

GROWTH POLICIES PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY, AUGUST 14, 2012

Meeting summaries are transcribed in an abridged manner and no audio recordings are available. All Steering Committee meetings are open to the public.

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members: Jack Baker, John Carter, Dave Harstad, Doug Horn, Don Griffin, Mike Litwin, Jim Murphy, Patrick Murray, Andy Ruff, Chris Smith, Jan Sorby, Kerry Thomson, Ron Walker and Larry Wilson.

Others in attendance: Katie Bannon (staff), Jacqui Bauer (staff), Josh Desmond (staff), Nate Nickel (staff), Adrian Reid (staff), Scott Robinson (staff), Chris Cockerham, Nikki Johnson, several members from the Commission on Aging and members of the public.

Draft Vision Statement Presented to Steering Committee

Ms. Bannon welcomed Steering Committee members to the meeting. She then provided a brief overview of how the draft vision statement was structured. This included heading titles and bullet points developed by staff which outlined the key themes that were identified through the public outreach process. Ms. Bannon strongly encouraged members to discuss their thoughts, ideas and concerns regarding the draft vision. This was especially true regarding items that members felt were potentially missing from the document, or caused a concern and would need to be revisited.

The draft vision statement included these items, which were developed as a result of the input and feedback received during the public outreach process:

- **Civility:** Our community will continue its strong commitment to equality, acceptance, and openness through widespread and active public engagement.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to Bloomington being open to diverse people, friendly, accepting, welcoming to all sorts of people, active community – volunteering and engaged in the future.

- **Downtown:** Our downtown will continue to be a dynamic, vibrant, and historic place that is the cultural center of the community.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to downtown being thriving, lively, vibrant and walkable; full of unique local businesses; full of historic buildings that are assets; some tension seems to exist between Indiana University students and non-students for housing options and a wide range of services.

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- **Development:** We will use innovative design principles and best practices to ensure that future development meets the needs of the entire community.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to the preference for infill to occur on brownfield rather than greenfield sites; preference for new mixed-use developments; neighborhoods connected to services and amenities to either walk or bike to; mixed opinions about density and where it should go; green design features; preference for quality architecture and design, as well as innovative building practices.

- **Eclectic Bloomington:** We will continue to support and celebrate the many community and cultural amenities, as well as the local businesses, that make our city a special place.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to Bloomington being a special and fun place to live and visit. Themes identified were the rich array of local businesses; festivals, community and cultural events; the arts, music, theater, visual arts, public art; people were proud of the Library, parks, farmers' market and the community's natural beauty.

- **Economic Balance:** We will foster innovation and provide high quality economic growth and equitable opportunities that will benefit individual citizens, the community, and the planet.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to employment and job opportunities; concern about economic disparity and growth of disparity; support for local businesses and area employers; developing a welcoming business climate without sacrificing environmental integrity; addressing cost of living issues.

- **Educational Excellence:** Our citizens will have a wide variety of educational opportunities at every stage of life to discover their full potential.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to Bloomington being home to Indiana University; people identified it as being a positive and excellent resource, but with some negative impacts to the community, too; Indiana University provides many cultural opportunities and diversity to the community; primary and secondary education in the city; Ivy Tech; education provides a strong quality of life issue – educational venues provide lifelong learning opportunities, such as job and career training and for personal enrichment.

- **Efficient Government:** Our local government will be forward-thinking, responsive, collaborative, and open, and will act as a responsible steward of our local resources.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to a community desire for greater coordination between Monroe County, Indiana University and State agencies; concerns about one-party local government; funding and government services; better examination of fiscal responsibility, stewardship of public resources, public engagement and open government opportunities.

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- **Environmental Balance:** We will strive for choices that minimize local and global environmental impacts while also utilizing our natural resources judiciously to sustain the community's quality of life.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to energy, water, air quality, animal habitats – resources for the next generation; green building; contamination; PCBs; brownfields; local food and food security; urban agriculture; streets; trees and greenspace – green roofs.

- **Housing Choices:** We will offer a wide variety of quality housing options that provide opportunities for all incomes, ages, and abilities.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to affordable housing – especially downtown, as well as being close to services and amenities; housing for both students and non-students; multi-generational housing; options for senior citizen housing; concern with large and expensive downtown housing; concern that current housing upkeep is poor.

- **Mobility:** Our community will provide a safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient system for all modes of transportation and will reduce our overall dependence on the single occupancy automobile.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to biking and walking; trails and bike lanes – especially with east-west connections; adding sidewalks to neighborhoods; bicycle and pedestrian connections to schools; city-county connections; bus service – higher frequency, better hours, more locations served, increased and improved service; light rail, especially to Indianapolis; less traffic, road work and construction; downtown parking; mixed opinions concerning roundabouts.

- **Social Services:** We will be responsive to and respect all citizens, without prejudice, with a strong community network that provides support for both basic needs and personal growth and self-sufficiency.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to the homeless population; poverty; drug and alcohol addictions; prison population; community needs to support the needs of varied populations, such as people with low income, that are homeless, have developmental disabilities, have drug and alcohol addictions, and might be non-English speaking.

- **Safety & Well-Being:** Our community will be a safe and healthy place that promotes wellness in all forms for both residents and visitors.

Ms. Bannon explained that this responded to rising (or the perception of) crime rate – especially in the number of higher profile crimes; trash and litter problems; lack of street lights; safety around bar areas at night; concerns about drug and alcohol problems; healthy and active lifestyles for the community; outdoor recreation opportunities for people.

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Steering Committee members identified several important issues that they felt were missing from the vision statement. Ms. Sorby and Mr. Murray both pointed out the need to add protecting core neighborhoods to the document. Mr. Horn added that not all core neighborhoods are the same and each one has its own unique qualities. Some discussion occurred regarding vermin and animal control problems. Some Steering Committee members felt that issues related to deer were probably more intense outside of the core neighborhoods.

Ms. Sorby added that historic preservation should be added to the vision statement, especially in regards to being an economic development tool. Mr. Murray added that it was also a sustainability feature.

Mr. Harstad stated that recreation and park/green spaces should be added to the vision statement. Mr. Griffin also agreed that these items should be included. Mr. Harstad and Mr. Smith both wanted capital infrastructure wording, such as sewer and water infrastructure, added to the vision statement. Mr. Micuda responded that a good example of capital infrastructure wording can be found in the current GPP, under the Leverage Public Capital guiding principle.

Mr. Horn stated that the role of the private sector in fulfilling the goals of this plan needed to be better addressed. Mr. Carter suggested that words 'partnerships' and 'collaborations' be added to the third paragraph of the vision statement.

Ms. Thomson asked about how the vision statement eventually gets related to the plan update process. Mr. Micuda and Mr. Robinson explained that the bullet point items in the vision statement could potentially become the action items that the updated comprehensive plan would directly address in more detail.

Steering Committee member Phil Stafford was not present at the meeting, but submitted comments via e-mail prior the meeting. His comment about adding accessibility as a vision statement item was discussed by the Steering Committee. Mr. Baker suggested that accessibility be added to one of the existing bullet points. Ms. Sorby suggested that accessibility could be addressed as part of the discussion involving infrastructure, especially at intersections. After some discussion, the Steering Committee felt that further contact with Mr. Stafford would be needed to clarify his intent involving the term accessibility. More clarification with Mr. Stafford regarding his comment about the need to include citizens and non-citizens is also needed. The Steering Committee felt this topic was already adequately addressed in the draft vision statement.

Mr. Ruff discussed the titles of the vision statement bullet points. He suggested that some do not flow well, do not have good symmetry, or do not best describe their corresponding vision items. He felt that many of the titles could be reworded. The Steering Committee then discussed at length various options, including either rewording the titles, or eliminating the titles in favor of simply keeping the sentences as stand-alone items in the vision statement. Several Steering Committee members asked if staff had an opinion either way.

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Mr. Robinson and Mr. Nickel responded that staff had the same debate internally and would defer to the feelings of the Steering Committee. The members of the Steering Committee approved the removal of the titles from the document. Staff then discussed each individual vision statement bullet point in order to receive specific feedback from the Steering Committee for each one. Several comments were made regarding necessary edits.

These included the following: acknowledging downtown as a civic center; recognizing that downtown is a strong arts and culture hub, but is not the only such place within the community; avoid the term 'innovative' and instead rewrite generally to acknowledge that the community strives for high quality in future developments; need to include 'arts' along with 'culture'; acknowledge that Bloomington is a blend of both local and national businesses; utilize Mayor Kruzan's platform to better define economic development within the community; remove the term "planet" because it is too broad; keep the word 'excellent' with education; keep the word 'efficient' with government; should use the word 'limit' instead of 'minimize' for local and global environmental impacts; utilize the word 'encourage' instead of 'offer' for housing options; remove 'system for all' and 'single-occupancy' from the transportation topic; insert the word 'strive' before 'reduce our overall dependence on the automobile'; consider walkability communities within the transportation topic; incorporate 'civility' to the safe and healthy community topic.

Overview of Next Steps

Ms. Bannon provided an overview of the next steps. Staff will make edits to the vision statement draft based on tonight's feedback. The draft will then be presented to the public in order to solicit their input and feedback. Ms. Bannon asked if the Steering Committee would like to meet again to review and finalize the draft before presenting it to the public. The consensus among the Steering Committee was that members could send any additional comments to staff electronically. Staff could then finalize the draft vision statement, have the Steering Committee review it electronically, and then move forward to the public review stage, without the need for an additional meeting.

Ms. Bannon stated that the outlook will include a November Steering Committee meeting to review the public comment that is received. Staff then aims to present a vision statement to the Plan Commission at the end of the year and City Council at the beginning of 2013.

Other Comments

There was interest in how Columbus, Indiana, broadly addressed development in their planning documents. Staff will research this and follow-up later with their findings. Several Steering Committee members thanked staff for their work in preparing the draft vision statement.

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