

City of Worthington

Community Visioning Committee

Tuesday, November 12, 2019 - 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Worthington Municipal Building, 6550 North High Street, Worthington, OH

Committee Members Present: Joe Sherman, Kathryn Burris, Don Mottley, Jon Melchi, Beth Sommer, Cynthia Findlay, Matt Lees, Austin Mitchell, Graham Wood, Laura Abu-Absi, Linda Mercadante, Paul Cynkar

Committee Members Absent: Jack Miner

Others Present: Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Assistant City Clerk Ethan Barnhardt, Chris Boring, Lauren Falcone (on conference line) and 1 visitor was in attendance

Mr. Sherman convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

MOTION

Mr. Mottley moved, seconded by Ms. Mercadante to approve the meeting minutes from the Community Visioning Committee meeting of October 28, 2019.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sherman thanked Mr. Boring for coming out and spending the time putting this presentation together tonight.

Mr. Boring expressed how he is glad to be here to present these numbers in person to the Committee. He said that some of the information may be known but some of it may be surprising. This presentation is going to cover four main topics:

- 1) A demographic snapshot with a base year of 2020 which is a slight forecast from 2018 numbers.*
- 2) A long range demographic forecast for the entire region out to 2050 from MORPC with their biggest question being where we were going to put these people and find them jobs.*
- 3) A look the 2012 MORPC business census looking at employment.*
- 4) An examination of MORPC's long range jobs forecast for the region.*

The numbers that he is going to present tonight do not mean anything if they are presented in a vacuum. He has come up with three different benchmarks to use:

- 1) Similar Communities which are comprised of a composite of Bexley, Upper Arlington, and Grandview. These communities are similarly landlocked, first ring suburbs within I-270.*
- 2) Adjacent Communities which are comprised of Dublin, Westerville, and Powell. Adjacent communities are all outer belt cities that are in close geographic proximity to Worthington, which are a lot different in many ways.*
- 3) A comparison to Franklin County which comes ahead in a lot of different criteria.*

He asked the committee members if there were any other benchmark communities they wanted to be looked at. The committee had no additional suggestions.

According to MORPC, in 2020 Worthington will have a population of 15,236. Worthington and the Similar Communities hit their peak population in the 1970s. Worthington lost about 2000 residents gradually between 1970 and 2010. However, since 2010 the City has added approximately 1,200 persons. In

contrast, Adjacent Communities have doubled their populations between 1990 and 2020 but their growth rates have been decelerating. Franklin County is one of the fastest growing counties in the Midwest decade after decade. The question is where these people are going to be living and working, which will have an impact on Worthington.

Worthington has a population density level of 2,660 persons per square mile. This is slightly lower than adjacent communities and Franklin County. Compared to Similar Communities, it is significantly lower, which implies that if Worthington wanted to, it is capable of taking on more density. In the future there will be pressure for the population to increase because everything around the City is growing.

Worthington stands out by having the highest median age in Franklin County at 43.3 years. Westerville was second at 41.5 years and Upper Arlington is 41.4 years. Median age is about four years higher than Similar Communities and is over nine years higher than Franklin County. Females make up 51.4% of Worthington's population with a median age of 44.1 years, versus 41.4 years for males. The City has a large cohort of seniors age 65 or older. 21% are 65 or older versus 15% for Similar Communities and Adjacent Communities, and 11% for Franklin County. The 75 or older age group comprises 9% compared to Similar Communities with 7%, 6% for Adjacent Communities, and 5% for Franklin County. Worthington has a large contingent of senior citizens. Interestingly, 25% of the Worthington population is under 18 which is about the same as all three benchmarks. That can be attributed to the schools which have a great reputation. What is missing is the 18-44 year old age group makes up 27% of the Worthington population compared to 34% for Similar Communities, 30% for Adjacent Communities, and 41% for Franklin County. Worthington is missing young Millennials and Generation X without kids. The City also has a large percentage of empty nest couple households at 34%. Additionally 28% of the City's households are occupied by one person.

In Worthington, 68% of residents age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree. This is compared to 76% for Similar Communities, 66% for Adjacent Communities, and 39% for Franklin County. 30% of adults in Worthington have graduate or professional degrees, compared to 35% for similar communities, 27% for adjacent communities, and 14% for Franklin County. Typically where you find higher education levels, you will find higher incomes. Worthington is affluent, but it trails other benchmark communities. The Worthington median household income is \$89,300, versus \$108,000 for Similar Communities, and \$100,200 for Adjacent Communities. Powell's median household income is approximately \$147,000, Upper Arlington is \$117,000, Dublin is \$97,000, Westerville is \$89,000, and Grandview is \$76,000. Worthington's per capita income is really good at \$53,100, but a little bit below Similar Communities at \$61,000 and close to equal to Adjacent Communities at \$53,300.

Mr. Mitchell asked if Mr. Boring had a sense of the trends for these numbers. Mr. Boring said some of that was in the MORPC data. Mr. Melchi asked if the committee could get a copy of the underlying data. Mr. Boring said yes but noted that he does not always trust the numbers for projections of income.

Mr. Boring noted how Worthington is not a very diverse community and is 93% white. However, Similar Communities are not that much more diverse. Adjacent Communities are 81% white and Franklin County is 67%. 5% of Worthington's population was born in a foreign country.

Mr. Mottley brought up that he would imagine that the school district is more diverse than the City.

Mr. Boring said that he tried to find statistics on the LGBT community in Worthington, but it appears that it is a small segment and the numbers look to be self-reported. The Committee needs to decide if that is important.

He found crime data that shows Worthington is safe but does have more crime than its peers except for Bexley which is a lot higher. The City-Data.com crime index had Worthington with a score of 131 in 2017 compared to the national average of 286. Similar Communities had an average score of 108, including Bexley. Adjacent Communities had a score of 94 and Franklin County had a score of 314. In Worthington there are a lot of people who come into the community in the daytime, so the score may be affected by that. The City is also located conveniently to I-270 which can affect the crime rate. Worthington has 2.1 police officers per 1000 persons which compares to 1.8 for Similar Communities, 1.6 for Adjacent Communities, and 2.0 for Franklin County.

Worthington has a high level of owner occupied households at 81%. That number is 77% for Similar Communities, 80% for Adjacent, and 54% for Franklin County. In 2017 the median housing value for owner-occupied homes was \$261,300 in Worthington as compared to \$343,700 in Similar Communities, \$303,500 in Adjacent Communities, and \$158,400 for Franklin County. Worthington has a median monthly rent of \$926 versus \$947 for Similar Communities, \$1,226 for Adjacent Communities, and \$903 for Franklin County. He explained how he attributes that to the fact that Worthington is missing the upscale apartments that are found in Adjacent Communities. In Worthington, the average household size is not far off from other benchmarks. There were very few new single family builds between 2008 and 2017. Worthington added only 27 new single family builds between 2008 and 2017, which is about 11% of the pace experienced in Franklin County. People who live in Worthington have an average commute time of about 22.4 minutes which is somewhat longer than Similar Communities that are closer to downtown Columbus and Ohio State.

MORPC's long range population forecast expects Worthington to reach 15,444 people in 2030, 16,256 in 2040, and 16,712 in 2050. It is not huge growth, but it is steady and strong growth projected over 30 years that equals about 2000 new residents or a 17% increase compared to the current population. He commented that it is an unusual growth pattern for the population to shrink and then grow again. The population growth rate is decelerating in Similar Communities, Adjacent Communities, and in Franklin County.

The percentage of Worthington's population age 65 and older is expected to remain around 22% until 2030 before tapering off to about 21% by 2040 and 2050. Worthington is expected to continue to be a community of choice for seniors. Other communities will not catch up to Worthington in terms of their percentage over age 65.

Worthington is expected to add 770 net new households over the next 30 years. It added 560 net new households between 1990 and 2020. We are seeing that seniors are wanting to downsize and desire ranch homes that are one floor where they do not have to mow the yard. He brought up Epcon Communities which builds for the 55 and up population at the high end. When he talked with them, they said their sweet spot was persons 65 to 80 years old who want to live in a nice house and community, but just want something smaller. He cautioned that these numbers are not written in stone and are just projections. Assuming they are correct, there is plenty of time to change the path you are on, which is why you are here talking about these things today.

Mr. Sherman asked about the margin of error for these numbers. Mr. Boring said he did not see that. Ms. Findlay asked the basis of the numbers. Mr. Boring said they were based upon historical data and trends. In his own work, some of the forecasts he sees are way off. He would be cautious, because a 30 year forecast is pretty ambitious and a hard thing to do.

Mr. Boring presented that according to the 2012 business census, Worthington's top 10 private industry sectors were:

- 1) Healthcare and Social Assistance*
- 2) Administrative Support/Company Management*
- 3) Professional Services*
- 4) Finance and Insurance*
- 5) Accommodations and Foodservice*
- 6) Retail Trade*
- 7) Manufacturing*
- 8) Wholesale Trade*
- 9) Transportation and Warehousing*
- 10) Commercial Services*

Worthington has several headquarters and administrative buildings here that provide services for large companies. Manufacturing may look low, but it is actually pretty good. The City has total private sector employment of 12,178 employees. Interestingly, Worthington is importing about 42% of its workforce. Many communities send out more workers and are bedroom communities. Worthington has a really strong employment base here where people are coming in and paying taxes to Worthington which is something you want to protect.

Ms. Findlay asked how the school district would fit in with this. Mr. Boring said these numbers are for private employees only.

Mr. Boring described how Worthington's four largest private industry sectors account for two thirds of its jobs. Compared to the benchmarks, Worthington has exceptionally large healthcare, administrative support/company management, and manufacturing sectors for a community of its size. Notably, jobs in these industries are generally high-paying.

A member of the public, Mr. Bunn, asked if these numbers were before Anthem left Worthington. Ms. Stewart responded that if the numbers are from 2012, then Anthem would be included.

Mr. Boring said while Worthington has large employers, it is still friendly to small businesses. There is a total of 851 private employers in the City with an average of 14.3 employees per firm. If Worthington's existing employers were to grow to 22.5 employees per firm, which is the Franklin County average, it could add almost 7,000 new jobs to its employment base. A lot of times growth comes in your community by helping businesses grow their workforces.

Ms. Findlay asked about determining where workers are coming from. Mr. Boring said it might be hard to say what percent come from where, but he can take a look at that.

Mr. Boring listed Worthington's top ten largest private employers:

- 1) AAA Ohio*

- 2) *Central Ohio Urology Group*
- 3) *DLZ Corporation*
- 4) *Hyperion Materials and Technologies*
- 5) *Jack Maxton Chevrolet*
- 6) *MedVet*
- 7) *Mettler Toledo*
- 8) *Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Center*
- 9) *Pet People*
- 10) *Worthington Industries*

He detailed how according to MORPC, employment in Worthington is projected to grow by 4% between 2020 and 2030 which comes out to about 500 net new jobs. This compares to 3% for Similar Communities, 7% for Adjacent Communities, and 9% for Franklin County. Looking further out to 2050, jobs in Worthington are expected to grow 13%, or about 1,500 net new jobs. This compares to 4% for Similar Communities but significantly less for Adjacent Communities at 26% and Franklin County at 27%.

When looking at job forecasts which are supported by historical trends, he brought up an Ohio State professor who has discussed how automation and technology are taking over jobs in all industries which will have huge implications. When projecting job growth, he thinks that there may be no such thing as job growth anywhere, and it will be more about how many jobs did you lose.

He expressed how he would like to come back to this group to go through some trends on a qualitative basis. Some topics include: Boomers Become Seniors, The Rise of Millennials/Environmentalism, Alternative Transportation/Walkability, Historic Preservation, Rising Healthcare Costs, Retail Revolutions, and others.

Ms. Findlay expressed that she would like to explore more about density and how it changes communities. Specifically, what happens to communities that decide not to become denser. Mr. Boring replied that he would like to look into that.

Mr. Mottley asked if MORPC is projecting housing types. Mr. Boring said he did not see a breakout by type, and he would like to follow-up on that because he has the same question. Mr. Mottley said he would think it would be a lot of apartments. Mr. Melchi said he projected according to MORPC population numbers, 457,000 new homes in the region and 52% of those would be multi-family.

Mr. Sherman wrapped up the conversation with Mr. Boring and asked the Committee whether there was any feedback or follow-up on Mr. Greeson's presentation at the previous Visioning Committee meeting. There were no comments from the committee.

Mr. Sherman asked Mr. Lees to discuss the next agenda item: the draft Communications Plan. Mr. Lees explained how this Communications Plan will begin to put some consistency around what the Visioning Committee is doing and explaining why people should be engaged in the process. He overviewed the details of the plan to the Committee. He detailed how they would be able to explain what the visioning process is and the outcomes could be.

Ms. Abu-Absi said that she thinks that overall the communications plan is really great, but she is struggling with the phrase "hold community leaders accountable for" which she believes is combative.

Ms. Findlay brought up how some people say that right or wrong with the last vision, the City was not accountable for acting on that plan. She gave an example of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that has no teeth. That is the main thing the community wants us to provide, is a vision. If we do not have some kind of statement in there, people will question why we are spending the money.

Ms. Burris explained that the job of the committee is to get the information, make it clear, and to find a consensus to hand off to the government.

Mr. Sherman emphasized that he is adamant about holding this government accountable and there has been no accountability. He has gone to City Council and explained how this committee's work is important. He does not see the committee ending after this is handed off. He wants to be able to tell Council they are accountable.

Ms. Abu-Absi said it will be interesting to see as we go through this process how clear or concise the vision is, or if there will be multiple visions.

Ms. Falcone said that the job is for a vision to extend 10-20 years and then continue to promote the vision.

Mr. Lees said he deliberately said "to guide" rather than "you will follow" the vision. The intent is that we will give a vision to help instruct and inform.

Mr. Sherman said the purpose is to steer the visioning process and then holding them accountable is important.

Mr. Mottley said the concept is that if you do a good enough job, then the residents will hold elected officials accountable.

Mr. Lees described the communications goals including what they want to accomplish and how to engage with the public. The goal is for 80% of residents to be aware of Vision Worthington and feel that they have been invited to participate in the year-long process. There is a desire to cultivate interest and community engagement in the visioning process; and build credibility in the Visioning Committee and its resident-driven process. The Visioning Committee comes from the residents and they are a conduit for input and enabling the process that goes around it. He then described the resident driven visioning.

Some of the challenges include criticism over the cost of the process, tension regarding land use and economic development and that some community members are skeptical of the purposes due to potential City Council Influence. There are also questions about reaching and engaging an aging population as well as millennials, as the two have different communications preferences and expectations.

Ms. Burris remarked how she has taken classes at the Griswold Center and asked how people would like to be engaged. Everyone said that they want to do an online survey, which was surprising to her. Their main concern is that they want to know it is safe to open.

Ms. Findlay asked if Instagram was skipped for any reason. Mr. Lees replied it had not been left out intentionally. Ms. Falcone explained that Instagram had been discussed for the use of a photo challenge.

Mr. Lees discussed the release of the Bang the Table site and how communications had originally been planned for November, but since the site is not up and running that has been pushed back and the goal is December now. The idea is to put out a press release after the site is launched to give a URL, describe how the website works, what we want people to do, and the opportunities that are out there. The hope is to

push people from Facebook to the community engagement site rather than engaging them on Facebook. There will be a social card image with a URL to the engagement site. He asked for committee members to the different Facebook pages of which they are a member.

Additional engagement opportunities include the Farmers Market event, the monthly neighborhood network email update that will be announcing the site launch, and the guest column in ThisWeek News for November 19th. Joe will author the ThisWeek News article as the chair of the committee.

He described the creation of street speech which is an elevator speech describing what we are trying to accomplish, who makes up the Visioning Committee, and how are we reaching out to people. This can be put in your own words.

He detailed some of the action items where we need people to take responsibility and get involved. We need to schedule space at the listed events in December and said someone would take ownership of doing this with the Old Worthington Partnership.

Mr. Sherman explained that he is meeting with Nina Parini to discuss ways to get word out and he will send an email out. Mr. Lees said we will also need volunteers. Ms. Falcone reminded that there needs to be six members or fewer to avoid a quorum.

Ms. Falcone said that Poggemeyer can handle creating banners and postcards with their graphic designer. Ms. Stewart noted that Parks and Recreation has tents and tables.

Mr. Lees described how they are continuing work on the Fast Facts FAQ document. The question is what data we want to share and how we provide that information in a consumable way. He also described the creation of a stakeholder presentation with four to five slides that explains who we are, what we are doing, and how to get involved.

Ms. Burris said on the Vision Worthington key contacts we should consider having someone with the schools included on that list. Also there is a pastor's association in Worthington, and it is ecumenical and could be another contact we should include. She has names that can be sent for that.

Ms. Falcone said as far as Bang the Table, she got the invoice today and hopes they can get it set up ASAP. They are still working on filling out the FAQs which should be done by next meeting. They also hope to have a draft public input plan by next week which goes hand in hand with communications plan. The document summaries are almost done with two more that need to be reviewed.

Mr. Sherman explained how they were asked to speak at Rotary and mentioned using the slide presentation, so we are all sending the same message with PowerPoint and driving to website. He encouraged committee members to reach into their groups to offer presentations.

The Committee discussed the logo for Vision Worthington, debating between three logos.

Mr. Mitchell suggested using the logo design from choice number two but using the same font for the word "Worthington" as choice number one. The Committee concurred. Ms. Falcone said they can do that.

Mr. Sherman noted how much work Mr. Lees has done and posed the question of how everyone can get involved. He thinks there are enough pieces and parts and he would like everyone to think about how they would like to be involved. He said that rather than telling the Rotary group what we are going to do, he would like to tell the story of what has been done and what we need help with. He would like to have

everyone see how they would like to get involved. He discussed how in interviewing city council candidates that over half of them rolled their eyes and said this was never going to work. He asked the committee members to think about what they would like to do at the meeting on November 25th.

Mr. Sherman expressed how he liked Mr. Boring's presentation with the data and seeing trends.

Ms. Abu-Absi said that a lot of the nuggets of data he presented will help with creating fast facts and engaging residents.

Mr. Findlay said that there are people who were having development discussions before the election and saying things that contradict what Mr. Greeson said at his presentation. She asked if we should share the presentations from these educational meetings. Mr. Mottley noted how they are public records.

Mr. Melchi said in the numbers for the top employers Anthem was a big chunk in healthcare or service. Mr. Mottley said he does not think of insurance HMOs as healthcare.

Ms. Findlay said she would like to get Trent Bowers to meet with the committee because the school district is a huge part of the community and they need to be linked into this effort. Ms. Stewart said that if we want to invite him in, he needs to know what he needs to talk about. Mr. Mottley suggested how the schools affect the City and vice versa. Mr. Sherman encouraged the Committee to bring this piece back at the next meeting in order to discuss schools. Ms. Findlay said its not too complicated what we want to discuss, and we want to get him in the information gathering phase. Mr. Sherman suggested having Dr. Bowers on December 10th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.