

**To:** X-Plan Steering Committee; Brian Forschner, AICP, City Planner

**From:** Brad Schwab, AICP

**Date:** November 1, 2011

**Subject:** October 27, 2011 Steering Committee #1 Summary

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In attendance:

- Sarah Amend, Planning and Zoning Commission
- Stephen Anderson, Greene County Regional Planning and Coordinating Committee
- Chris Berger, City Engineer
- Judy Ann Baker, XARC
- Mayor Marsha Bayless
- Mark Bazelak, Finance Director
- Steve Brodsky, Development Director
- Collett Burnett, Central State University
- Jerry Dedinger, Athletes in Action
- John Caupp, City Council
- Tiffany Foxx, Xenia YMCA
- Missy Frost, Greene County Dept. of Development
- Dan Jordan, Xenia Grace Chapel
- Martin Kim, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission
- David Kell, Greene County Dept. of Development
- Joe Kennedy, Kennedy Korner
- Alan Liming, Xenia Area Chamber of Commerce
- Jim Percival, City Manager
- Brad Phillips, P.F.D. Development
- Deb Piotrowski, Xenia Community Schools
- Michelle Sivert, PNC Bank
- Barbara Stafford, BRACA/Xenia Board of Education

Invited but unable to attend:

- Brent Merriman, Assistant City Manager
- Dr. Aaron James, Xenia Planning and Zoning Commission
- Tim Sontag, Xenia Shoe and Leather
- Joe Wright, Twist, Inc

The meeting started off with introductions and a review of the planning process and schedule. Opportunities for public participation were also discussed. Roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and assigned staff and consultants were reviewed. Results from eighteen stakeholder interviews were shared with Steering Committee. The results were grouped in three categories - Strengths, Weaknesses and Key Planning Issues. The Steering Committee discussed these items and added additional ideas.

The Steering Committee then ranked community strengths and weaknesses and key planning issues. Ranking was achieved through a prioritization exercise where each Steering Committee member present assigned a score from 1 through 5 in terms of each item's relative importance. A score of 1 indicates an item of lowest

importance; a score of 5 indicates an item of highest importance; and a score of 3 indicates an item of medium importance.

A summary of the top five results for each category – Strengths, Weaknesses and Key Planning Issues – follow. Rankings for all entries for all categories are attached.

### **Strengths**

Strengths are community attributes that offer a distinct advantage or serve as a source of community pride. These top ranked strengths really point to Xenia's potential to diversify and grow its local economy. Schools make the top five as both a strength and a weakness.

1. Xenia has ample vacant land and water and waste water infrastructure to attract new business and grow the economy.
2. Five new elementary schools are being constructed which will be a source of community pride when complete.
3. Xenia is an affordable community to own a house and operate a business.
4. Xenia is close to Wright Patterson AFB. Xenia should be able to attract some base related companies that don't mind a short commute to the base.
5. Xenia has a strategic regional location. It is close to urban areas and regional interstate highways – US 35, I-675, I-70, I-71 and I-75. Xenia is easy to get to. Commutes from Xenia are easy too.

### **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are liabilities that may hold a community back or are disadvantageous. Weaknesses can serve as a source of discontentment. As the below results indicate, the highest ranked weaknesses deal with community image and perception issues.

1. Xenia exhibits a poor community image resulting from a concentration of poverty, community aesthetics, and lack of branding and communication.
2. Negative perceptions of Xenia Community Schools. This perception may be driven by building age and architecture (curb appeal) more than actual academic performance.
3. Lack of entertainment options gives the perception that there is nothing to do in Xenia.
4. Empty or underutilized downtown storefronts cast a negative shadow over the entire community.
5. Improper building maintenance on behalf of a few property owners depicts a negative community image and prevents others from investing in building improvements.

### **Key Planning Issues**

Key Planning issues are priority issues the Comprehensive Plan should address. Most key planning issues focus on changing Xenia's community perception and attracting new business. Key planning issues 5, 6 and 7 ended in a three way tie.

1. Attract manufacturing companies to improve City finances and provide jobs to residents. Determine how to make Xenia more competitive.
2. Market Xenia's strengths externally. Change Xenia's regional image.

3. Determine how Xenia fits into the overall region and develop a brand and PR strategy to drive the desired story about Xenia.
4. Focus on the really important, critical issues to ensure the comprehensive plan provides clear direction and focus.
5. Develop a strategy to attract companies that are linked to Wright Patterson AFB that do not have to be located right outside the gate.
6. Develop a strategy to maintain the attractiveness and appeal of Xenia's neighborhoods and housing stock.
7. Work collaboratively with the Legacy Center and Athletes in Action to realize broader community benefits.

## Strengths

Rank	Questions	Total	Average	Responses
1	Xenia has ample vacant land and water and waste water infrastructure needed to attract business and grow the economy.	90	4.5	20
2	Five new elementary schools are being constructed which will be a source of community pride when complete.	89	4.45	20
3	Xenia is an affordable community to own a house and operate a business.	84	4.2	20
4	Xenia is close to Wright Patterson AFB. Xenia should be to attract some base related companies that don't mind a short commute to the base.	83	4.15	20
5	Xenia has a strategic regional location. Close to urban areas and regional interstate highways – US 35, I-675, I-70, I-71 and I-75. Xenia is easy to get to. Commutes from Xenia are easy too.	78	4.11	19
6	Xenia has Shawnee Park and other abundant parks and greenspace.	81	4.05	20
7	We are #1 in bike paths in Midwest.	79	3.95	20
8	Xenia is surrounded by colleges and universities and offers a good location to provide housing and services to college employees and students.	79	3.95	20
9	Xenia's small town attributes are a strength—low crime, walkable, trust.	79	3.95	20
10	Xenia is home to leading, high tech companies like Frontier Technologies, Barco and Rogosin Institute.	77	3.85	20
11	Xenia has a diverse population and workforce for its size.	74	3.7	20
12	Downtown and historic neighborhoods provide a sense of place and identity for the City and its residents.	68	3.4	20
13	Aquifer, near endless supply of water.	61	3.39	18
14	Xenia's population exhibits a strong work ethic – a point that is recognized by existing companies. Our workforce can be used to attract new companies.	63	3.32	19
15	Historic neighborhoods/tree lined streets.	62	3.1	20
16	Diversity of churches.	56	2.95	19
17	Xenia is a resilient community with the ability to persevere and overcome hardships.	57	2.85	20

## Weaknesses

Rank	Questions	Total	Average	Responses
1	Xenia exhibits a poor community image resulting from concentration of poverty, community aesthetics, and lack of branding and communication.	92	4.6	20
2	Negative perceptions of Xenia Community Schools. This perception may be driven more by building age and architecture (curb appeal) more than actual academic performance.	85	4.25	20
3	Lack of entertainment options gives the perception that there is nothing to do in Xenia.	84	4.2	20
4	Empty or underutilized downtown storefronts cast a negative shadow over the entire community.	82	4.1	20
5	Improper building maintenance on behalf of a few property owners depicts a negative community image and prevents others from investing in building improvements.	78	3.9	20
6	Xenia's housing stock is showing signs of distress and deferred maintenance in certain pockets. Market obsolescence is another issue all of which question the long-term vitality of some neighborhoods.	77	3.85	20
7	City finances are flat due to smaller income tax receipts and lower state transfer tax threatening the City's ability to provide previous levels of service and adequately maintain infrastructure.	75	3.75	20
8	Closure of several manufacturing plants within the regional and loss of related low skill, high wage jobs.	73	3.65	20
9	Residents have to leave Xenia to shop for clothes and many other items as a result of malls and big box stores located out of town.	71	3.55	20
10	Young families don't feel welcome in Xenia - nothing to do.	67	3.53	19
11	Xenia is not perceived as a college friendly town.	57	3.35	17
12	Xenia is perceived as business unfriendly because of the perceived number of departments a person must contact during the process of starting a business in Xenia.	66	3.3	20
13	Xenia lacks a benefactor with the resources needed to lead and invest in community projects.	65	3.25	20
14	Communication by and among various Xenia organizations is weak. Bad news is constant and good news gets distorted.	65	3.25	20
15	No neighborhood/convenience retail.	55	2.89	19
16	Loss of grand and historic structures resulting from tornado has negatively changed the landscape and image of Xenia.	48	2.4	20

## Key Planning Issues

Rank	Questions	Total	Average	Responses
1	Attract manufacturing companies to improve City finances and provide jobs to residents. Determine how to make Xenia more competitive.	90	4.5	20
2	Market Xenia externally. Change Xenia's regional image.	40	4.44	9
3	Determine how Xenia fits into the overall region and develop a brand and PR strategy to drive the desired story about Xenia.	83	4.15	20
4	Focus on the really important, critical issues to ensure the comprehensive plan provides clear direction and focus.	83	4.15	20
5	Develop a strategy to attract companies that are linked to Wright Patterson AFB that do not have to be located right outside the gate.	81	4.05	20
6	Develop a strategy to maintain the attractiveness and appeal of Xenia's neighborhoods and housing stock.	81	4.05	20
7	Work collaboratively with the Legacy Center and Athletes in Action to realize broader community benefits.	81	4.05	20
8	Revitalize downtown, restore buildings and add critical mass of business to attract people.	79	3.95	20
9	Improve community aesthetics through property enhancement projects and making sure new developments abide by a reasonable set of standards.	76	3.8	20
10	Need all agencies and civic minded organizations to work together towards achieving common goals. This will help close funding gaps and reduce duplication of services and facilities.	76	3.8	20
11	Leverage Xenia's fame as a Midwestern bicycling hub to make Xenia a bigger tourist destination.	73	3.65	20
12	Get one or more of the area's colleges and universities to invest in Xenia.	71	3.55	20
13	Create a more integrated system of bike paths, parks and greenspaces so these same amenities become synergistic with stronger linkages to neighborhoods.	68	3.4	20
14	Do more to make Xenia "pedestrian friendly" expanding on the great infrastructure already in place. Be known as the most pedestrian friendly town around.	60	3	20
15	Regional issues that impact Xenia - like US 35 traffic signals and elimination of at-grade intersections.	25	2.78	9