.2 Funding captured from 3rd Frontier Program and from other State and Federal sources

3. Expand partnerships with businesses, educational institutions, and governmental sectors to diversify the economic base and to ensure the availability of a highly qualified, skilled, and trained workforce.

Benchmark(s):

2.3.1 Raise in median income

2.3.2 Job creation

2.3.3 Money funded from the public and private sectors

Following is the listing of other attributes from the Economic Development Group.

A. Improve telephone communications within Troy.

B. Expand partnerships with businesses, education, and government to diversify the economic base and ensure highly qualified, skilled, trained workforce.

C. Retain existing business by surveying local companies for needs and expansion.

D. Improved Training Facilities/Conference Center.

E. Allowing for global collaboration.

F. Consider marketing Troy as a "Destination" in addition to a High Quality of Life area.

3. DOWNTOWN

Following are the priority attributes and benchmarks for Downtown Troy.

1. Have Downtown Troy be a destination place.

Benchmark(s):

3.1.1 Increase in retail sales

3.1.2 Reduced store vacancies

3.1.3 Increase in number of stores

3.1.4 Increased vitality of Downtown

3.1.5 Increased foot traffic

2. Preservation and utilization of historic structures.

Benchmark(s):

3.2.1 Reduced vacancy rates

3.2.2 Number of historic buildings renovated and occupied

3. Upgrade services and public facilities in the Downtown.

Benchmark(s):

3.3.1 Increased retail sales

3.3.2 Number and type of improvements made Downtown

4. LANDSCAPING, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, GATEWAYS, & SIGNAGE

Following are the top three attributes and benchmarks in prioritized order.

1. Create a horticulture master plan for the City of Troy

Benchmark(s):

4.1.1 City tree nursery/arboretum established

4.1.2 City Department of Forestry established

4.1.3 Flower gardens planted throughout the City

4.1.4 Proliferation of tree-lined streets

2. Support Historic Preservation and not allow chain retailers from razing significant City structures.

Benchmark(s):

4.2.1 Creation of user friendly historic design standards

4.2.2 Better government/property owner cooperation

4.2.3 Better design controls of new construction in historic areas

4.2.4 Improved maintenance of historic structures by property owners

4.2.5 Additional resources for preservation activities obtained

3. Create a unique image to Troy from Interstate I-75.

Benchmark(s):

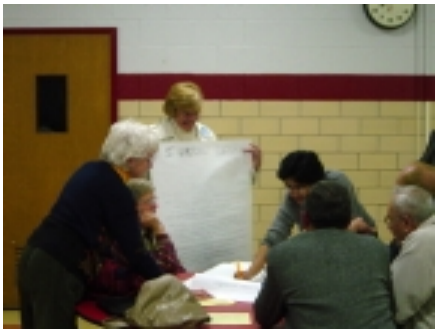
4.3.1 Improved landscaping along the I-75 gateway to Downtown

4.3.2 Improved signage along I-75 gateway corridor

4.3.3 Building controls instituted along I-75 corridor

5. URBAN DESIGN

Below are the prioritized attributes and benchmarks.



1. Preserve the City's existing architecturally and historically significant structures to make Troy a better tourist attraction and encourage in-fill development in the older sections of Troy.

Benchmark(s):

5.1.1 Number of properties improved by absentee landlords

5.1.2 New programs/economic incentives created to renovate historic properties for adaptive reuse

5.1.3 Tourism will be treated as an important economic development strategy

5.1.4 City's canal area will be targeted for improvement

5.1.5 Improve parking Downtown to accommodate redevelopment and reuse of historic buildings

2. Encourage annexation of Township land into the City to accommodate reasonable planned growth for residential and industrial land uses.

Benchmark(s):

5.2.1 Number of acres annexed by City

5.2.2 Annexation complemented by suitable infrastructure

3. Improve all gateways to Troy, and encourage property owners to beautify their businesses with exterior improvements to their buildings, landscaping, and aesthetically-pleasing signage

Benchmark(s):

5.3.1 Improved maintenance of buildings and grounds by property owners

5.3.2 Improved signage throughout the City

5.3.3 Acreage of land developed for public open space

6. TRANSPORTATION

Following are the prioritized attributes and benchmarks from the transportation group.

1. Troy will have an integrated transportation plan encompassing non-motorized, motorized, air, and pedestrian means of travel.

Benchmark(s):

6.1.1 Satisfaction samplings

6.1.2 Congestion studies

2. Troy will have non-motorized access with links to parks, services, and neighborhoods.

Benchmark(s):

6.2.1 Miles of diversified access

3. Troy will have public transit connections to sites of public interest (e.g., Dayton Airport, downtown Dayton) that will be cost effective, efficient, and have growth potential.

Benchmark(s):

6.3.1 Number of established routes

6.3.2 Increase volume of usage

4. Troy will have high technology transportation.

Benchmark(s):

6.4.1 Troy will have access to light rail routes and connectors

7. ENVIRONMENT, OPEN SPACE, AND PARKS

Below are the prioritized attributes and benchmarks.

1. Troy will have an abundance of public open space, greenspace, and numerous pieces of public art throughout the City.

Benchmark(s):

7.1.1 Increased acreage of greenspace and open space throughout City

7.1.2 Dedicated land for greenspace established by the City

7.1.3 Increased number of public art displays such as sculptors, statues, and fountains will be developed

2. There will be an extensive system of recreational trails throughout the City with connections to parks and other significant activity centers.

Benchmark(s):

7.2.1 Number of miles developed on a yearly basis

7.2.2 Development of suitable services and retail along the trails (e.g., snack bars, ice cream stands, etc.)

7.2.3 Development of interactive play areas along the trails

7.2.4 Development of an aquatic center along the trail area

3. The City will build a serpentine wall, an amphitheater, a promenade, waterfront parks, and trails along the Great Miami River.

Benchmark(s):

7.3.1 Number of miles of wall and trails built

7.3.2 Increase acreage of parkland near the river

7.3.3 Amphitheater built

Below are other attributes mentioned by the group.

A. Higher Density Development with Greenspace Required and legislated park space (Planned Greenspace).

B. Developers should stick to the rules requiring open space and park space designations. There should be no parkland buy outs.

C. City should consider environmental impact statements for large developments.

D. City should consider instituting development impact fees.

8. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Following are the prioritized attributes and benchmarks. The group, however, felt that all three attributes were of equal importance.

1. City will maintain safety forces at suitable levels.

Benchmark(s):

8.1.1 Police

8.1.2 Fire

8.1.3 EMS

2. City will maintain and/or expand its public works facilities/infrastructure to serve existing residents and businesses and accommodate nominal growth.

Benchmark(s):

8.2.1 Streets

8.2.2 Utilities

8.2.3 Solid waste

3. The City will provide suitable recreational facilities and amenities.

   Benchmark(s):

   8.3.1 MSGC

   8.3.2 Arena

   8.3.3 Pool

   8.3.4 TMS

Mr. Dando thanked the participants for their hard work and stated that a written report would be prepared by Poggemeyer Design Group. The material and information generated by the small groups will be utilized in the City's Comprehensive Plan Update. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.