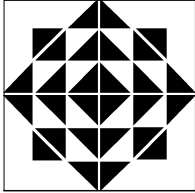

Community Perspectives

The Community Perspectives chapter answers the planning question “Where do we want to go?” This chapter has two parts, a L.A.N.D. Matrix and Community Issues.

The L.A.N.D. Matrix stands for Liabilities, Assets, Needs, and Dreams (though it also includes Obstacles and Opportunities). This format helps to outline the many ideas, suggestions, and recommendations gathered from Shipshewana and Newbury Township residents and business people during a series of community workshops. Workshop participants were also asked to vote on their “Top Ten” issues; these were then condensed into eight issue areas:

- Culture and Character
- Traffic and Parking
- Industry
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Land Use and Growth Management
- Design Guidelines
- Local Control of Planning and Zoning

The Community Issues section then examines these topics in more depth and begins to consider alternatives for addressing the issues.



L.A.N.D. Matrix

Assets	Liabilities	Needs	Dreams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodging • Clean Neighborhoods • Viable Tourism • Friendly People • Menno-Hof • Schools • Amish/Mennonite Community • Quiet • Smallness • Name Recognition • Proximity to turnpike • Restaurants • Flea Market/ Auction • Active Churches • Police and Fire Department • Rural Character • Safety • Progressive Town Government • Variety of Shops • Merchants Association • Town Park • Lions Club • Business Visitors Bring Families • More to Experience than Flea Market • Library • Youth Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land/Houses not Available in Town • Truck Traffic Through Town • Traffic • Parking • Buggy Traffic • No Traffic Light • Industrial Noise/ Dust • Only Tourism Revenue is Food Tax • Sidewalks “Roll Up” at 5 P.M. • Urbanization of the Amish • Policy Implementation • Signage • Congestion • Gateways • Industries Employ People Outside Town • Roads Don’t Connect to Arteries • Developers Not Willing to Build • Lack of Integrity in Studying Amish • Loss of Farmland • County Control of Land Use • Conflict Between Cars/Pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing • Nice Apartments • Senior Citizen Housing • Housing in General • Townhouses • Housing with Municipal Utilities • Industrial Recruiting • Traffic Management for Industrial Delivery • Local Business “After Hours” • Balance of Tourism/ Industry • Merchant Diversity • Place to Buy Basic Needs • Population to Support Local Markets • Economic Diversity • Infrastructure • Curb and Gutter Requirements • Widen Roads to Accommodate Buggies/Pedestrians • Open Pumpkinvine to Buggies • Additional Sidewalks • Traffic Management • Extended library hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buried Utility Lines • Development Guidelines • Gateway Signage • No Change in the Essence of Shippshewana • Fast Food with Strict Design Guidelines • Proactive Controlled Growth • Traditional (Euclidean) Zoning • Airport • Mass Transit • Buggy Lane from Shippshewana to Middlebury • Pumpkinvine Trail • Train Station • Extend/Expand SR 5 to Toll Road • Extended Entrance to I-80 • Big Park • Industry • New School Out of Town • Make Old School into Shops • Mitigate Elementary School Playground Problems

Note: The responses presented here reflect the opinions of the participants in the public workshops. Only minimal editing was done to eliminate duplicate responses. The responses represent the opinions and perceptions of the participants.

Shipshewana Master Plan

Obstacles

- Lack of Consensus
- Need \$500,000
- Lack of space
- Poor Enforcement
- Land owner resistance
- Lack of initiative
- Merchants are not residents
- Most town “users” are not residents
- Lack of industry
- Traffic
- No services/businesses for residents
- Change is difficult
- Fear of no short term return on investment
- Industries feel underappreciated for past efforts and are hesitant to invest in more community projects
- Lack local control
- Amish oppose Pumpkinvine Trail
- No specific parking areas
- Land prices are increasing
- Cyclical water and sewer demand

Opportunities

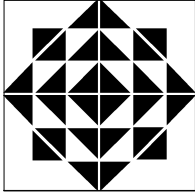
- Good Education
- Design guidelines
- Urban forestry plan
- Volunteerism
- Youth activities
- Farmland preservation
- Pocket parks
- Bike trails
- More hitching posts
- Integration of Amish
- Road design for pedestrian/buggy safety
- Museum
- Hospitality training
- Industrial park
- Redevelopment Commission
- Alternative agriculture
- Low real estate taxes
- Atmosphere has changed regarding PC/BZA

Top Ten

- Culture/Character
- Traffic/Parking
- Industry
- Housing/Affordable Housing
- Parks/Recreation
- Environment
- Library
- Land Use/Growth Management
- Design Guidelines
- Local control of Planning/Zoning

Issue Areas

- Culture/Character
- Traffic/Parking
- Industry
- Housing
- Parks/Recreation
- Land Use/Growth Management
- Design Guidelines
- Planning/Zoning



Community Issues

The Community Issues section described the issues and some of the actions recommended during the community workshops. The issue areas were:

- Culture and Character
- Traffic and Parking
- Industry
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Land Use and Controlled Growth
- Design Guidelines
- Local Control of Planning and Zoning

Culture and Character

Participants identified preservation of the community's unique character as an important issue. Respect for the Amish culture was identified as being directly related to the unique character of the area. One of the concerns that was raised is the balance between promoting tourism and respecting the privacy and religion of the Amish and Mennonite communities. Much of the area tourism is based around the Flea Market, Menno-Hof, shops, restaurants, and other places that reflect aspects of the Amish culture. Tourists are often unaware of their actions which are disrespectful of the Amish religious beliefs, yet many of the Amish benefit from tourist activities as well.

Traffic and Parking

Traffic is a problem in Shipshewana, especially on Flea Market days. The circulation pattern out of the Flea Market does not direct drivers to the most appropriate exit for their destination. Improved signage could help facilitate circulation out of the Flea Market and out to the transportation arteries. Proper signage directing traffic could reduce the amount of traffic attempting to use the "back roads" to get out of town, which is a safety problem for pedestrians and buggies as well as a capacity problem for those roads. Residents expressed a need for the extension of certain county roads to improve access to and from town. It was also recommended that some of the roads in town could appropriately be extended to nearby county roads for the same reasons.

Parking is also a major issue in Shipshewana, especially on the heavy tourism days associated with the Flea Market. Parking is all surface parking and limited; often it is not well separated from roadways and pedestrian spaces. There was also concern that there is little respect for use of accessible parking spaces and a need for additional accessible spaces as well as greater

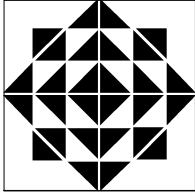
enforcement of parking in those spaces. Clear signage may help alleviate some of the parking problems the community experiences, especially since most of those parking are from out-of-town and unfamiliar with the location and layout of local parking lots. Some residents suggested that a parking structure was becoming necessary, though parking structures are almost always very expensive and rarely an asset to the character of a community. One suggestion to alleviate both traffic and parking problems was to move the parking to the edges of the community and use some sort of trolley or shuttle system to move tourists from the parking areas to the downtown and Flea Market areas.

Pedestrian circulation was another issue raised at the workshops. Pedestrian areas are not well defined, often blending in with roadways and contributing to a “Disneyland syndrome” where pedestrians wander around without paying attention to vehicular circulation. This is a potentially dangerous situation. Other pedestrian issues were the need for a crosswalk and light at the intersection of SR 5 and Middlebury Road, the need for additional sidewalk construction and improvements, and the problem of pedestrians not crossing at the crosswalks. The town has a plan for extending and repairing sidewalks as they are able to afford to do so. Guiding pedestrian circulation through the use of pedestrian-oriented signage and pedestrian scale design barriers may improve the safety of pedestrian circulation patterns.

Industry

Workshop participants identified several strengths of the area’s industries, including the fact that industry is not seasonal, is generally environmentally friendly, and has a high commitment to staying in the community. The industry workers are generally local people, with the managers and owners often living elsewhere. The industrial representatives indicated that their corporations were sensitive to the local business climate and workforce. Some of the industries hire Amish workers for the good and dedicated labor they are known for, despite their lack of formal education. Other industries are working to change plant human resources requirements to allow for the hire of Amish workers.

Concerns about local industry were primarily focused on the obstacles and challenges facing industrial development in the Shipshewana area. There are relatively few industrial opportunities and the community is perceived as a tourist town, rather than an industrial community. The industrial representatives indicated a desire to hire additional workers, especially local workers, but feel they are facing a lack of an adequate workforce. This sentiment was reflected by a statement made at one of the workshops that “the people who are unemployed want to be.” The lack of formal education of many area workers is a challenge facing the industries, though many are beginning to reevaluate corporate policy to evaluate skills using other criteria



than educational attainment. Some felt that industrial growth in the community was hampered by the lack of traditional recruitment incentives offered by many communities. Others felt that the main obstacles to industrial development were the lack of adequate transportation networks and the lack of housing in the area. Some area residents felt that the existing industries need to become more involved in the local community through corporate sponsorship of events and activities.

Housing

The lack of available housing in and around town was another issue raised at the public workshops. Some residents who live outside the town limits expressed a concern that there isn't much room for housing development inside the corporate limits and the existing housing is generally not on the market. A few suggested that they would approve of incorporation into the town limits; they located outside of town due to the lack of available housing in town.

Another housing concern was related to the development of quality affordable housing. Many residents and business people expressed a concern over the potential for maintenance and other problems associated with apartment development as an affordable housing option. They recommended well designed, affordable single family homes and duplexes to meet the need of those who need moderate income housing.

Area real estate agents expressed concerns over rising land prices due to speculation. They also expressed that developers are generally unwilling to assume the financial risks of developing where they see a limited possibility for return-on-investment due to the small amount of industry. Other concerns of developers related to the traffic on tourist days and the cyclical nature of water and sewer demand in the community. Several developers have also stated that they are unwilling to accept the risks of developing in a community which lacks local development guidelines and control of land use. It was suggested that control of planning and zoning be returned to the local level and that the community exercise a jurisdictional fringe area. More information about local planning and zoning is available in the Planning and Zoning section of this chapter..

Some area residents feel the community should plan to be a bedroom community that has a limited amount of industry and tourism. They feel that the community's assets of attractive rural schools, accessibility to employment centers, and relatively low real estate taxes encourage development of the community as a bedroom community rather than "trying to be" an industrial community.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks and recreation opportunities are immediate concerns of the community. The Town Park Board adopted a new park master plan in 1998 and an additional 20 acres of park space have been purchased by the town. Proposals are currently under development for park design and the types of recreation opportunities that should be included in the community.

Development of youth activities was raised as a part of the discussions about recreation. There is a need for young adult and youth type recreation equipment in the park, such as trails for rollerblading. Another suggestion was for a bike system to be developed through town separate from the traffic. Such a plan is underway with the development of the Pumpkinvine Trail, though there is local opposition to the trail (particularly by the Amish) for privacy reasons. Several compromises may make the trail a reality for all users in the community. One such compromise would be opening the trail up to buggy users and horses as a means of separating this traffic from the general traffic flow for the same reasons bike and pedestrian circulation needs to be separate.

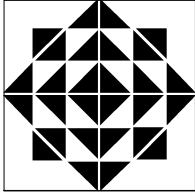
In addition to parks development the issue of general community “greening” was raised at the community workshops. Recommendations were made about adopting landscaping requirements for commercial properties and the potential for adopt-a-tree programs and other programs that would encourage tree planting and landscaping in the community.

Land Use and Controlled Growth

The town had local control of planning and zoning (and therefore land use and growth) until lack of support for the local Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals required that control be remanded to the county level. The sentiment toward planning and zoning has changed since then and many area residents and business people feel that land use management could be more efficient and effective at the local level. This will be discussed further in the Local Planning and Zoning section.

Many residents are misinformed about what regulations can be placed on land use and how growth can be managed. The first step toward adopting any formal land use plan or growth management policy should be to inform people about the legal status of planning and zoning in a very simple, truthful public education campaign. Such a program would facilitate any steps toward local control of planning and zoning functions.

Regardless of the level at which planning and zoning are controlled, there should be a community liaison, possibly the Town Manager, who works closely with the county planning department in the development of the county comprehensive plan, which effectively controls growth around Shipshewana.



Even if planning and zoning come under local jurisdiction, there is need for coordination between the local and county development plans to prevent costly sprawl development.

Design & Development Guidelines

The establishment of design and development guidelines to ensure high quality development in the community was another issue raised at the community workshops. Design guidelines are recommendations for architectural style, landscaping, signage and other design features of development. They are essentially voluntary, even if formally adopted, unless they are incorporated into a zoning ordinance as design and development standards.

Many participants felt that the county currently did a good job of code enforcement when there were complaints of violation of county-wide development standards and property related codes. However, others felt that the town and the county needed to work more closely to maintain an acceptable level of code enforcement and that there were not enough human resources (people or staff hours) to properly enforce the existing codes, particularly building codes. Many feel that the local ordinances that do exist, such as the sign ordinance, have little enforcement.

Property management was raised as an issue, though many participants seemed to be misinformed of the legally acceptable uses of such police powers as eminent domain. Public education about design guidelines, planning, zoning, and private property rights should precede any decision to return planning and zoning to the local level.

Local Control of Planning and Zoning

Many of the development issues raised by participants at the community workshops are related to returning control of planning and zoning functions to the local level. The land use and growth management issues, as well as design guidelines, are closely related to control of local development that is not feasible at the county level.

Residents and business people feel that the existing county zoning is ineffective at controlling local development, though others feel that it is an asset to have county level planning staff that is willing to work closely with the local communities. A concern was expressed that variances are granted too easily at the county level while others felt that it is difficult for developers to obtain zoning changes needed for growth.

Some residents expressed an interest in a strong Euclidean zoning ordinance which requires separation of land uses and few land use designations.

Shipshewana Master Plan

Requiring developers to assume responsibility for the infrastructure demands their development places on the community was also a concern. Many feel that the developers don't have to pay for development impacts to infrastructure. Requiring adequate public facilities prior to development was recommended as a means of ensuring that development is of consistent and high quality.

Some residents favored an architectural review board for residential and commercial properties to improve the quality of local development. This level of property regulation is rather strict for a community where planning and zoning have been controversial. If such regulations are implemented, they should be limited in scope to certain blocks or areas of town where character is critical to the viability of the local tourism industry and quality of life.

