

## Smart Growth Public Kickoff Meeting Countywide December 7, 2005

Residents attending the Washington County Smart Growth Kickoff meeting had an opportunity to participate in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) assessment of their community. Residents worked in groups of 6-10 people brainstorming issues on each component of the S.W.O.T. workshop. After each component, groups were asked to “\*” three issues that were of most importance that they would like to share with the entire group of participants. The following is the result of that workshop.

**Strengths:** Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities; Resources or capabilities that help a community be successful/strong.

- \*Natural beauty – rustic roads
- \*Parks and outdoor recreation (hunting and fishing)
- \*Strong infrastructure (utilities, roads, etc.)
- \*Education system
- \*Cultural and historical facilities
- \*‘‘Small town feel’’ and friendly
- \*Good municipal services and schools
- \*Good recreation areas and parks
- \*Good government
- \*Beautiful natural areas and open spaces
- \*Major north-south corridor as Hwy’s 41 and 45
- \*Strong educational base w/UWWC and MPTC, etc.
- Strong Ag industry that contributes 10% to the county’s economic base
- \*Proximity to major metro areas (i.e. Milwaukee, Chicago, Madison, Fox Valley)
- \*Kettle Moraine – unique geographically, Holy Hill, Pike and Cedar Lakes
- \*Employment opportunities for a strong work force
- \*Kettle Moraine Forest
- \*Beauty of rural terrain
- \*Neighborliness
- \*Good schools
- \*Parks and recreation - number of and quality – space, except for golf course
- \*Beauty of the Kettle Moraine
- \*Rural way of life – farms
- \*Reasonable taxes
- \*Good north-south roadway
- \*Great cultural attractions – museums, art center, Holy Hill, etc.
- \*Good natural resources: Gravel – lakes, wetlands, woodlands, sports – hunting
- \*We are not a large county (yet) (overpopulated)
- \*Diverse business base
- \*Agribusiness is still here
- \*Good schools
- \*Close to metro area
- \*Good medical facilities
- \*Room for growth
- \*Good agriculture community
- \*Good school systems
- \*Availability of Natural Resources
- \*Excellent county facilities – ex. –The Old School, Fair Park, etc.
- \*Utilized prime farmland
- \*Honest, hard working people
- \*Local control of zoning (town level)
- \*Excellent schools
- \*Good law enforcement
- \*Courteous people and well-behaved children
- \*Low crime level
- \*Good land diversification (marsh, up lands, dry lands, productive lands, wood lands)
- \*Low crime rate
- \*Good schools
- \*Urban/Rural diversity
- \*Kettle Moraine/Parks/Natural Beauty

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- Low crime compared to other areas
- Educational opportunities
- Lower taxes than metro-Milwaukee/area
- Mostly honest government
- Strong leadership – county and local
- Good work force
- Airports
- Good transportation routes
- “I live here”
- Good housing
- Honest government
- Good community organizations
- Washington-Ozaukee Land Trust
- Historical Society – active – The Old School
- Good record of preserving heritages
- Individuals involved in attracting industrial development
- Good leadership
- Good Midwest ethics (work)
- Strong agriculture base (people and land)
- Good roadways
- Great recreational facilities
- Good educational support (with schools) such as libraries and museums (art and history)
- Good industrial diversification
- Good job opportunities
- Accessible shopping
- Highway 41/45 corridors
- Proximity to Milwaukee/Fox Valley

### **Weaknesses:** Deficiencies in resources for a community to be successful.

- \*Lack of public transportation
- \*Lack of public participation in local gov't/planning
- \*Lack of industrial growth/economic development
- \*Lack of health insurance for many families
- \*High cost of housing
- \*Lack of good paying jobs
- \*Lack of land use planning
- \*Students not using education opportunities
- \*Blurring between rural and urban areas (no distinction between them)
- \*Government too involved in private enterprise
- \*Not enough planning and/or coordination between municipalities (consistent policies)
- \*Existing state statutes create barriers between communities – no incentive to work on an equal level or footing.
- \*A variety of jobs and balance from unskilled to skilled to technical fields
- \*High cost to land values because of aggressive growth
- \*Lack of inter-municipal mass transit
- \*Lack of public transportation in planning process
- \*Aging workforce
- \*Destruction of great farmland
- \*Lack of east-west corridor
- \*Lack of coordination between communities – county and regional
- \*Public transportation
- \*No biking trails
- \*Over development of agriculture land and gravel pits
- \*Brain drain/lack (weak) of economic growth
- \*Lack of senior homes, assisted living, etc.
- \*Conflict between sections of county (i.e. West Bend vs. City of Hartford, intergovernmental Agencies)
- \*Lack of east-west corridors
- \*Too many LAWS (duplication) –too many levels (DNR, State, County, Local-USA)

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- \*Good communication between units of government are missing
- \*Same between government and people
- \*Aging population – older workers retiring, etc.
- \*Lack of farm help
- \*Lack of workers willing to start at lower wages and or work long hours
- \*Off shore competition such as China causing loss of jobs and market
- \*Lack of quality jobs
- \*Limited farm land
- \*High taxes
- \*Not in my back yard attitude
- \* BWADITY – But we always did it that way attitude
- Deficiencies in resources or capabilities for a community to be successful
- High taxes
- Lack of alternative transportations
- Lack of consistency of individual townships decision-making
- Lack of funding to protect natural resources, cultural resources, and education
- Lack of communication – open government
- An east-west transportation route doesn't exist
- The utilization of the county's existing natural resources to expand energy, etc.
- Cities, villages and rich developers are grabbing up all available rural land
- More development means more taxes, police, fire and government and sanitation costs
- Improper housing development (location, siting)
- Over-development around lakes
- More pollution, garbage and littering
- Danger of being a bedroom community without an industrial tax base
- Lack of community involvement for preservation of natural resources
- Not in my backyard keeps out certain industries such as wind farms and ethanol plants
- Low tax base
- Lack of public transportation
- Wasting resources such as existing buildings – hospital move, industrial facilities being taken down
- Limited recreation for young people
- Restrictive building code

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**Opportunities:** Something that could be done to improve a community; Factors or situations that can affect a community in a favorable way.

- \*Bring in more industry
- \*Promote single family housing development
- \*Plan for future road development
- \*Efficient use of natural resources
- \*Preserve farmland, open space, rural atmosphere – PDR
- \*Community compatible roadways – roads that “fit” the areas and environment
- \*Protect Kettle Moraine – recreation and ground water
- \*Restore and reuse existing infrastructures
- \*Contiguous development – rather than scattered
- \*To integrate development into open space that exists
- \*To accomplish “inter-governmental” cooperation with a common goal
- \*Improve transportation for roads, and add bus, pedestrian types!
- \*Expand and support the industrial, commercial work force including agriculture
- \* “Smart Growth” presents an opportunity to plan
- \*Affordable (entry level) housing (chance to have more)
- \*Variety of community service easily available
- \*Lower taxes encourage economic development
- \*Protect natural beauty and resources
- \*Public recreation areas
- \*Coordinated planning efforts
- \*Creating a “sense of place” for our kids
- \*To protect the county’s resources
- \*To keep the heritage of farming for the future
- \*To plan for a better road system
- \*To control growth
- \*Good existing labor force
- \*Good transportation routes support residents
- \*Good agriculture land
- \*Utilities – accommodate future growth
- \*Balance the county as far as agricultural and urban/industrial development
- \*Preservation of agricultural and natural areas because we haven’t lost it ALL yet ex. North Branch Farming Heritage project and glacial trails
- \*Good schools – UWWC systems, Moraine Park
- \*Possibility for mass transit infrastructure
- \*Keep/maintain all educational systems
- \*Strong agricultural base able to maintain
- \*Need for east-west roads
- \*Mass transportation (light rail)
- \*Plan for utilizing natural resources such as gravel
- \*Focus future housing developments near freeway off-ramps
- Concentrate industrial development (jobs) along the main roadways
- Something that could be done to improve a community
- Factors or situations that can affect a community in a favorable way
- Promote family farms
- Work to keep taxes affordable
- Preservation of land development rights
- Be more neighborly (help each other)
- More money and/or people for fire and police
- Control hunting rights and hunters
- Better road planning (as population increases roads must get better)

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- Governmental cooperation – working together
- Conservation development
- Plan the use of the county's natural resources (i.e. lakes, wetlands, habitat)
- Expand and develop alternate forms of energy
- Renewable energy (develop and implement)
- Good recreation – parks, lakes, trails, golf course, ski
- Natural resources – gravel, agriculture land, forests, wetlands
- Good parks – state, county, local
- Good government cooperation
- Opportunity for preserving ice age trail
- More local industry – good schools
- Return County golf course to farming
- Low density housing as a buffer between villages and farmland
- Speed up PDR progress
- Assist small business startups and continuance, especially local people (US citizens)

**Threats:** Anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community; Factors or situations that can affect a community in a negative way.

- \*Increasing population
- \*Not enough industry
- \*Increasing traffic congestion
- \*Large corporate farms possibly coming in
- \*Rising housing costs
- \*Overdevelopment
- \*Poor planning
- \*Save agriculture from development (not mentioned in goals)
- \*Loss of property owner's rights
- \*Over development
- \*Loss of open and farm lands
- \*Loss of environmental areas
- \*Transportation – safer, not bigger highways
- \*Farmland loss
- \*Urban sprawl
- \*Overexploitation of natural resources – i.e. water
- \*Sanitary sewage issues -chopping up environmental corridors
- \*Over-development of an urban sprawl – lack of community resources
- \*Loss of open space and farmland, environmental corridors included
- \*Maintaining of quality education for schools – threat that quality will decrease
- \*Maintain and support existing roads and infrastructure
- \*Ability to protect the natural resources (i.e. ground water, wetlands)
- \*Increased traffic
- \*Uncontrolled growth
- \*Increased crime rate
- \*Threat to the unique beauty of the Kettles
- \*Threat to quality of life
- \*Roads and maintenance
- \*Loss of prime agriculture land
- \*Loss of wetlands/natural resources/rural character
- \*Increase of population vs. job opportunities and balance of wages
- \*Villages and cities powers vs. township powers and living by the same rules
- \*Increase and high taxes
- \*Large/unaffordable size of housing
- \*Traffic pattern
- \*Highway structure/location (east/west corridors)
- \*Loss of farmland

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- \*Litigation between units of government: taxpayers lose twice
- \*Loss of industry
- \*Stadium tax and similar out of county taxes
- \*White elephant county golf course – loss \$
- \*Low farm prices – products/commodities
- Taxes
- Illegal immigrants
- Loss of rural atmosphere
- Losing our small communities
- Loss of community identity
- Higher crime rates
- Development away from urban areas
- Multi-lane roadways through towns and cities
- Loss of locally owned community owned business to chains
- Inadequate law enforcement
- Unplanned development
- Taxes – cost of services
- Loss of Rural character
- Security (increase in crime)
- Loss of small town feel
- Loss of historical buildings and places
- Educational facilities
- Increased taxes (real estate)
- Changing and loss of community identity
- Not in my backyard – resident attitude
- Resistance to change
- Me first – close the door behind me – no change/neighborhood
- Change to the way it was in urban – urbanize rural areas/increase city services
- Lack of respect for farming (odors), noises, timing
- Loss of individual municipal identities
- Annexation without sewer and water and uncontrolled sprawl
- Lack of affordable housing – young, first time buyer, senior
- Location – segregated housing
- Lack of adequate public transportation
- Lack of landfill
- Urban sprawl
- Not fair share of state revenue
- Lack of farm product infrastructure
- Hilltop home sites – losing rural character
- Annexation without services
- Special interest groups too heavy influence in tax money use