

City of Worthington

Community Visioning Committee

Tuesday, January 27, 2020 - 6:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

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

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

Committee Members on Conference Line:

Committee Members Absent: Linda Mercadante

Others Present: Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt, Public Information Officer Anne Brown, Lauren Falcone, Chris Boring, and no visitors were in attendance

Mr. Sherman convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

MOTION

Mr. Mottley moved, seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the meeting minutes from the Community Visioning Committee meeting of January 14, 2020.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sherman introduced the newest member of the Visioning Committee, Catey Corl who was appointed by Councilmember Pete Bucher. She underwent an onboarding process this past weekend to get up to speed on the Committee's work. Ms. Corl explained how she has a background in design research and building future visions for private companies. She has a husband and two little kids, a son at Colonial Hills and a four year old. She expressed how this is an exciting opportunity to be part of. Mr. Sherman welcomed Ms. Corl and invited her to jump into the conversation.

Mr. Sherman overviewed his presentation from the January 22nd City Council meeting. The big things discussed were the working teams and how the outreach into the community is now beginning. He expressed how important it is that the Committee keep Council support. With a lot of the big ongoing priorities, he does not want the Council to lose sight of what the Committee is doing. All of the Councilmembers were very supportive.

Mr. Mitchell introduced Chris Boring who is doing a follow up to his last presentation, addressing questions from his first presentation and doing some deep dives into additional topics.

Mr. Boring explained how he updated the market profile document he previously distributed and presented on. Overlooking education, Worthington has a highly educated adult population, but is not quite keeping up with peer communities. In the snapshot with 2018 information, 68% of persons age 25 years and up have a bachelor's degree, but that is not as high as Similar Communities made up of Upper Arlington, Bexley, and Grandview. Worthington is Similar to the Adjacent Communities of Dublin, Westerville, and Powell. Worthington is much higher than Franklin County. The percentage of adults with a college degree increased by 3% in Worthington in the 2010s, but that is not as good as Similar Communities that went up 7%. Those with graduate or professional degrees account for 30% of adults in Worthington, which compares to 35% for Similar Communities, and 27% for Adjacent Communities. The percentage of adults with graduate or professional degrees increased by 2% in Worthington in the 2010s. This compares to 9% in Grandview, 7% in Bexley, 4% in Upper Arlington and Dublin, and 3% in Franklin County.

Mr. Melchi brought up how Worthington is on average two years older and asked if that would explain for the gap because we have an older population. Mr. Boring said that he does think that would explain some of it considering how each succeeding generation is more educated. Ms. Findlay said it could be Ohio State. Mr. Boring explained how Upper Arlington and Grandview are really close to Ohio State which is definitely part of it.

Mr. Boring moved on to income. He expressed how Worthington is definitely an affluent community, but it does trail benchmark communities. The household income numbers presented are in 2020 dollars. In 2020, median household income is approximately \$107,500, but that is below Similar Communities. Adjacent was higher with Dublin having a household income of \$135,000. Looking at trends, Worthington is down 3% from 2000, which is essentially flat. Upper Arlington is down 4% and Bexley is up 6%. He views them all as being essentially flat. Westerville has declined 13% and he guesses that some of their more affluent households have moved to New Albany. Grandview had a 30% gain which is an outlier with them being at about \$95,000. Mr. Mottley noted they have had the greatest growth but started with a lower baseline. Mr. Boring explained that the story is similar for per capita income. Worthington is way above the Franklin County average. Interestingly, Franklin County dipped from 2000 to 2010, but then rose after 2010.

Looking at housing, there are 6,129 households in Worthington and 70% are owner occupied. Worthington has a very low housing vacancy rate of 2% which is lower than any other community he looked at. There were very few new homes built in Worthington in the last 10-20 years. The typical house in Worthington was built in 1961. Adjacent Communities have had a lot of newer housing built. In Worthington the bulk of new housing was built between 1940 and 1969 with another big chunk between 1970 and 1999. Only 2% has been built since 1999. 64% of houses are 50 plus years old. The City is dominated by detached single family units. There are lower percentages of apartment complexes and high rises than Similar and Adjacent Communities.

Examining median housing values, the average value is \$334,000 in Worthington versus \$489,000 in Similar Communities, \$359,000 in Adjacent Communities, and \$198,000 in Franklin county. 78% of homes are valued between \$150,000 and \$500,000. The average annual appreciation rate since 2010 is 4.1% which is a little lower than Similar Communities at 4.6%, 3.3% for Adjacent, and 6.1% for Franklin County. The average rent is \$1,380 in Worthington and \$1,457 in Similar Communities.

Mr. Boring asked the Committee for questions about his deep dive into the additional topics.

Mr. Mitchell asked if there was anything Mr. Boring found surprising about transportation trends. Mr. Boring explained how he looked at the walkability of different Communities. Worthington with a score of 71 is very walkable and way more walkable than peer communities. Only Grandview was close to Worthington. Dublin had a score of 16 which is not walkable at all. Westerville had a score of 28 and Powell has a 51. Franklin County overall is 37. Worthington is almost double the average. He explained how millennials follow a trend of moving into the city and then moving back into the suburbs. However, they do not want to sacrifice what they left behind in the city and one of those things is walkability. He shared an anecdote about someone moving to Worthington because it is so walkable, and how that is something worth maintaining.

Ms. Findlay brought up the discussion about density versus dormancy. Mr. Boring explained how he thought most communities embraced density, but the reality is that most suburban communities fight it.

The right question is not if density is good or bad, but rather that you have the right housing mix. Communities have to keep existing housing up to date through renovations, modernization, and expansion. Look at the different generations and the number of people that are wanting to downsize. Generation X is going to be 50-65 years old by end of the decade and will soon be empty nesters. One problem is that baby boomers want to downsize but the next generation does not want the big homes and yards either. Many want different types of housing. He referenced some of his work for Epcon which does housing for seniors. Downsized single family homes and amenity rich developments will account for 50% of new home builds between now and 2030. Multigenerational households could be making a comeback. The question is whether there is the right mix of housing as the population gets older with the smaller one story homes that people want. That could translate into more density. The purpose is to give people adequate choices.

Mr. Boring discussed how one thing that struck him is how car dependent Worthington is. 99% of households have a vehicle. 26% of households have only one person. There are households that have more vehicles than drivers. It is a bit of a contradiction considering how walkable the community is, but there are so many cars. Mr. Mottley said that many people commute, and considering Worthington is so well located, people typically drive. Mr. Boring described how he thinks that Uber and Lyft will grow, because this is the kind of community where they make a lot of sense. The City of Columbus is experimenting with a driverless shuttle in South Linden that drives a loop travelling between 12-18 mph. It is a free service due to the Smart Cities grant Columbus received. He would think that some type of shuttle might be a possibility for Worthington. He brought up Amazon and how delivery has grown quite a bit that could reduce car dependency. Grocery delivery has not taken off, they are still trying to make that work. Restaurant delivery has taken off with millennials dominating the market. Mass transit has been discussed forever, but he is skeptical anything would occur by 2030. However, Worthington is well located to benefit from it.

When looking at millennials, they have less wealth, less property, lower marriage rates, and less children than boomers at similar ages. Their careers got off to slow start as they entered the workforce during the Great Recession, and they have a significant amount of student debt. It was surprising to discover they have a lot of health issues for their age, including things such as addiction, depression, and hypertension.

With the humanization of pets it is interesting because empty nesters and millennials without kids are continuing that trend. For people who have pets, it is a big deal to them how pet friendly your community is. There are numerous ways for communities to be pet friendly.

Mr. Mitchell asked about the quality of city services and wondered if through his research he sees the demand for city services changing. Mr. Boring replied that he does think these things will have an impact on city services. He would leave that more to this committee to determine. Delivery does not replace walking that much, but it does have a positive impact on transportation. Ms. Stewart explained how health issues impact city services.

Ms. Findlay brought up the potential for the Hyperloop project. Mr. Boring said he has not run into much with that lately. Ms. Stewart said we could reach out to MORPC for more insight into the Hyperloop.

Mr. Sherman moved on to next order of business which is the past document summaries. Mr. Mitchell confirmed they were all received and questioned how these can be useful or valuable to the committee. Mr. Sherman explained how they provide a common baseline to utilize when going out and starting to talk

to the community. For example, when looking at the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, today it is a lot of the same issues and topics, just written differently. Ms. Falcone said that it is useful to have the information at your fingertips when coming across questions. In any visioning process they do this, so you know where you have been and where you are going.

Mr. Lees asked if this is the first time we have done a citizen led visioning process like this. Ms. Stewart said that Worthington 360 had a steering committee of residents, but that initiative did not have the same breadth of outreach goals, or the resources being dedicated to this effort. It was conducted during the Great Recession and it was a very different environment, but there was a group of residents that steered the process. Mr. Lees said it is important because this is the opportunity to have the community involved and a vision that will increase the probability of accomplishing some of the things that were not accomplished 15 years ago.

Mr. Mottley brought up how the 2005 Comprehensive Plan discusses UMCH and Harding, but prospective development of those sites was not imminent then.

Ms. Sommer said that she took away from the summaries how amazing it is that there were the same concerns as there are in today's environment. Some people in the community support density and others oppose it. With that division, the City has not moved forward. She knew about the Worthington 360 plan, but she was not involved with it. She has the impression that the three organizations involved tried to build on their strengths and weaknesses, but she did not see an action plan partly because of the environment.

Mr. Sherman wondered if we could drive residents to the website and have a listing of the top five things that came out of 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Paying attention to what was said then, we have the means today to start to drive some of this.

Mr. Melchi explained how in his experience, there are not many examples of people being engaged on a comprehensive plan. People often point out what they do not like after its completed. Successful plans have had someone strong driving it after it is done. His fear is that this group does all the work, but we do not have a strong mayor to drive the agenda which is a challenge here. He does not know the plan was wrong back then, it just died on the vine with no one to champion it. There will need to be champions of this effort to keep moving forward.

Mr. Mottley explained how the plan spells out options but did not pick one.

Mr. Melchi said a lot of time communities do not update their comprehensive plans often enough. For example, the City of Delaware plan calls for "McMansions," but now they are trying to find other ways to keep Ohio Wesleyan students. Plans need to be updated every ten years or so.

Mr. Mitchell added things maybe have not changed in Worthington. Central Ohio has changed significantly since 2005. New communities have emerged north of us that did not exist the way they did ten years ago.

Mr. Cynkar appreciated the trend information, but we cannot control societal changes and generational changes. We know we have certain problems within the City that need solutions. The question is whether they should focus on things like the Worthington Inn, Anthem, or UMCH so that solutions would really provide positive impact to the residents.

Ms. Findlay said the problem is the same. We cannot solve problems when half of Worthington does not want density.

Ms. Abu-Absi said if we are going to hit the 80% engagement goal, she sees us asking about it all. The engagement site will help. More comprehensive tools can get a sense of priorities.

Ms. Falcone said the goal is to collect information and ask people questions so that we will get a lot of good information to report back.

Mr. Melchi proposed that on the engagement site, something to drive engagement would be questions like, "How do you feel city has addressed a certain issue?"

Mr. Sherman said we will have to put some report in front of Council and will need to hold them accountable to do something with it.

Ms. Stewart explained it is a balance going forward. Council wants broader visioning, but if you start with the Comprehensive Plan it may be harder to go broader. Mr. Sherman said you have to have a broad question. Mr. Mottley said maybe we should use the plan to inform our understanding of the issues, but the committee's task is not to update the plan.

Ms. Brown asked if when talking about the 2005 Comprehensive Plan that it includes the 2014 UMCH update. Mr. Sherman said yes it does.

Mr. Mitchell explained how we are mixing vision with strategy. The Comprehensive Plan feels much more tactical while visioning is above all of that.

Ms. Falcone explained how you are not solving problems with visioning. Comprehensive planning discusses things such as zoning, land use, and housing.

Ms. Findlay said a lot of people's visions is what they do not want the community to look like, but they do want restaurants and other sorts of things.

Mr. Melchi asked if we had a number for the average tenure of a resident. Ms. Findlay said that is something we could ask about.

Ms. Stewart explained how when discussing density there are a lot of ranges. People say density and think high density, but in the planning world every property has a density. Ms. Falcone brought up how you might want show examples of what densities look like. If you want data to be strong, you need to define terms.

Mr. Sherman discussed that the Farmers Market it is not what he envisioned it to be. Sitting at a table is not going to get it done. The biggest first question is if you are a Worthington resident and to talk to people running the market to ask them on how to best engage. We need to be specific about the questions asked.

Ms. Stewart relayed information from the Worthington Partnership, who collected info from marketgoers. 51% live outside of the 43085 zip code. Attendance counts peak between 10-11am. Marketgoers spend an average of 46 minutes at the market. There are approximately 4,800 people who attend per market.

Mr. Sherman said he has gone two weekends and was impressed at the number of people there. He said that maybe our approach could be different. Ms. Findlay said at the table we could have a computer

screen, you cannot walk past a screen without looking at it. Ms. Falcone said we need to find way to separate residents from non-residents. Ms. Brown said you need to identify yourself in a visual way with name tags or tee shirts.

Mr. Cynkar said that the data about 51% coming from outside the 43085 zip code reinforces the things that are working.

Mr. Sherman said we should consider when we start that the website needs to be functioning well.

Mr. Sherman brought up the post cards and asked where else they should go. He wondered if we would be able to put postcards at banks. Ms. Sommer said yes, people will want to read them waiting in line. The committee discussed the other places they could be put around Worthington.

Ms. Burris explained how she has been knocking on doors casually and looking to see where we could put our postcards to have them be visible or whether there is an approval process. It makes sense to put them at the Community Center. A woman at the Griswold Center was incredibly enthusiastic in helping, offering their facilities and anything they could do to be helpful. One thing she feels is important is how to approach the cards and how important they are to track.

Ms. Falcone said we should track them. If they are not working, we do not need to waste money on them.

Mr. Sherman discussed going to individual churches and asking if they would allow us to put the postcard in the bulletin and possibly stand up for 30 seconds to discuss what it is. They could also be sent home with kids at school. They would need to talk to Dr. Bowers about doing that.

Ms. Findlay noted we could get more people to pick it up with candy. We will get the attention parents with kids. We need to have some attention grabber.

Mr. Cynkar said he has a meeting with the schools on Thursday and can bring it up. They get bombarded with things to be sent home with kids. We need to ask where they are at with things like that. Mr. Melchi brought up targeting certain schools.

Ms. Burris said there is a pastor's society in Worthington, and she has talked to the chairperson who expressed they are very willing to do whatever is needed. That might be a first conversation to have before following up about coming to individual churches.

Mr. Sherman explained how council candidates said to mail the postcards, but we do not have the money to do that. They also suggested door hangers.

Mr. Lees said the schools have a robust social media and he wonders if we could tap into their social media to push people to the website. Once the website is done, the next phase is looking at a social media campaign as well as a press release. He would start with as much social campaigning as possible.

Ms. Brown said the City's mailed newsletter goes to every mailbox and the visioning process would be on the front page of that.

Ms. Abu-Absi asked about incentives to participate. Ms. Falcone said that can be effective, things such as an enter to win raffle.

Mr. Mitchell said he is hearing lots of ideas about approaching the community. Should some of these decisions be delegated to the working teams and if there are any ideas on how to step through this in the most efficient way.

Ms. Brown said she has a process to push information out including the e-newsletter, the physical newsletter, website news releases and notifications, and social media. A news release can be sent out to the traditional media. When launch day comes, all that stuff can be shot out the same day. She noted that the printed newsletter has a couple week turn around to produce.

Mr. Lees said he is most concerned about retention. He sees the Communications working team more as mass communications. Talking to community groups he sees more as the Speakers Bureau working team. What they need is a combo of all the teams for site engagement and deciding how to keep material new and ever changing. There should be a new subcommittee across the committees that really drives that meeting weekly to brainstorm.

Mr. Mottley suggested using the news alert to ping people to get their attention to come back.

Mr. Wood recommended having some features ready to go that are scheduled and previewed.

Ms. Findlay said it sounds like it would be helpful to have a structured call on website engagement. Mr. Lees said yes there needs to be something like that. From a content collection perspective, how do we know what to ask and when.

Ms. Falcone said we want people to want to check back on what others are saying. It is not just posting surveys and other interactive features. It is not 100% asking questions. We are collecting data from people telling their story.

Mr. Mitchell asked if we have talked to other communities to determine the people that are participating and to get a sense of the best we can expect from an engagement perspective.

Ms. Abu-Absi brought up that in the first Bang the Table training it was mentioned how in one community, the single largest number of registrations was from voting to choose the summer movie.

Ms. Corl said we can use the same idea of talking to people, by using a tablet at a farmer's market and there could be an opportunity to win something with a poll. Ms. Findlay said that makes sense.

Mr. Sherman asked how best to proceed. Mr. Lees said an action item could be a 30 minute phone call with a working team. Ms. Findlay said team leaders should be involved as much as possible. Mr. Sherman said the first call can include Catey, Austin, Paul, Cindy, Matt, and City Staff.

Ms. Abu-Absi said it would be helpful to get a recap of the tools available. Mr. Lees agreed that could be good to go over on the first call. Ms. Abu-Absi said that could be good for the whole committee to see and know what we are working with.

Ms. Falcone suggested using the "Your Story" tool, "Street Team Comments," "What We Have Learned," and the mapping function.

Ms. Brown suggested reaching out for best practices.

Ms. Findlay discussed the stakeholder interview tool and explained how the Committee had not met since refining the tool. She detailed how there is a schedule of the stakeholder interview names for the week of

February 3. We do want to try to gauge everyone's happiness with the tool as soon as possible. They need to schedule the members of City Council for interviews. The point of talking to City Council is to get a sense of what their constituents have been seeing as priorities rather than Council's version of a vision for the City. There is the need to be sure that the questions reflect the mission of the interviews. Anyone who wants to do an in person stakeholder interview, be aware that shared notes become a public record.

We will work to reach out for extended stakeholder interviews online for all the candidates for the Visioning Committee. We will need to meet as a team to create that tool to digitally push out an interview survey to those people. People may speak more freely filling out a text box on their own time. However, during the in-person interviews, there was lots of back and forth that expanded their thoughts.

Ms. Falcone explained how she would like to identify the big holes that they were able to see in the stakeholder interview tool. She overviewed what questions were added, changed, or struck entirely.

Mr. Lees said he had a hard time coming up with new answers. Different questions are sometimes going to get the same answer. Categories give a frame of reference and get their minds around questions. With open ended questions, you do not know what you do not know.

Ms. Abu-Absi asked for the stakeholder interviews tool to be shared in advance.

Ms. Brown shared how with a list of categories to be careful about language as to not make it sound like a planning category. Make sure to put it in real world language.

Mr. Mitchell brought up an answer from Mr. Cynkar about energy that captured so much of what they are talking about as a community. He suggested adding a question asking what someone would miss the most if they had to leave. He also requested to have a question that asks directly what someone's vision is.

Ms. Corl said when she read through it, there are a lot of specific things to give feedback on. Lead-ins could be more qualitative and open. There are not a lot of why questions.

Ms. Falcone emphasized that this is the starting point for the interviews and why is the follow up question. If anyone is planning to do these interviews in person, you need to chat about the follow up. This tool is really flexible.

Ms. Findlay suggested it is important ask about someone's affiliations and when they moved here.

Ms. Corl suggested using the term relationship and not affiliation. She then asked why we plan to ask Councilmembers about what their constituents want versus what they think. Ms. Findlay responded they want to gather a vision of the community because the community is saying they are not being heard. The Committee is charged with going out to discover what the community thinks. Council has ample opportunity to share their vision with the legislation they create.

Mr. Melchi asked if the plan after talking to all the members is to do a sample aggregation of the committee's comments.

Mr. Mottley asked about records with people's names associated with the comments. He expressed there is value in letting people be candid and following the public records law.

Mr. Sherman wondered if the Committee wants to add Matt Greeson to the interview list. We are asking Council to interview, but not asking City staff. Ms. Stewart said we have staff that are experts in various fields, and if at some point that is an interest they can be invited to talk.

Mr. Lees said we might ask questions of the community and then askn City staff whether what the Committee has heard is accurate.

Ms. Burris expressed how when thinking of the nature of Mr. Greeson's job, he would not have the opportunity to be as candid as he might be as a citizen. He is a citizen, so it seems he could have the opportunity to do the survey and express his preferences that way.

Mr. Melchi said he is sure he would have very good answers, but we would not want to put him in a difficult situation.

Mr. Cynkar showed off the draft for the business card. He is ready to go on this if the group feels like this is what we want to do. The Committee agreed to move forward.

Mr. Lees described how they could do a soft launch of the website at the Chamber of Commerce's Groundhog Breakfast if it is ready to go live. Ms. Brown said that the plan is to put out the postcards at the tables.

The Committee decided that Mr. Barnhardt should integrate the map tool and the "Your Story" features into the website before the Groundhog Day Breakfast when the website goes lives. Ms. Abu-Absi suggested having family or friends post some content on the website.

Mr. Cynkar brought up how he and Robyn made an appointment with the schools to discuss how to reach high school kids, how to get to the teachers, and how to get to the PTAs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.