



Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting

August 13, 2021

Meeting Summary

Steering Committee Attendance:

- Mike Burrow
- Josh Daugherty (rep. Mary Gibble)
- Jason Faucett
- April Fisher
- Pat Haley
- Steve Long
- Ryan Maxfield
- Jack Parker
- Bill Spaulding
- Jonathon Sparks

Not in Attendance:

- Jeannine Gray
- Mary Gibble

County Staff:

- Mike Dale
- Gary Poole
- Randy Sorrell

Consultant Team:

- Scott Harrington, Vandewalle & Assoc.
- Lupita Alvarez, Vandewalle & Assoc.
- Meredith Perks, Vandewalle & Assoc.
- Mike Higbee, OBE Advisors
- Bill Hawkins, Strand Associates
- Fred PrazEAU, Context Design

Meeting Summary:

- Mike Dale provided a welcome to the steering committee and the Comprehensive Planning process
- Scott Harrington, Vandewalle & Associates, provided an overview presentation of the Comprehensive Planning Process, Steering Committee roles and responsibilities, and communications plan
- Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent of Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation, and Mary Gibble, President of Hancock County Community Foundation, were unanimously selected as Steering Committee co-chairs.
 - Steering Committee co-chairs will help the staff and consultant team ensure the Steering Committee meetings are efficient and effective and will provide guidance on meeting topics, etc.



Breakout Group Discussion Summaries:

The steering committee and county staff were broken into two groups for facilitated small group discussion. Members of the consultant team asked a series of questions to prompt discussion. These questions and discussion summaries are below:

Question 1a. What is something that you *wouldn't* change about Hancock County?

- Hancock is a welcoming place; there is a culture and sense of community, pride and unity among residents; we would not want to lose that in the future.
- Hancock County is an easy place to get around; the street network is effective and there is relatively low traffic. In the future, we will need to scale the infrastructure to the County's growth so that the accessibility and low traffic continue.
 - It provides a high quality of life
- Hancock County has an agricultural heritage. Agriculture is changing and will be different in the future.
- Hancock County should maintain its balance of land uses to have pockets of commercial and development but preserve rural assets.
- Hancock County has strong schools.
- The growth the County is seeing could change the culture/community feel of the County. It is important to show new residents what the Hancock County culture is about and bring them into that culture/community.
- There are different elements that give Hancock County its sense of community, which should be maintained or enhanced:
 - Community design (facades, small-town architectural characteristics)
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Walkability
 - Small businesses
 - Downtowns
 - Schools
 - Being a place to raise a family

Question 1b. What is something that you *would* change about Hancock County?

- The County needs to think long term (next 100 years) and not just plan for now.
- Hancock County needs more amenities – things that will bring people to the County and keep them here, particularly younger people and families.
- Hancock County should adopt some of the best practices of its peers around growth, development, and amenities, and try to avoid the mistakes others have made.



- Hamilton County is doing a good job with amenities (trails, coworking spaces, shopping, etc.)
- The job and growth concentration on the west side of the County creates long commutes for east side residents – need more distribution of growth and opportunities.
- The lack of infrastructure on the east side hinders growth and development.
- Talent retention is difficult because of the lack of certain types of jobs and diversity in amenities in the County.
- Hancock County does not have the diverse housing stock that it needs to attract and retain families. The County has few multi-family options, has expensive starters homes and no age-in-place opportunities.

Question 2. When you think about economic development, what does that mean to you (i.e. downtown revitalization, job creation, etc.)?

- It is about the quality of place, which equals amenities, which include public spaces, gathering places, restaurants and destinations, trails, parks, and open space, and things that provide a sense of community and identity.
 - Things with a culinary focus work well because it is a destination for all kinds of people and is exciting.
 - Talent attraction is difficult because of the lack of quality of place amenities
- Need to make infrastructure investments ahead of the demand to be prepared for growth and draw businesses and investment.
 - This is a more efficient development model.
- Responsible development is about agglomerating development where it already exists and with complementary uses, not spreading into agricultural areas.
- Hancock County needs to get people to spend their discretionary income in the county rather than leaving the County and spending it other places (Carmel, Fishers, etc.).
- The County needs to use more tools to attract investment.
- Economic development is about creating economic opportunity.
- Want to see higher quality businesses/wages such as what Elanco brought to the area.
- “Make Hancock a place people want to live”
- Need skills development and trades/talent development opportunities in the County because currently all of the vocational schools are outside of the County.
- Need opportunities to grow in place from a housing (multifamily, to entry-level, to age in place oppts.) and jobs (advance within an industry, diversity of jobs oppts.) perspective.



- There is very strong fiber in the County – we need to use it to attract high-paying jobs.

Question 3. What are the biggest transportation issues or opportunities in the County?

- Mt. Comfort, 500 N, and 400 N – important corridors to look at on the west side. Concerned about the quality of the roads and ability to support the activity happening around the Mt. Comfort corridor.
- Need to connect McCordsville and Fishers and I-70.
- County Road 1050 E is a well built and good thoroughfare for County growth opportunities.
- The County has a strong infrastructure planning and implementation program.

Question 4. What are the most important 5-year goals for Hancock County?

- Continue the County's strong infrastructure planning and implementation, particularly with roundabouts and crash/safety improvements.
- Identify and build amenities, the County is overdue for these quality of life improvements.
- Hancock County should be a live-work county.
 - Address the gap between workers and residents – we need people to live here, not just commute here
- Hancock County should be a community that attracts and builds entrepreneurs and small businesses, especially from the Ag community, through incubator programs and entrepreneurial infrastructure.
 - Farm to Table is a good opportunity for this.
- Need a diversity of housing options to attract workforce, including downtown-style mixed use options.
- Have a plan to transition from the industrial and logistic development occurring around Mt. Comfort Road.
- Have a vocational training facility in the County.
- Provide talent growth opportunities.
- Improve road/utility infrastructure.