

SECTION 8

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This Section displays results from the S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and lists the goals, objectives, and specific implementation strategies for the Plan.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS RESULTS

A S.W.O.T. analysis was completed with members of the Steering Committee at the October 10, 2006 and December 12, 2006 meetings. At the October meeting, members of the Steering Committee were asked to identify what they perceived to be the Township's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. At the December meeting, members were then asked to prioritize the list of issues identified in the S.W.O.T. analysis using a system of voting.

Each member was given a total of three votes and asked to place votes next to items included in the identified list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. No restrictions were placed on the number of votes that each member could place on any one item. In other words, a member could choose to place three votes on one item, two votes on one item and a single vote on a third item, or one vote on each of three items, provided that they did not exceed a total of three votes. Presented below are the results of the prioritized S.W.O.T. analysis, with items shown in descending order according to the number of total votes received. All items identified in the S.W.O.T. analysis, regardless of whether or not they received any votes from Steering Committee members, are provided below.

Strengths

- 8 Rural character
- 4 Water quality – good wells
- 2 County sewer – limited availability (city maintained)
- 2 Low crime
- 2 Small town feel
- 2 Watershed protection/Wolf Creek
- 1 Dependable community infrastructure/utilities
- 1 Interstate proximity
- School system – Good rating
- Roads are well maintained
- Perk - \$0.00 income tax
- Township is fiscally sound
- Nice, new, well cared for homes
- Higher education opportunities nearby
- Open space
- Wildlife
- Access to Medina/Metroparks, and nearby metro areas (Akron and Cleveland)
- Airports (ease of access to several; Wadsworth Municipal, Skypark, Medina Municipal, Akron-Canton, and Cleveland Hopkins)
- Clean (low pollution) industrial base
- Access to good healthcare – Wadsworth and beyond

Weaknesses

- 7 Inability to provide services/utilities, water – leads to annexation
- 2 Lack of options to keep farms (not proactive) from developers
- 1 Odd boundaries – causes disconnection and inefficiencies for provision of services
- Aging housing stock
- Lack of flexibility in zoning
- Concern about maintenance of open space in residential development
- Lack of voice/power for Township officials to impact and guide development

Opportunities

- 3 Identify areas (geographical) for cooperation
- 2 Alternative residential development strategies that save green space
- 2 Parks plan/land acquisitions for open space preservation
- 2 Promote current strengths Township ??
- 2 Western Reserve Land Conservancy (Medina/local) increased conservation opportunities
- 1 Getting to know city’s plans for commercial areas
- 1 Increase tax base (JEDD’s /CEDA)
- Cooperative service agreements with city (increase fire, EMS, sewer, sanitation, cable, electric)
- Brick Yard

Threats

- 6 Annexation
- 1 Growing cities
- 1 Density/ population jeopardizes strengths and opportunities
- Increased traffic causes road safety troubles
- Nonconforming architectural styles (currently in city) – low quality, incompatibility with surrounding properties and buildings
- Aging housing stock/ changing housing preferences
- Not knowing city and plans for growth
- Density in adjoining and encroaching city
- Ground water quality and availability at risk because of encroaching development

Items identified through the S.W.O.T. analysis were utilized and incorporated, where applicable, into the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for the Plan, which are discussed below.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Steering Committee first discussed draft goals and objectives at the January 9, 2007 meeting. Goals are broad, general statements that represent the shared vision of the Township. The goals have been grouped into three categories: Quality of Life, Environment, and Community. These categories were selected based on the input received throughout the planning process, particularly the S.W.O.T. analysis.

Objectives are listed below each goal. While the goals are broad and present a vision, objectives are more defined and usually more easily measured. Objectives can be seen as the steps necessary to achieve each goal.

Below each objective are the implementation strategies related to that objective. Implementation strategies represent concrete courses of action that the Township can take to attain each objective. Following each implementation strategy is a brief explanation of specific actions the Township should take to implement the stated strategy. Following each implementation strategy is a space provided for the Township to identify the responsible party, timetable, and date for completion of the above strategy.

GOAL: *QUALITY OF LIFE.* Preserve Wadsworth Township’s rural, small-town character.

OBJECTIVE 1: Encourage development and redevelopment that protects the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Strategy 1: **Ensure development and redevelopment decisions and regulations are consistent with Plan recommendations.** Following adoption of the Plan, local officials should consider a comprehensive update to the Township’s Zoning Resolution to ensure that zoning regulations are in accordance with the Plan. The Future Land Use map provides a basis for Zoning Map updates while the Zoning Resolution text should incorporate various Plan recommendations that aim to preserve the Township’s rural, small-town character.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Develop a plan to educate public officials, residents, business owners, and developers on Plan recommendations.** Plan recommendations are likely to impact Township residents and businesses. Plan recommendations should be made available to the public and referenced in zoning decisions, including Zoning Resolution amendments.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Update the Plan within five to 10 years of Plan adoption.** The Plan should be updated regularly in order to properly respond to changing Township conditions, including, demographic shifts, changes in Township land use distribution, and changes in Township preferences.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: *QUALITY OF LIFE.* Preserve Wadsworth Township’s rural, small-town character.

OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure low-impact residential development that complements the rural, small-town character of the community.

Strategy 1: **Create planned districts to ensure conservation of valuable open space that can preserve greenway corridors and other natural features and resources.** The Township should encourage use of innovative zoning tools, such as Planned Residential Development. Priority should be given to development that provides extensive common open space and preserves environmentally sensitive areas (as identified on *Map 2 Natural Features*).

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Create an architectural review board, or other enforcement agent, and adopt landscape and architectural standards and procedures.** Per ORC Section 519.171, Townships may create an architectural review board to enforce compliance with any zoning standards it may adopt pertaining to landscaping or architectural elements (excluding exterior materials). Standards and procedures must also be adopted. The enforcement of landscaping or architectural elements standards and procedures may be delegated to the Zoning Inspector or Zoning Commission. Adoption of such standards could help to ensure new development is compatible with the existing rural small-town character in the Township.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Require large front yard setbacks for all Township residential subdivisions.** The Township should require all new subdivisions to provide substantial front yard setbacks. These standards could also be incorporated into Planned Residential Development Overlay District regulations. Landscaped development entrances should be required as part of adopted Township standards for planned developments and encouraged for other developments.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: ***QUALITY OF LIFE.*** Preserve Wadsworth Township’s rural, small-town character.

OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure low-impact residential development that complements the rural, small-town character of the community.

Strategy 4: **Develop standards regarding the quality, configuration, and maintenance of open space.** One defining element of a rural landscape is open space. While open space can be defined in a number of different ways, for the purposes of this Plan, open space is defined as an undeveloped piece of land adding ecological, scenic or recreational value to an urban area. Open space can be publicly or privately owned. The Township should require long-term maintenance of all open space within planned developments. When possible, emphasis should be placed on creating greenway linkage between both public and private open spaces. The Township should require that planned developments provide a certain percentage of open space.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: **QUALITY OF LIFE. Preserve Wadsworth Township’s rural, small-town character.**

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage the development and redevelopment of under-utilized non-residential land.

Strategy 1: **Perform a market study to determine reasonable use options for the Brick Yard property.** A market study should be performed to determine alternatives to turn the currently vacant industrially zoned property into a tax generating property for the Township.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Pursue cooperative agreements with surrounding municipalities and other entities that could provide support to both existing and future businesses and the Township.** Cooperative agreements with surrounding municipalities include Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs), which would enable the Township to share income tax revenues with the participating municipalities. Both the Township and participating municipalities would benefit from such an agreement. JEDDs are one method of reducing the threat of annexation. The Township should also encourage existing and future businesses to work with other entities that can offer tax incentives and financing mechanisms such as the Medina County Port Authority.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Allow limited commercial and office activity adjacent to City of Wadsworth municipal boundaries, where appropriate, and currently industrially zoned land.** Limited commercial and office activity would create a transition from more intense industrial uses to residential uses. Such uses could also greatly contribute to the Township’s tax base if included in a JEDD, as outlined in Strategy 2, above.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: ***QUALITY OF LIFE.*** Preserve Wadsworth Township’s rural, small-town character.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage the development and redevelopment of under-utilized non-residential land.

Strategy 4: **Establish a committee to guide economic development in the Township including implementation of the above strategies.** Economic development activities are an important and can often play a major role in determining the long term fiscal stability of any community. In addition to implementing the above strategies, such a committee could also focus on job retention and attraction strategies, and work to foster a balanced tax base within the Township.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: **ENVIRONMENT. Protect and enhance natural and environmentally sensitive areas.**

OBJECTIVE 1: Preserve critical natural features.

Strategy 1: **Prevent development in or adjacent to steep slopes, wetlands, riparian corridors, and floodplains.** Establishment of steep slope regulations, wetland and riparian corridor setbacks, and floodplain overlay districts will ensure that development does not negatively impact critical natural features.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Protect rare and endangered plant and animal species.** The Township should utilize the Natural Heritage Database and work with the ODNR to determine the habitat needs of endangered plant and animal species. Development should be directed away from property containing rare and endangered plant and animal species. The Township should seek to acquire or secure conservation easements for property found to contain rare and endangered plant and animal species.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Support acquisition of land containing critical natural features cited above.** The Township should coordinate with the Medina County Parks District and Western Reserve Land Conservancy to identify priority natural features areas for acquisition. The Township should also seek state and federal funding to acquire property for future Township parks and explore dedicated revenue sources to support Township local shares, such as property tax levies.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: ***ENVIRONMENT.*** Protect and enhance natural and environmentally sensitive areas.

OBJECTIVE 1: Preserve critical natural features.

Strategy 4: **Require wetland delineations, groundwater supply studies, and detailed environmental impact studies for proposed developments.** The Township should require developers to provide information outlining the potential negative effects of any proposed development that exceeds specified thresholds. The Township should incorporate such requirements into landscape and architectural standards and procedures. Environmental impact analyses should be required for all conditional uses.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: **ENVIRONMENT. Protect and enhance natural and environmentally sensitive areas.**

OBJECTIVE 2: Encourage low-impact development and redevelopment that preserves and conserves natural features and resources.

Strategy 1: **Adopt flexible zoning regulations to preserve critical natural features and preserve open space.** The Township should encourage use of innovative zoning tools, such as Planned Residential Development. Priority should be given to development that provides extensive common open space and preserves environmentally sensitive areas (as identified on *Map 2 Natural Features*).

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Adopt zoning regulations that promote the use of green building practices.** Green building techniques such as the use of permeable asphalt, natural roofs, and rain gardens should be encouraged as part of new planned development. Incentives should be identified and provided for utilization of green building techniques.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Require planting of native plant species.** The Township should develop landscaping standards which require the use of native plant species. Native plant species enhance existing habitat by supporting diverse wildlife, reducing maintenance, improving soil fertility, and seldom require fertilizers or chemical pesticides.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: ***ENVIRONMENT.*** Protect and enhance natural and environmentally sensitive areas.

OBJECTIVE 3: Promote and advocate public involvement in natural resource conservation and preservation.

Strategy 1: **Facilitate and initiate community-wide events that encourage citizen participation in natural resource conservation and preservation.** The Township should explore the feasibility of initiating a tree planting and recycling program. Grant funding is often available to assist communities in initiating natural resource related programs.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Encourage and support initiatives related to natural resource conservation and preservation.** The Township should provide written and/or financial support for public and/or private initiatives related to natural resources conservation and preservation. Letters of support and/or matching funds provided by the Township can have a substantial impact on the successful funding of programs.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Develop a plan to provide public education and outreach regarding natural resource conservation and preservation to increase awareness of environmental issues.** The Township should provide information to Township residents about the steps they can take to protect the environment, such as properly disposing hazardous household wastes, maintaining septic systems, conserving water, and other environmental regulations. The Township Bulletin Board on the Township's website provides an excellent venue for disseminating valuable educational information.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: *COMMUNITY.* **Maintain and enhance existing community facilities, services, and infrastructure to meet community needs.**

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure community and encourage regional services and facilities that meet the needs of the community.

Strategy 1: **Cooperate with various entities to ensure connectivity, where possible, with Wadsworth City, Medina County, Summit County, and other public and private open spaces and identify responsible parties to implement this strategy.** The greatest benefit of open spaces can be realized when those open spaces are connected. This can benefit both the users of the open space and the natural environments contained within the open space. The Township should ensure that open spaces are expanded and connected where possible.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Ensure that local services meet the needs of Township residents and businesses.** Local services include zoning administration and inspection, road repair and maintenance, emergency response, schools, economic development, and others. The Township should identify gaps and, where feasible, explore cooperative agreements to maintain services to businesses and residents. These services are vital to the health, safety, and welfare of the Township.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Develop and maintain a hazardous/emergency response plan that is specific to the industries and activities occurring in the Township to ensure that the Township is prepared to address any possible events.** In 2005, the Township adopted the County's All Hazards and Flood Mitigation Plan. The County Sheriff and the City of Wadsworth provide policing and fire/EMS services, respectively, to the Township. The Township should work cooperatively with the County, the City, and other entities in preparation of its plan.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: **COMMUNITY. Maintain and enhance existing community facilities, services, and infrastructure to meet community needs.**

OBJECTIVE 2: Promote transportation improvements that preserve the current rural appearance of the Township.

Strategy 1: **Maintain rural road resolution standards for all Township roads.** Rural road standards which require open ditches and chip and seal construction with no curbs will aid in preserving the current rural appearance of Township roads. Township roads should continue to be maintained on a regular basis and resurfaced on a rotating basis.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Coordinate with ODOT and the County Engineer on any future proposed changes and improvements to State and County roadways in the Township.** Major widening of collectors should be discouraged. The Township should identify targeted improvements and encourage response to specific areas of concern. Proposed improvements should include, but not be limited to center turn lanes and provision for accel/decel lanes. Existing natural features and landscaping elements within and adjacent to existing rights-of-way should be preserved whenever possible.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

GOAL: **COMMUNITY. Maintain and enhance existing community facilities, services, and infrastructure to meet community needs.**

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the community and the region.

Strategy 1: **Monitor traffic count and accident data to identify safety and capacity issues.** Traffic count and accident data should be monitored on an annual basis. The Township should advise ODOT and the County of any roadways which represent safety and congestion concerns. Development of a standard for determining roadway classification based upon average daily traffic counts should be initiated. Regulations reducing the number of curb cuts and promoting shared access points should also be developed.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 2: **Develop a plan to encourage safe pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle circulation.** The Township should require all new developments to incorporate a combination of sidewalks, pathways, and dedicated bikeways. Linkages between existing and proposed pedestrian circulation infrastructure should be encouraged. The Township should promote implementation of the Medina County Bike/Hike Plan where applicable.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____

Strategy 3: **Require interconnectivity between existing and proposed rights-of-way.** The Township should work with the County to ensure that existing and proposed streets are connected to alleviate unnecessary congestion and facilitate efficient response times for fire and safety personnel. The Township should coordinate with the City of Wadsworth to implement those proposed transportation system improvements identified in the 1996 City of Wadsworth Comprehensive Plan Update that are acceptable to the Township.

Responsible Parties: _____

Timetable: _____

Completed: _____