

HUDSON

Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committees Workshop Summary September 10, 2014

On September 10th, a kick-off workshop was held with the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Phase II Steering Committees at City Hall to discuss issues and opportunities within the City of Hudson. The workshop centered around three key questions:

- What are five issues or concerns facing Hudson?
- What are three specific projects or actions you would like to see undertaken in Hudson?
- What are the primary strengths and assets of Hudson?

The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions recorded in response to these questions. It is important to note that the items identified in this workshop summary are not recommendations of the consultant, but rather feedback and comments received from those who participated in the workshop.

Top Issues

The discussion began by asking steering committee members to write down and then voice five issues or concerns that they believe are confronting the City of Hudson. While this question brought forth a wide variety of topics, many of these issues were interrelated and in agreement with the responses of other participants. Accordingly, the responses are organized below into several common themes.

Balance Economic Growth with Preservation of Local Character

Many committee members would like to grow and diversify Hudson's economic base in order to bring in new revenue and reduce reliance on residential property taxes. At the same time, however, members would like to see growth conducted in a measured, strategic manner in order to preserve Hudson's small-town feel and unique local character.

Enhance the Downtown Core

Members overwhelmingly believe that Downtown Hudson is one of the City's greatest assets and would like to see it maintained and enhanced. Specific issues facing the Downtown included traffic during peak periods, a limited amount of quality office space and the need to finish Downtown Phase I.

Increase Non-Motorized Connectivity

Committee members brought up a number of issues regarding connectivity, with a specific emphasis on pedestrian and non-motorized traffic. Many members believe that better sidewalks, trails, bike paths, and bike lanes are needed to increase healthy lifestyles and enable easy movement between neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Support Schools

Committee members were very proud of Hudson City Schools, noting that educational quality is what attracts and retains residents. However, many also noted that facilities are aging and may be in need of infrastructure upgrades or replacement. Continued support for the schools was emphasized, particularly given the aging population of Hudson.

Diversify the Housing Stock

Participants noted the lack of affordable and senior housing within Hudson. Most homes are perceived as being large and expensive, pricing out lower-income families and making it difficult for seniors to “age in place.” Members suggested a variety of new housing options, such as multi-family, senior housing, and townhomes.

Improve Traffic and Parking

Concern was expressed over traffic congestion during peak periods, particularly on Routes 303 and 91. It was also mentioned that parking within the Downtown area can be difficult during weekends and special events, especially with limited non-motorized transportation options such as bike lanes, public transportation, or sidewalks available.

Additional Issues

The following are other issues and concerns raised by participants that do not fit within the identified themes:

- Lack of a recreation center
- Redevelopment of the YDC property
- Preserving historic structures and neighborhoods
- Maintaining a balanced budget
- Stricter code enforcement

Top Project or Actions

Steering Committee members suggested a wide range of action items to improve Hudson, but several ideas came up frequently. Some of the more popular responses included: targeted improvements to connectivity and traffic flow, redevelopment of the YDC property, infrastructural improvements, introduction of a new recreation or community centers, and development of a new central civic campus.

Specific projects and actions provided by committee members are listed below:

- Develop a traffic study or transportation plan
- Improve sidewalk connectivity, especially along Routes 91 and 303
- Improve road infrastructure
- Improve road signage
- Introduce bike lanes
- Redevelop YDC Property
- Complete Downtown Phase I
- Construct the Oviatt Street connector
- Improve the Hines Hill Road rail road crossing
- Provide broadband access city-wide

- Construct affordable housing geared toward “empty nesters”
- Conduct a marketing campaign to attract new investment to Hudson
- Construct a new recreation center
- Construct a new arts center
- Construct a new auditorium or events center
- Construct a new aquatic center
- Build a hotel in the downtown
- Develop a new civic campus containing all city functions
- Relocate or improve city buildings and facilities

Primary Strengths & Assets

Finally, members of both steering committees were asked to identify Hudson’s major strengths and assets. Popular responses focused on the Hudson school system, local parks and open spaces, the Downtown, and an engaged community.

A full list of responses is provided below:

- Downtown
- Engaged and well-educated residents
- Sense of community
- Small-town charm
- Family-friendly community
- Quality school system
- Parks and open spaces
- Safety
- Well-maintained properties
- Sense of place
- Historic area
- Fiscal responsibility
- Professionally-run government
- Strategic location between Akron and Cleveland
- Western Reserve Academy