

Chapter 1

Strategic Planning Process

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STEERING COMMITTEE PROCESS

The 2013 Huxley Comprehensive Plan represents an update to the 2007 Huxley Comprehensive Plan which included a detailed Strategic Planning Process that called on Huxley's citizens to define its objectives for the next five, ten and, potentially, twenty years. At that time, a Community Resource Committee, representing a wide variety of interests in the community, coordinated this process. The strategic planning process involved the evaluation of six areas; Growth and Development, Infrastructure/Transportation, Community Issues, Housing, Quality of Life/Community Services, and Economic Development. A questionnaire was sent out to residents to evaluate the above mention areas. Ultimately over 200 citizens within the community and immediately outside the City limits responded to the questionnaire and returned them to the City for tabulating the data. The findings from this original Strategic Planning Process have been amended in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update to reflect changes that have occurred since the 2007 Plan was adopted.

On September 17, 2012 a meeting was held with City Staff to discuss the 2013 Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals. A process was developed for the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update which includes a detailed study of the parks and trails systems. After this meeting, the procedure for the Growth/Development study diverged from the parks/trails study since different stakeholders were involved. Committee members were involved. The Steering Committee for the growth/development study was comprised of members of the Planning and Zoning Board (P&Z), the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) and City staff. The Steering Committee for the Park/Trails study was comprised of members of the Parks and Recreation Board (P&R) and City staff.

The first meeting on the Growth/Development portion of the project was held at the P&Z meeting on October 18, 2012 to review the Future Land Use Plan, Major Streets Plan and utility service areas. A follow up meeting was held at the P&Z meeting on November 19, 2012 to review revised maps. On December 17, 2012, a joint P&Z and ZBA meeting was held to review the draft report of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Planning and Zoning Board held a Public Hearing on January 21, 2013 to present the comprehensive plan to the public and obtain feedback from the citizens of Huxley after which P&Z recommended City Council approval of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The first meeting on the Parks/Trails portion of the project was held on October 3, 2012 to review the park inventory, survey findings and collect input. Prior to this meeting a questionnaire had been sent out to residents that produced a very low response from the public. The Parks and Recreation Board then held a public open house on November 7, 2012. The residents were very vocal at the open house and after the meeting a questionnaire was posted on Survey Monkey to gain community input. A follow up meeting was held with P&R on December 5, 2012 to review the summary of survey results and the proposed updates to the Parks/Trails portion of the comprehensive plan. A follow up meeting was held on January 9, 2013 to review the concepts for each park. P&R subsequently recommended City Council approval of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Upon receiving recommendations from P&Z and P&R, the City Council met in a work session on January 29, 2013 to review the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. Revisions were made to the maps and report based on input from City Council. City Council then held a public hearing on March 12, 2013 on all aspects of the plan. Following the Public Hearing, City Council approved the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update.

IDENTIFICATION OF HUXLEY'S ISSUES

As mentioned above, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan identified the community's strengths and weaknesses to develop Huxley's opportunities and constraints. Following is a summary of the opportunities available and constraints facing the community in a six distinct areas. This list has been updated to reflect changes that have occurred since the 2007 plan was adopted.

Growth and Development

Opportunities

- Commercial corridor through town (US Highway 69).
- Parks available for expansion (See Chapter 5).
- Available subdivision infrastructure for housing, commercial and light industry.
- Exposure to Interstate Highway 35, US Highway 69, and Iowa Highway 210.
- Relationship between City and Huxley Development Corporation.
- Annexed to I-35 with sewer and water services complete in 2007.
- Traffic signals at Centennial Drive allow better access.
- Traffic signals will be installed at E. First in 2013.
- New Larson Family Sports Fields.
- Prairie Ridge offers affordable house programs to households meeting low to moderate income guidelines.
- Now a safe pedestrian crossing at US 69/Oak/Main intersection with installation of signals in 2008.
- Ambulance service.

Constraints

- Utilities in Old Towne area and storm sewer in east part of City.
- New Fire Engine needed.
- School revenues impacted by Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Perception of a "bedroom community".
- Low number of jobs/commercial businesses.

Infrastructure/Transportation System

Opportunities

- New water supply and treatment facilities to accommodate growth.
- Heart of Iowa Trail through town.
- New wastewater treatment facility became operational in October 2010.

- Traffic signals added at US 69 at Oak/Main and Centennial
- Traffic signals proposed for US 69 at E. 1st Street in 2013.

Constraints

- With growth requires more maintenance personnel and equipment.
- Sidewalks in poor condition or completely missing need to be repaired/completed.
- Storm sewer system in Old Towne area needs improvements made.
- Need to continue with secondary storm systems through town to relieve sanitary sewer system.
- Storm water infiltration into the sewer system throughout town.
- Costs associated with the new wastewater treatment facility.
- Costs associated with the reconstruction of E. 1st Street.
- Gas service – outside franchise utilities (team).
- Closure of N. 5th Avenue poses multiple constraints through town.
- Access control on US 69 (new accesses require possible frontage road w/combined accesses)
- Interchange at E. First Street and Interstate 35 is a remote possibility.

Community Issues

Opportunities

- Heart of Iowa Trail through town.
- Inter-urban line potential.
- Big development partnering on trails/open spaces and green belts.
- Neighborhood vs. regional parks, variety in town.
- Newly constructed Ballard High School.
- Improved communication though online availability of Council minutes and communications thru utility bills.

Constraints

- New trails in existing part of town, low usage likely.
- Sharing of school/City facilities.
- Park land dedication process with new developments vs. bank park sites for future.
- Small town limitations for big town amenities.
- Pedestrian safety throughout town.
- Lacking a common identity or strong identity for Huxley.
- No formal yard waste collection program in town.
- Communication between City and community needs improvement.
- Lack of public involvement/volunteerism.
- Need to improve on disaster preparedness for citizens and City.
- Increase services with lower taxes and fees.

Housing

Opportunities

- Recommit to South Story County Alliance.
- Multiple types, zoning, densities available.
- Huxley is considered a clean City.
- Inspectors free up staff time and ensure quality/continuity.
- Prairie Ridge housing subdivision.

Constraints

- Perceived problem with TIF/school relationship.
- New homes being constructed are comparable in cost to homes being built in Ankeny.
- Inspectors enforcing codes with contractors.
- Need for more commercial/industrial developments to support housing.
- New lot prices need to be lower.

Quality of Life/Community Services

Opportunities

- Availability with new commercial and industrial will help to broaden tax base.
- Residential growth is strong.
- Community vision and partnerships (School and City share 3C's building).
- Churches, police and other services are adequate and poised for growth.
- Visionary Parks and Recreation Board with active programs.
- Large pool of volunteers.
- Service clubs – Heros/Kiwanis/Lions/Habitat for Humanity/etc...
- New ambulance service.
- City cemetery.

Constraints

- Two-year term for mayor is too short.
- Lighting in parks is needed.
- Heart of Iowa Trail through town needs to be paved.
- Fire and first responders work out of town during the day (BR community).
- Cost of training is inhibitive.
- Pedestrian safety is a concern and finishing the sidewalks program is critical.
- No Catholic Church in town.
- Yard waste collection vs. burning.

Economic Development

Opportunities

- Land is available for grocery store.
- Clothing/book stores.
- Restaurants.
- Lawyers and practices.
- Vision centers and practices.
- Sporting goods.
- Light industrial (computer business) “Clean Industry”.
- Ag-related backbone for support system.
- Security business.
- Cemetery/Funeral home.
- TIF/Tax abatement incentives.
- Specialized health care.
- Potential for partnering with similar developments (Van Wall and Case IH).
- Great employee pool with seven Universities/Colleges within 20 miles.

Constraints

- Water supply for certain types of development is limited.
- Potential need for a second water tower.
- Parks and recreation programs are lacking.
- Need for more commercial and manufacturing types of development.
- Common strategy known and communicated by all parties.
- Limit incentives to certain types of development.

CREATING THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Members of the Steering Committee are being asked to closely review the 2007 Strategic Plan and evaluate the outlined opportunities and constraints in light of the changes that have occurred and to evaluate the current relevance of each. This process provides a fresh look into the future, while acknowledging the strength of the original vision.

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