City of Bowling Green

Future Land Use Section
2014 Update
Comprehensive Plan
It is the intention of the Bowling Green community to be a distinct family-friendly, college town comprised of a diverse community of residents, business owners, shopkeepers, and students.

It is our intent to be an economically viable and environmentally sustainable place comprised of households and businesses alike that work together to steward scarce natural resources.

It is our intent that our neighborhoods be walkable, safe, and vibrant, and our streets beautiful and appealing.
We are here

November through April:
- Current Plan Deemed Obsolete
- Intense Analysis of Market, Plans, Codes
- Interview and Discussions with Planning Commission, City Council, Senior Staff, Various Groups, Individuals
- Intense Back-Forth with Representative Steering Committee
- Steering Committee Produces Statements of Core Values, Priorities, and Aspirations

May through July:
- czb/MIG Retained to Draft New Plan
- czb/MIG and Steering Committee Refines Land Use Plan into FINAL DRAFT
- Public Shapes / Refines Version 2.0
- Version 2.0 DRAFT available for public comment on 4/28/14
- Development of Land Use Plan DRAFT
- Steering Committee Presents Preliminary Findings to City Council

August Through October:
- Final Draft review by Steering Committee
- Final Draft review by Senior Staff
- Final Draft review by Planning Commission with hearings and/or public comment recommendation
- bowling green City Council Reviews
- Hearings and/or Public Comment
- Reject
- Purpose - Update on Land Use Plan
“If you don’t know exactly where you’re going, how will you know when you get there?” — Steve Maraboli

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.” -Eleanor Roosevelt

“If you don’t know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else.” -Yogi Bera

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” — Benjamin Franklin

“Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all is a form of planning.” — Gloria Steinem

“Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” — Warren Buffet

“Whether you think you can or whether you think you can’t, you’re right!” -Henry Ford

“The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.” — John F. Kennedy

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Purpose of Planning

- Get the “big stuff” right
  (avoid paying 3x’s-install, undo, re-install)

- Anticipate future needs

- Consistent, predictable decisions
  (get everyone on the same page)
Asking the Tough Questions

- What’s “working” and “not working”
  - What is our current trajectory?

- How can BG better compete in the region?
  - Just like businesses, cities are also in competition with each other

- How can we better coordinate with BGSU
  - Universities are also facing competition. Can we have greater mutual benefit?

- What is our Target “Market”?
  - Who do we want to attract and what will appeal to them?

Thinking critically, focusing on current demographics, and looking at 5, 10, 15, and 20 years from now
Focusing on Assets

- Good Schools
- Parks
- Downtown
- Arts
- Culture
- Well-Kept Homes & Neighborhoods
- Pride
- Abundant shaded neighborhood streets

Civic Engagement

BGSU
Population Outlook: Flat
In the City’s General Fund, 2014 Revenue is $2 Million Less than 2007 Revenue
Data Analysis: Housing/Neighborhoods

60% of BG Housing is Renter Occupied

90% of renters adjacent to and south of BGSU are under 25 years old
Disorderly Conduct Reports By Neighborhood

Data Analysis: Housing/Neighborhoods

Bowling Green Parcels
# of Disorderly Conduct Incidents, 2009-2010
- 1
- 2 - 9
- 10 - 84

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The fiscal health and success of Bowling Green and BGSU are interrelated.

Cities and Universities are in Competition with global, market, and economic forces at work.

BGSU

- 6,000 students living on campus
- 70 countries represented by BGSU students
- ~19,000 students at BGSU
- 147 BGSU “Bang for Buck” ranking of 349 national universities, highest of Ohio public institutions

- 800+ BGSU faculty, a significant portion of whom live elsewhere and commute into BG
- 16% of BGSU students are non-traditional\(^1\) (the national average is approaching 50%)

\(^1\) Non-traditional = one or more of the following: over 25, working full time, married with children, taking less than ¾ of normal class load.
Assets + Data Analysis + SC + Small Group Input =

Areas of Focus for Public Input

Steering Committee
Open House
Surveys
Written Comments
City Staff
Small Groups
Conversations
Consultant Meetings
Community Open House: 250+ attendees
Public Input: Survey Results (423)

Bowling Green needs to have new development (zoning) regulations that are up to date and capable of addressing today’s contemporary market and development challenges

Public input supports the need for the plan update

Bowling Green needs a new comprehensive plan to direct growth and re(development) activities

Legend:
- **Blue**: Agree Strongly
- **Green**: Agree
- **Orange**: Neutral
- **Red**: Disagree
- **Purple**: Disagree Strongly
Public Input: Northeast

“Please help families who live south of Wooster near Crim school. In recent years many of those single family homes have been turned in to rental housing and are falling into disrepair. With a great public school nearby, this neighborhood should be attractive to BGSU faculty and staff with families, but it's quickly becoming a party ghetto.”

“Landlords need to be held accountable for the properties that they own. Upkeep of those properties is essential. I am tired of seeing slum-like conditions in the NE and SE areas of my community.”

“We think that the time has come to consider trading with landlord/developers, allowing re-zoning of selected areas in Wards 1 and 2 so as to allow townhouses or even apartment buildings, IN EXCHANGE for the landlords/developers converting their R-2 rental houses back to single family use. This should be a guaranteed trade; the City should extract real progress toward restoration of our older neighborhoods in exchange for the higher density zoning.”

81% said they “Agree Strongly” or “Agree” with the proposed approach for Northeast Neighborhood.
Public Input: Southeast

82% “Agree Strongly” or “Agree” that the Conditions in the SE Neighborhood Need Attention

“How will we protect these areas when people are allowed to park on the grass, not mow their lawns, not trim or cut their bushes, not repair homes and buildings, not control pets… I would happily invest back into my property and my rental homes if I knew my neighbors weren't going to park junk cars in their back yard…”

“Be mindful of pre-existing non-conforming uses. People own and purchase their property expecting to be able to continue current uses. Provided they maintain their property reasonably well government should not try to void those uses, at least until they are legally abandoned.”
“I believe that it is within our abilities to make BG a more appealing and trendy place to live. I visit Ann Arbor as much as I can when the weather is nice. That city has a healthful vibe. They have safe, wide bike lanes, outdoor seating with umbrellas in the downtown area. They appear to have found a balance between accommodating cars and bikes/walkers.”

“I support the proposed approach for BG’s Downtown”

“I think a parking garage would be beneficial to the downtown area. There are ways that other cities have successfully done this without it sticking out like a sore thumb... a college town with a lot of downtown activity that has successfully done this is Athens, OH. They have a multi-level parking garage that is sort of hidden and nobody notices that it's a parking garage but it is utilized by many.”
Public Input: East Wooster

77% “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the proposed E. Wooster Approach

“BGSU must be encouraged to invest in E. Wooster corridor. Private investment and/or joint private/government projects are necessary. Need to be creative to accomplish project goals.”

“Please balance the aesthetic and ideal with the practical and realistic. A pretty median at the expense of a recent (and hard-won) turn lane could again clog traffic and imperil safety (rear-end crashes) as drivers slow and stop to turn.”

“The east side of Bowling Green needs attention, especially east of I-75. When you get off the ramp there is nothing there and it looks like this city has nothing to offer.”
I believe it’s time for Bowling Green to increase its level of reinvestment in itself.
“Landlords should not be viewed as the enemy. Students should not be viewed as the enemy. Bars should not be viewed as the enemy.”

“Quality of life is the most important issue affecting Bowling Green, and that issue most clearly impacts the east side of town. Most of the energy spent updating the plan should be focused on the east side and bringing it up to par with the west side. It’d be great if we could see some creative thought and willpower going toward creating bike lanes and connecting the city and campus, more parks/green spaces, better housing, and more cultural amenities to make BG a vibrant city that attracts and retains young people.”

“Someone said that the City needs to decide whether it wants to be married to the university and have industry as a mistress or vice versa. I feel that by making changes that make BG more appealing to college students, young professionals and young families we are actually making the community more attractive to industry as well.”

“BG needs to encourage a progressive vision yet maintain the charms of an ‘olde’ town - preserve the past, but offer QUALITY. A Levis Commons instead of our dying mall would be great. More bike paths and much more attention to the ‘poor side’ of town needs to be paid. Kudos to the planning commission for seeing this and FINALLY doing something about it!!!”
Public Input + SC Feedback + Data = We Need an Action Plan!
BG Needs to be able to retain & attract young professionals

93% of those surveyed agree that BG needs to be able to retain & attract young professionals
DRAFT Plan Highlights: Target Market

Why this Target Market?
- City has older demographic
- Strong entrepreneurial, professional workforce opportunity
- BGSU (opportunities to retain strong households now and into their life cycle)

More Specifically...
- Health & fitness (bike paths, sidewalks, parks)
- Entertainment (athletics, events, theaters)
- Local flavor/character (unique places, gathering spaces)

This Translates into...
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Quality of Life / Amenity-Rich Neighborhoods
- Vibrant Downtown
- Community Character and Aesthetics
DRAFT Plan Highlights: The 7 BG Principles

- Highly livable urban form
- Positive, appealing first impressions
- Local flavor
- Strong business base
- Broad Housing Spectrum
- “Good Neighbor” neighborhoods
- Easy access to health and fitness
DRAFT Plan Highlights: Applying the Principles

- Urban form
- Positive first Impressions

- Local character
- Strong business base

- "Good Neighbor" Neighborhoods
- Access to Health & Fitness

- E. Wooster
- Northeast

- Downtown
- Southeast

- Access to Health & Fitness

- Strong business base
DRAFT Plan Highlights: Applying the Principles

Northeast

strong need to connect BGSU to downtown (via pedestrian/bicycle) to increase patronage

Southeast

development potential
- local-serving commercial (mixed use)
- neighborhood parks
- interconnected local streets

E. Wooster

strong gateway features (planting, sculpture) create a striking ‘first impression’ of Bowling Green

Downtown
Proposed Timeline

Planning Commission – August and September (Public Hearing on 9/3/14 and potential recommendation that night).

Polished Draft to Planning Commission and public by mid-August (deadline 8/15/14).

City Council – September and October (Public Hearing TBD)
This is hard work…

If there is no sense of urgency, people will allow the status quo to continue

Fear of “rocking the boat” could stop the process

Not “everyone” will agree on “everything”

Easier to do nothing. But is that best for Bowling Green?

All progress requires work and cost...financial, political, and energy

Implementation: Action is required for the success of any plan