

# A6

## VISION SESSION SUMMARY



*The Vision Session is a vital opportunity for the Planning Commission to gain the input of residents, other City officials, and community leaders.*

**O**n November 11, 2003, over forty people met at the Hayden-Ford Mill Community Center to participate in a Vision Session designed to gather public input on the City of Tecumseh Master Plan. Participants included business owners, residents, Planning Commission and City Council members, public safety officials, and planners.

The participants were divided into six groups to discuss several questions during the two-hour visioning process. The questions were developed to generate a variety of thoughts and stimulate discussion on the future of the City of Tecumseh. The following questions were asked:

- What defines the City of Tecumseh?
- What can the City do to maintain and preserve its community character?
- What needs/desires are there for improved and/or additional City services and community facilities?
- What types of residential development are needed within the community?
- Which areas of the City are more suitable for higher density and multiple family development?
- Need/desire/locations for more commercial outside of downtown?
- Downtown—adequate parking, need for additional uses, other improvements?
- Need/desire/locations for more industrial/research & development/high tech development?

- Need/desire/locations for office uses?
- Adequacy of existing street network?
- Future needs and desires—new roads, roads to be widened, etc.?
- Specific safety concerns?
- Bike paths/sidewalks—desired locations?

Following the small-group discussions, a designated representative of each group presented the consensus of the group's ideas. The comments were recorded on a large tablet for all participants to view. At the end of the evening, each participant was given four dots in order to mark those comments or ideas that the participant thought were most important to pursue for the Master Plan. In this way, a general consensus could be determined for each question posed to the group. Using these group comments, the Vision Statement (which appears in Chapter 4) was developed to reflect the overall consensus of the group. The ultimate purpose of the Vision Statement is to provide significant public input into the formulation of goals, objectives, and policies statements. In that regard, the experience is invaluable to the Planning Commission and City Council, and provides them important guidance.

***What defines the City of Tecumseh?***

Participants see their city as a vibrant place with a small town feel. They feel that the City is a safe and friendly community with a strong economic development structure, good schools, and important and distinctive historical features.

***What can the City do to maintain and preserve its community character?***

Several participants think that the City of Tecumseh should acquire more land, so as to have better control over its development. They also feel that it is important for the City to encourage preservation and restoration of existing buildings, and that design standards and zoning ordinances should be strictly enforced.

***What needs/desires are there for improved and/or additional City services and community facilities?***

Many participants would like to see an expansion of Rails to Trails in the area. They also feel that more recreational opportunities for children and teens are needed, and that the City's many waterways could be emphasized more. Downtown public restrooms, an expansion of City Hall, a fire station at the north end of town, more parks, and public transportation were other ideas that garnered support.

***What types of residential development are needed within the community?***

A large number of participants feel that there is a great need for phased senior housing in the City. Many participants also support the idea of building condos or brownstones in the downtown. Some participants would like to see more expensive housing being built in the City, while others feel that maintaining quality housing in a variety of price ranges is important.

***Which areas of the City are more suitable for higher density and multiple family development?***

Several different ideas arose in response to this question, including southeast outside the City limits, northwest, and south near Tecumseh Products. Other participants feel that no such development is necessary for the City.

***Need/desire/locations for more commercial outside of downtown?***

Many participants feel that the City needs more lodging facilities. Many also agree that the Evans/Brown shopping area could benefit from redevelopment efforts. Others would like to see a grocery at the north and east ends of town. Some residents pointed out that the downtown area should be filled with businesses before the City considers expanding commercial zoning, while others feel that more commercial zoning would be appropriate in the near future.

***Downtown—adequate parking, need for additional uses, other improvements?***

Participants are satisfied with existing downtown parking; however, some feel that entrances to the City and to City-owned parking lots should be enhanced. The Carnegie Library building is an issue that some people feel needs to be addressed through another Vision Session. Some uses that participants would like to see in the downtown are more retail, more restaurants, and lodging facilities.

***Need/desire/locations for more industrial / research & development / high tech development?***

Participants think that a partnership between the City and Tecumseh Township to develop an industrial park could be profitable, although others caution that existing industrially-zoned land should be used up first.

***Need/desire/locations for office uses?***

Participants suggested encouraging office uses to move off of Chicago Boulevard in the downtown area and onto side streets, leaving the main street for retail and restaurants.

***Adequacy of existing street network? Future needs and desires—new roads, roads to be widened, etc.? Specific safety concerns?***

In general, residents are not interested in expanding the street network or widening roads. They do have some specific concerns about intersections that might benefit from left turn lanes or traffic lights. They think that one-way streets should revert to two-way. One item on which most participants agree is the necessity of a truck route to keep industrial traffic out of the downtown and away from residential areas.

***Bike paths/sidewalks—desired locations?***

There is overwhelming support for more bike paths in the City, with several specific recommendations for where sidewalks should be extended and bike paths should be built.

## COMMENTS FROM VISION SESSION PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Note: Check marks indicate that more than one group contributed the same comment. Number of dots indicates how many dots were placed next to the comment at the end of the Vision Session.

### COMMUNITY CHARACTER

#### 8 DOTS

Rails to trails √√

#### 6 DOTS

Teen center and recreation areas

#### 4 DOTS

Truck route

#### 3 DOTS

City should acquire land √

Encourage preservation and restoration √√

Strong economic development department

#### 2 DOTS

Indoor recreation for children √√

Development of waterways √√√

#### 1 DOT

Enforce design standards √√√

Grants to restore buildings and homes

Support hospital

Control growth

Enforce zoning √

Recognize people who do things right

Improved use of community center

Land for industrial park √

Senior housing

North side utilities/services

Outdoor pool

Amphitheater

Combat interstate

Proactive, not reactive planning

#### 0 DOTS

Continue "Promotion of Past"

Encourage community pride

Don't stagnate

Recognize value of what we have

Support police/fire departments

Maintain infrastructure

Convert historic homes back to single-family dwellings

Promote existing seasonal events

Attract teens and keep them busy

Quality leaders

Involve new generations in civic pride and

development

Education

Promote community volunteerism

Public transportation √

Men's and especially women's clothing stores

Community college satellite

Dog park

More seasonal events especially winter

Expand City Hall √

Spring cleanup

Community arts program

Improve cemetery

More parks √

West end improvements

Create incentives for improvements

Planning sessions vital

Include adjoining townships in planning and services

(police/fire), will help keep taxes low

Downtown restrooms √

Street sweeping

Fire station at north end of town √

Continually protect rivers/greenways

Unique shops

Understated signage

Small-town festivals/parades

Planned activities for youth

*Vision Session Summary*

**DEFINES TECUMSEH**

3 DOTS

Strong economic development  
Sense of safety ✓

2 DOTS

Schools

1 DOT

Historical features ✓✓✓✓✓  
Small town feel ✓✓✓✓✓  
Well-kept ✓✓  
Strong sense of community ✓  
Progressive

0 DOTS

Feels vibrant ✓✓  
Downtown architecture ✓  
Industrial base ✓  
Quality restaurants  
Proximity to larger cities ✓  
Friendly ✓✓✓  
Conservative  
No interstate connection  
Distinctive neighborhoods  
Excellent public services ✓  
Library and civic auditorium  
Cooperative citizens  
Well-rounded variety of businesses  
Civic pride

**RESIDENTIAL**

15 DOTS

Progressive senior housing like Grand Court in Adrian  
✓✓✓

7 DOTS

Condos/brownstones in downtown

2 DOTS

More affluent housing ✓  
Rental property inspections

1 DOT

Maintain quality housing in variety of price ranges  
Less dense development

0 DOTS

Additional condos ✓  
New single family houses ✓  
Starter homes \$125-150,000 or less ✓  
Senior developments  
Phased senior housing ✓  
Income-based housing  
Upper-story residential in downtown ✓  
Redevelopment & infill on currently underutilized land  
Areas for more dense development:  
    Southeast outside City limits  
    Not applicable to Tecumseh, maybe on edge of town  
    Northwest ✓  
    South by Tecumseh products  
Designated resident parking in downtown  
Convert older homes back to SF  
Sensitivity to historic homes coming on the market  
Anticipate changes in uses of grandfathered commercial property in residential areas  
Trend: population push coming from Ann Arbor  
Housing too expensive  
Taxes too high  
No effects from Cabela's yet

## *Vision Session Summary*

### **COMMERCIAL**

#### 8 DOTS

Lodging

#### 3 DOTS

Evans/Brown shopping area needs help

#### 2 DOTS

North side grocery

Resolution to Carnegie library building—hold a vision session

Use marketing study

#### 1 DOT

Grocery store/farmer's market at east end of town (old Napa building)

Entrances to city and parking lots need to be enhanced

Incentives for office uses to move out of downtown

More commercial zoning

Logan/Evans needs to be developed ✓

Develop office/service off the main streets ✓

More retail

Additional restaurants

Truck route ✓

#### 0 DOTS

Area of office/residential mix

Encourage medical/dental near hospital but mediate effects on neighborhood

Aesthetics ✓

Office/service in underutilized areas

North end for office (plaza)

N. Evans office

West end streetscape

Maintain status quo

Designate area for office to keep them in town

Utilize 2<sup>nd</sup> stories for apartments/galleries ✓

Shared office/retail

Fill downtown before expanding ✓✓

Proactively encourage businesses we don't have

We already have good parking ✓✓

Bicycle parking

Downtown grocery store

Wayfinding signs

Flexibility in zoning

### **INDUSTRIAL**

#### 2 DOTS

City/townships share hi-tech industrial park

Use unused industrial facilities ✓

#### 1 DOT

Community college satellite

#### 0 DOTS

Be sensitive to truck issues ✓

May need to expand into township/425 agreement ✓

Continue to work with Lenawee Tomorrow

East end / Eton farm

Have own industrial park

### **TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION**

#### 6 DOTS

More bike paths ✓✓✓

LH turn lane at Maumee and Occidental

#### 5 DOTS

Keep trucks out of town ✓

#### 3 DOTS

Light at driveway by Doug & Ted's ✓

#### 2 DOTS

Protect boulevard from redevelopment ✓

Use Russell Rd as a truck route ✓

Reinstate sidewalk and driveway approach paving program

#### 1 DOT

Get rid of one-way on Ottawa

L turn light at Occidental and Chicago

No asphalt paths along residential streets

Extend boulevard sidewalks to west end ✓✓

#### 0 DOTS

Heavy traffic at school entrance ✓

Lack of curb cut definition

Connect subdivisions better

Don't widen existing streets

Beautify entrances

Street tree planting

Existing street network is good ✓

Widen Mohawk, curb and gutter

Fix fences downtown

Address cul-de-sac design standards

Lane widths on W. Chicago Boulevard

Maiden Lane too narrow

Bike path along Occidental

Path needed along Evans by high school

Paths needed outside main sidewalk system

Connect parks/schools/downtown/other trails

Pedestrian signals at west end

Access management at west end

Sidewalks near Stacy Mansion ✓