



## COMMUNITY MEETING #1 NOTES

Date: August 30, 2016

Location: Crim Elementary

*The following are direct responses from community members gathered through community exercises where people, as organized by the table at which they were seated, were asked to list the **Assets, Issues, and Opportunities** of the City of Bowling Green. They were then tasked with providing ideas about **Early Action Projects** that could be implemented within a short amount time, including during the development of the Community Action Plan.*

### Assets

- Friends/extended family – look out for each other
- Safety
- Appealing appearance
- Close to shopping – walkability
- Parks/community center – swimming, flowers, walking paths, bike trails

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- Diversity of houses' architectural style
  - Walkability to downtown and the university
  - Closeness to public schools and parks
  - Mature trees and shrubs
  - Sense of being part of the history of BG
  - Relatively inexpensive housing

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- Neighborhood schools
  - Stroh Center
  - Use of BGSU facilities by entire community for entertainment activities
  - Carter Park and Ridge Park
  - Good restaurants
  - Churches – more cooperation
  - Court house – well-maintained
  - More diversity on E Side income
  - Access to I-75 brings in money, visitors

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- Slippery Elm Trail, parks
  - Sports facilities
  - Walkability, low traffic
  - Different neighborhood character (not cookie cutter)

- Affordable, wide range of housing
- Safe, safety services
- Downtown vitality (car show, BSAF etc.) – great for small business
- Inexpensive utilities, clean inexpensive water

- Crim Elementary and grounds
- Ridge Park and Carter Park
- Green space – Church and Wooster Streets
- Walkability
- Access to University
- Older and varied architecture

- Parks and city pool
- Neighbors
- Downtown
- Sense of community
- Manageable

- Residents – people – diversity
- Carter Park – Ridge Parks – “future green space”
- Active churches
- Walkability – university – downtown – parks
- Well-maintained homes and trees
- University – events – play – music – sports, etc.
- Industrial space off Dunbridge
- Education – Crim
- Big trees
- Historic architecture – courthouse – homes

- Green – trees, parks, tree/lawns by sidewalks
- Compact – easy to get to activities
- Downtown – events, “vibrant”
- Pride of ownership – well-maintained properties
- Neighborhood schools and their partnership with community
- Diversity of churches

- Churches (St. Mark’s, St. Al’s, etc.)
- Community center
- Affordable options for apartments, etc.
- BGSU/proximity to BGSU
- BG City schools
- Downtown
- Simpson Garden Park
- City park/pool
- Trees
- Historic buildings – courthouse, architecture

- Small businesses
- Bungalows/craftsman houses
- Ridge Park
- BGSU – culture
- Slippery Elm Trail
- Car museum / car show / downtown farmers’ market
- Open green space – downtown
- Ice cream / coffee shops / restaurants
- Local culture – art, music – now
- Black Swamp Festival
- City schools
- Volunteerism / big retired community
- Library
- Churches, etc. and community organizations
- Big youth population
- Access to sporting events
- Great place to raise child
- Sense of community

- Parks and recreation
- Safety
- Walkability
- Downtown
- Constant improvement
- Schools

- Simpson Park / city pool
- Community center
- Courthouse (historical)
- Green space
- Downtown with Black Swamp, car show, parade
- Historic area – Buttonwood, Maple, Church

- Parks
- Family-friendly neighborhoods
- Social services
- Performing arts center
- Focus on green energy
- Municipal utilities
- Appreciation of the arts
- Safety – police, fire
- Walkability
- Things to do
- Openly acknowledge problems
- Well-maintained properties

- Historic homes
- Parks
- Walkability
- Local business character
- Functioning downtown
- Library
- People
- The Common Good on Crim
- Service provider collaboration
- Local ownership (versus absentee landlords)
- Access to recreation/entertainment

## Issues

- Poor public transit or a lack thereof
  - Consistency of code enforcement, education
  - Lack of parking
  - Division between the University and City
  - Perceived division between the landlords and homeowners
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- All new development on Wooster is cheap chain restaurant food – why need more?
  - 40 years of University and the City not acting on students living off campus and the effects on our housing stock
  - Little code enforcement – no rental inspections
  - Apartment-alization – no inspections
  - Parking – many people park on east side to go to class who don't live where they park
  - No bike infrastructure
  - Private trash trucks at 3 AM
  - Need park at Manville and Clough
  - Why buy land for soccer fields and not use city park golf course?
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- Maintenance of property lowering property values
  - Absentee landlords  
Vandalism – safety
  - Disrespect of neighbors
  - Lack of diversity
  - Nonconforming houses (code enforcement)
  - Noise
  - Parking
  - Lack of landlord accountability
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- Absentee ownership
  - Inadequate zoning enforcement
  - Vandalism
  - Over-occupancy
  - Littering
  - Noise, parties, late evening activities not conducive to family living
  - Cost of community center passes
  - Bike access – sharing of the road
  - Congestion at peak times: cars/people/bikes – Uber/driverless cars/public transportation???
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- Trash – stunning litter – poor enforcement
  - Poor enforcement
  - Poorly maintained homes/rentals – very high percentage
  - Nuisance parties – loud parties
  - Accessibility – e.g. broken sidewalks, biking
  - Adversarial relations – renters vs. home owners, landlords vs. home owners
  - Defunct businesses – e.g. Clark, the Shed, including ground railroad tracks

- Affordable family housing
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- Lack of affordable housing for professionals, seniors, and millennials
  - Imbalance of owner-occupied vs. rental housing
  - Deteriorating housing
  - Over-occupancy
  - Non-conforming properties
  - Ineffective code enforcement and procedures (city vs. county)
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- Lack of curb appeal: landscape upkeep; weeds; beer cans; et al.
  - Trash
  - Condition of homes
  - Parking issues
  - Code enforcement
  - Better town/gown orientation
  - Too many residents in rental units
  - Restrictions on small business
  - No historic policy re: preservation
  - Realtor responsibility for maintaining rental properties – need for better management
  - No sidewalks
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- Lack of parking
  - Rental housing is not affordable
  - Well-kept/visually appealing homes (accountability for)
  - Signage/rental advertising
  - E. Wooster “welcome” signs at college houses
  - Compliance w/ cat leash law
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- Absent landlords
  - How to get rentals converted to single family
  - Code enforcement/staff to do it
  - Feasible bike/walking lanes
  - Jobs
  - Transit on streets Sat/Sun mornings
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- Absentee landlords who don't maintain property
  - Maintenance – becoming safety
  - Unruly behavior
  - Non-compliant structures creates parking issues
  - Geographic segregation of owner and renter occupied housing
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- Downtown overnight accommodations
- Code enforcement – Staffing?? Compliance??
- No bike friendly areas
- Blight
- Attract/retain young professionals

- Lack of variety of restaurants
- Night life for non-college age
- Single-family home to rental conversions

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- Lack of sidewalks/complete sidewalks
  - Noise/partying/disruptions
  - Traffic noise/traffic
  - Lack of transportation
  - Speed bumps for alleyways
  - Difficult access to social services for low-income residents
  - No bike lanes

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- Lack of maintenance/accountability
  - Enforcement of regulations
  - Loss of community involvement/pride
  - Lack of pride
  - Long-distance landlords

## Opportunities

- More collaboration and financial investment from University
  - Airport and link to University
  - Exit 181 beautification
  - Higher-end, grad student rentals, townhomes
  - South end of BG
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- Court Street to one-way street from BGSU to Downtown – pedestrian on one-side, bike traffic on the other side – try it before doing anything permanent
  - Develop green space – N. Enterprise and Ridge
  - Green space downtown – programmed activities
  - Community gardens on a larger scale
  - Biggest problem – housing issue – look at rental housing inspection program again
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- Grants for improvements
  - Bike and running paths
  - Neighborhood action groups
  - Allow progress/change
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- Buy Burger Chef building / tear down
  - Bike rental/path
  - Public recognition for property improvement
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- Housing development for mid-range priced housing
  - Housing for retirees
  - City concierge liaison for housing
  - I-75 completion leading to business growth
  - Take advantage of the talent pool here
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- Appealing walk/bike corridors between downtown and U as alternative to Wooster
  - Bikeability (implementation of 2007 transportation master plan)
  - Get the trucks out of downtown
  - Arts district
  - S. Main School green space – use existing building for local theatre
  - City-wide high speed internet
  - Tech industry/jobs
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- Close Court St. from BGSU to Main – pedestrian
  - Senior housing/assisted living with international students and way to cross – walking bridge
  - Buy library parking – grove to Conneaut – addition to bakeries/townhouses/multiuse
  - Put city building at Crim if/when elementary schools consolidate lots of parking land – win-win for the school
  - Choose one whole street to improve altogether

- Collaboration – city, schools, university, Habitat for Humanity, churches, non-profits, service, rental property owners all partnering – all choosing one BIG BG project a year (like one whole street project)
- “Welcome wagon” type intros to community/neighborhood or “block parties”
- Green space for town, gown, ed uses, arts, kite flying
- BGSU living-learning adult community retiree living on campus – elder hostel activities
- Wooster-Manville corner to train tracks
- Green space at Wooster and Church
- Court Street
- Using transportation opportunities more deliberately/extensively for economic development (i.e. rain, highway)

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- Wooster Street corridor – mixed-use opportunity (commercial/residential)
  - Centralize social services for residents and students
  - Recycling downtown and within residential areas
  - Biker lanes – Court, Manville/Thurstin, Wooster especially
  - Charging stations for cars (more)

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- Dog park near downtown
  - Creative landscaping/uses of city property
  - Vacant commercial property
  - Repaving questionable streets/sidewalks
  - Work with existing developers/organizations to bring in large-scale development
  - Affordable/faculty and staff housing

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- Regularly scheduled public transportation from city to University and University to town
  - Attract businesses to make BG a destination to outside
  - Connect bike paths to destinations
  - Creative zones using existing empty properties and grounds
  - Green space

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- Artistic use of open spaces
  - More frequent safe pedestrian crossings on Wooster Street
  - Train access as public transportation to and from BG
  - Incentives to encourage owner-occupied homes – young professionals, young seniors, BGSU professors, city employees

## Early Action Projects

- New park at Clough and Manville (old water tower site)
  - Close golf course at end of this season and turn it back into a park
  - Bike trails now! Start with downtown to BGSU corridor
  - Ask the major landlords to identify five (5) action projects and organize/pay to do them
  - City council to pass a comprehensive apartment inspection and license program
  - Hire more code enforcement within 6 months
  - Get BGSU to be an active participant in this process
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- Finish bike trail to community center
  - Bike map – best ways to stores, etc.
  - Neighborhood cleanup – start on numbered streets?
  - Neighborhood planting day
  - T-shirts for volunteers – or a sign in businesses – sign to identify who is supporting these projects – BG cap
  - Spread information about this project – innovative ways to publicize
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- Neighborhood clean-up
  - Paint and tear down Burger Chef (Chip Myles)
  - Brush pick-up
  - Big trash pick-up
  - Block parties – Rock the Block!
  - Dog park
  - Community garden
  - Quarterly community events
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- Adopt-a-block
  - Create code enforcement – lawn, bushes, etc.
  - Painting
  - University students clean-up
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- Bike culture/education/etiquette
  - Bike signage/lanes
  - Safe crosswalks
    - Enforcement
    - Better signage like by the high school
  - Neighborhood-scale public planting project
  - Flag on street lights extended further from downtown
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- Community gardens – one per city district
- Community composts established
- One rehab house on east side with city businesses (to flip) – partnership with Habitat for Humanity’s down the road
- Green space downtown – make it BG’s town square, dedicated in perpetuity
- Landscape a house or more – east side and all other wards – a piece

- Beautify Bowling Green – reinstitute – different regions of city and curb appeal with volunteers
  - Court Street – make it immediately a pedestrian street
  - Grants – can this be a BGSU class project collaboration for city improvement
  - Meetings with all partners (in the mix) with one partner with authority from BGSU, city, schools, realtors, business, church, services, non-profits
  - Dog park – rent empty land from hospital – back of hospital that is open to connect next to Conneaut Hill Park
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- More plantings and cheap streetscape
  - Murals (community projects) – other public art, collaborate with BGSU
  - Program green spaces with music, etc.
  - Neighborhood clean-up or target of opportunity
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- Develop and sell t-shirts to market the BG CAP
  - Neighborhood clean-up events (annual) – spring service project – BGSU and community
  - Seasonal service projects – raking leaves, shoveling snow, and mowing lawns, etc.
  - Dog park
  - Community gardens
  - More service day events (other than MLK weekend)
  - Encourage home owners and renters and landlords to take advantage of \$20 Home Energy Audits offered by Columbia Gas to BG residents and very favorable offer to insulate homes with only \$300 out of pocket from residents
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- Landscaping city properties and open spaces (i.e. Thurstin and Wooster)
  - Resolve old Jr. High/W. Wooster green space
  - Enforce tree ordinance with regard to commercial property
  - Hire additional code enforcement officer
  - Food trucks
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- Make improvements to crosswalk at Clay and Ridge at N. Main
  - Organize a closer recycling point, especially for students
  - Organize volunteer groups to clean up litter/trash on monthly basis or for special events (e.g., Swamp Arts)
  - Increase connection with service groups on campus
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- Project Love BG for residents and students to reduce vandalism and litter, instilling respect for BG
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- Neighborhood cleanup – use university students?
- Block party to help educate students when moving into neighborhoods
- Improve frequency of large item and brush pick-up
- Location for brush drop-off for residents