

**COMMUNITY INFORMATION PROJECT (CIP) BRAINSTORMING SESSION  
7/11/05**

The CIP team held a community brainstorming session at the Senior Citizens Center to glean perceptions and suggestions from community members on 7/11/05. This meeting was preceded by a public notice in the *YS News*. The event was introduced by Ron Schmidt, CIP project manager, who asked participants to help define new & creative ways to communicate that Yellow Springs is a special place to shop, work, learn, & live. The CIP arose out of Community Forums held the last two springs and is now in the project planning phase. Ideas generated subsequent to this session were also solicited for submittal to the project planning committee.

Fred Bartenstein facilitated the session and set the following ground rules:

- One person speaks at a time;
- If you wish to speak, raise your hand to be added to the queue; &
- People who have not spoken will be recognized first.

The object was to address ways to:

- Attract new residents;
- Attract appropriate new employers and strengthen existing ones;
- Increase visitation for shopping & recreation; &
- Attract learners to our educational institutions.

Topics addressed and results follow in the four major areas.

**LIVING – Attract new residents.**

1. What attracted you to live in the YS community?
  - Safety & security – low crime rate, “the Village” conducive to child rearing,
  - Diversity – people, housing & cultural activities.
  - Learning environment for children & adults,
  - Walk-able,
  - Rich, diverse cultural life,
  - Glen Helen, parks, open space,
  - Informed political & social awareness & activism,
  - Stimulating environment,
  - Kindred spirits,
  - Property values,
  - Community involvement & volunteerism is easy & encouraged,
  - Easy to find and make friends,
  - Supportive arts community,
  - Police, fire/rescue & village administration extremely supportive of and responsive to the community,
  - Vibrant Newspaper,
  - Giving / philanthropic community,
  - Interesting history & strong Historical Society,
  - Community feeling,
  - Wide variety of religious opportunities & tolerance of life-style choices,
  - Beautiful community & surroundings.

2. What is Truly Unique about living in YS?
  - Cooperatives,
  - Leadership school,
  - Antioch Writers Workshop,
  - Environment – mature trees,
  - Ready access to a number of major metropolitan areas [Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton) – with both airports & universities.
  - Antioch College,
  - Safe community,
  - Independent kids' activities,
  - Community support for uniqueness of individuals,
  - Climate – temperate,
  - Continuum of elder care – Best Continuing Care facility in OHIO,
  - Film-making community.
  
3. Strategy to attract individuals to live here? **HOW**
  - Retain renters in their 20s,
  - Make public transportation available,
  - Spectrum of housing alternatives,
  - Promote to people moving into the area before they find something else,
  - Good promotional materials -- WEBSITE, YS DVD, etc.
  - Seek appropriate developers – who offer unique & varied housing opportunities,
  - Address perception of excessive drug use and permissive attitude toward drugs,
  - Couple locals with local jobs,
  - Continue to support & enhance the cultural & arts programs,
  - Maintain the rural township & protect the green-belt,
  - Market 'green' building,
  - Not new residents – rather, new CITIZENS,
  - New resident outreach – events/meetings to get to know newcomers and familiarize them with YS; our version of "Welcome Wagon",
  - Take advantage of & improve existing communications like WYSO, Websites,
  - Approve accessibility for wheelchairs,
  - Wireless Village,
  - Promote that living in Village is financially feasible & responsible.
  
4. Personal experiences when first moving to YS?
  - Feeling of Safety in home & for children in community,
  - Kindergarten & Antioch School, Children's Center – excellent educational opportunities for children,
  - Diverse cultural activity,
  - "One visit and I was home"; no other place like it,
  - Welcoming & accepting,
  - Community events like Blues Fest, Street Fairs, Halloween bonfires,
  - WPAFB employment opportunities,
  - Education & science,
  - Shakespeare Theatre,
  - Acceptance of diversity – racial, ethnic, religious, family & life-style.

**WORKING – Attract appropriate new employers & strengthen existing ones.**

1. What is good about working in YS?
  - No commute / travel time or costs,
  - Convenient to interact with neighboring businesses (social & employment),
  - Commute from elsewhere is easy,
  - Businesses support each other,
  - Varied work places (home, plant, shop, ...),
  - Bike-able, walk-able,
  - Libraries are excellent resources (public & Antioch),
  - Good network of subcontractors,
  - Facilities for conferences & meetings,
  - Access to educational institutions,
  - Range of businesses opportunities from small to large,
  - Businesses are involved & supportive of community,
  - Business mentors,
  - Supportive Village government.
  
2. What is unique?
  - People like to work here – good for employers,
  - Highly educated workforce,
  - Diverse, esoteric skill base,
  - Community support for creative workers,
  - Women here have careers,
  - Employee ownership opportunities,
  - Places for lunch,
  - Pool of diverse services and talents & people seeking them.
  
3. Strategies to attract businesses.      **HOW**
  - Form a Community Development Agency – off-load the over-taxed village administration & Chamber of Commerce.
  - Hire a Village manager with economic development expertise,
  - Support farmers – Farmers’ Market → Green belt,
    - Expand/feature food processing activities.
  - More thorough internal communications network,
  - Provide system of public transportation,
  - Provide professional opportunities for students / graduates from area Universities,
    - Foster collaboration between Antioch College & neighboring Universities.
  - Demonstrate financial viability of doing business in Village,
  - Ombudsman for prospective & new businesses,
  - Pursue desirable businesses – green building technology & sustainable industries,
  - Forecast opportunities – future scan,
  - Stronger and more vibrant Chamber of Commerce,
  - Initiate a robust business incubator program,
  - ‘Round Two’ support for small business to assist in their scaling up of operations (employment),
  - Wireless Village,
  - Identify & promote facilities for businesses,
    - Adaptive reuse of Vernay plant.
  - Clarify & communicate the reasons YS is a good place to do business,
  - Research successful models in other communities,
  - Demonstrate financial viability of doing business in the Village.

4. Experiences of doing business in YS?
  - Meet shop owners & they are your friends,
  - Business mentors are available,
  - Subcontractors are supportive and friends,
  - Collaborative, creative environment gives opportunities to develop new solutions
  - Creative environment for graphic & visual arts & writing – “like NYC” ,
  - Support from service personnel,
  - Large number of active non-profits in community,
  - Clients are attracted to an interesting community,
  - Cache of YS business address gives national credibility,

**VISITING – Increase visitation for shopping and recreation.**

1. What attracted you?
  - Young’s Dairy,
  - Little Art theatre – foreign films,
  - Restaurants & food retailers– variety & quality,
  - Soccer fields / Gaunt Park complex (swimming, baseball, softball),
  - Community gatherings for conversation,
  - Mills Lawn playground,
  - Glen, John Bryan, Clifton Gorge, Eco-Camp,
  - Pedestrian friendly,
  - Specialty shops and unique shopping,
  - Range of retail – florist, pharmacy, market, hardware store, Dollar General,
  - Skate park,
  - Bike path, train station,
  - Theatres / Kids’ Playhouse,
  - No “big box, yuppified” chain stores,
  - Arts & crafts,
  - Diverse cultural activities – numerous free,
  - Clifton Mill,
  - Musical concerts,
  - Farmers Market.
  
2. What is truly unique?
  - Winds’ ,
  - Young’s Dairy (Ohio’s largest “agratainment” venue),
  - Skilled artisans,
  - Freedom of street vendors,
  - Glen Helen, John Bryan,
  - Easily walk-able business district but also accessible by car,
  - Unique theatres,
  - Clifton Mills – Christmas & food,
  - Community events – Blues Fest & Street Fairs,
  - WYSO.

3. Strategies for attracting visitors? **HOW**
  - More parking spaces and / or garages,
  - Transportation initiatives within YS & to other communities,
  - Extended shop hours,
  - Coordinate, advertise, celebrate walk-ability,
  - Sell YS – to YS residents to use downtown socially & economically,
  - Conversation centers – more public benches,
  - Community theatre,
  - Visual and performing arts center,
  - Barrier free / wheel chair accessible; improve sidewalks,
  - Focus visitors beyond Xenia Ave. to Dayton St., Corry St.,
  - Cross promotion of businesses & events,
  - Market – agra & eco tourism,
  - Link websites,
  - Participation in & demonstration by artists,
  - 1<sup>st</sup> class hotel – downtown with full service Spa & workshop & conference center,
  - French bakery – candy shop,
  - More supervision of skate park (from teen walk),
  - More trash cans & more frequent pickup,
  - Replace trash cans with benches,
  - Safe place signs – Convivial shopkeepers & residents,
  - Signage for Train Station,
  - Identifiable Visitors Center – with parking,
  - Public restrooms throughout town; Train Station too remote.
  
4. Personal Experiences?
  - Community pottery studio,
  - Antioch Shakespeare Theatre,
  - Farmers' Market,
  - Glen Helen,
  - Herb shops,
  - Bike path,
  - Walk-ability,
  - Little Art Theatre,
  - Winds',
  - Street Fair,
  - WYSO – listening & volunteering,
  - Antioch School,
  - Young's Dairy.

**EDUCATION – Attract Learners to our educational institutions.**

1. What attracts you?
  - Spectrum of learning resources [Antioch School → McGregor],
  - Learn from people in town – stimulating conversations,
  - Alternative – life long & life skills learning – yoga, meditation, etc.
  - Convenient, & many options,
  - Open minds – religious, political, life-style tolerance,
  - Community feeling,
  - Focus on music in the schools,
  - 12 major educational institutions within 30 minutes of YS,
  - K → 12 → college – teachers, professors, administrators live here & are accessible.

2. What is truly unique?
  - Antioch School,
  - Antioch College,
  - McGregor – teachers’ certification program, numerous unique programs,
  - Antioch Writer’s Workshop,
  - Leadership School,
  - Dharma Center,
  - Wide range of expertise for one on one learning,
  - Summer child care & educational programs,
  - Public school – low teacher / pupil ratio,
  - Range of tutorial expertise,
  - Robust spectrum of alternative health services & education,
  
3. Strategies to attract individuals to our learning environment? **HOW**
  - Address ‘bullying’ in schools; create safe places,
  - Appeal to locals who seek education elsewhere,
  - Antioch College – expand international student exchange opportunities,
  - Expand / extend opportunities for educational institutions to locate here,
  - Opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, trade schools,
  - Add facilities for large conferences, workshops, etc.,
  - Cooking school to develop synergy with local farmers & restaurants,
  - Make public transportation available,
  - Teaching of visual & performing arts,
  
4. Personal educational experiences?
  - Antioch School,
  - School enrichment programs,
  - Volunteer opportunities in the schools,
  - Use of Antioch Library,
  - Antioch Writers’ Workshop,
  - Charismatic, innovative teachers find opportunities to thrive,
  - YS Community Children’s’ Center - unique, non-traditional child care,
  - Antioch College,
    - Unique graduates like Rod Serling & Leonard Nimoy,
  - Diverse, life-long learning opportunities; sandal-making to meditation,
  - Sustained by marvelous conversations downtown,
  - High IQs within Village; highest library circulation in county,
  - Yoga, massage, Tai chi, etc.

### OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS –

- Wire-in implementation, e.g., roles for Chamber, government, etc.
- Address sustainability,
- Community Development Agency to coordinate implementation & resources.

### ATTENDEES

Len Kramer, Mark Crockett, Megan Quinn, Suzanne Patterson, Beth Holyoke, Bill Alexander, Don Hollister, Karl Koehler, Pat Murphy, Diane Chiddister (YS News), Daniel E. Tayler, Ven Adkins, Lee Morgan, Sharon R.K. Chenoweth, Jonathan Flanery, Suzanne Clauser, Krista Magaw, Jocelyn Hardman, Jake Hardman, Patti Dallas, Karen Wintrow, Jerry Sutton, Fred Bartenstein, Phyllis Schmidt, Ron Schmidt