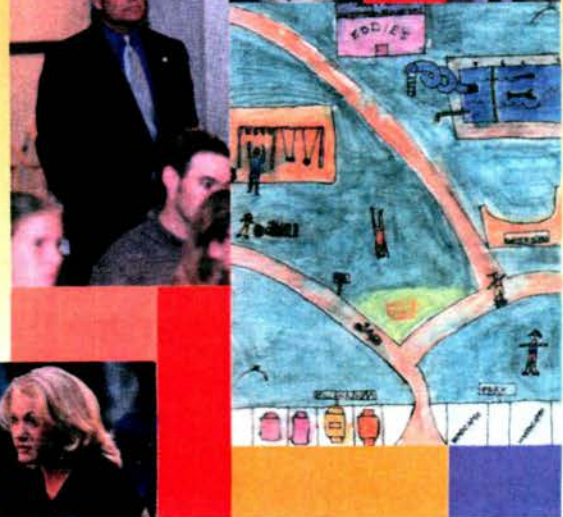
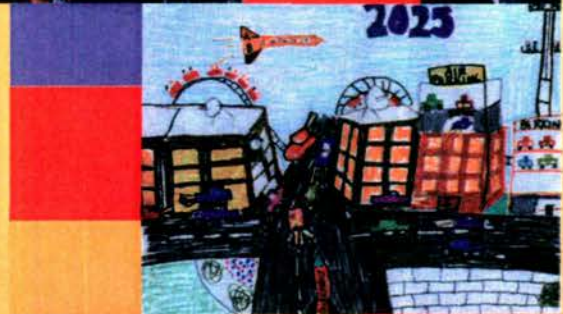


IMAGINING AKRON

The Report of Imagine.Akron:2025

To
Mayor Don Plusquellic
and
The City Council of Akron

September, 2000



David A. Lieberth, Chairman
Barbara Hiney, Honorary Chairman
Gigi Woodruff, Program Manager
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**DESIGN
OF THE
IMAGINE.AKRON
PROGRAM**

**IMAGINING AKRON
IN THE YEAR 2025**



IMAGINING AKRON

By Dave Lieberth, Chairman, IMAGINE.AKRON: 2025

*To Conquer the Present
Suspiciously fast,
Smell of the Future, and
Stink of the Past."*

...Piet Hein

It was the summer of 1998, and Don Plusquellic was being uncharacteristically patient. Since the day I met him - - 25 years earlier on his very first day as a councilman - - he has been in a hurry. Most often, in a hurry for Akron to realize its potential as one of America's premiere cities.

But now, he was agreeing to wait.

At the time, I was mired deep in Akron's rubber history, preparing a three-hour stage program from the book *Wheels of Fortune* that would be produced at E.J.Thomas Hall the week before Thanksgiving. Once completed, I thought I'd spend 1999 working on Akron's Centeseptuquary, the 175th anniversary of our founding.

The mayor had a different plan. He said he'd wait for me to finish the history show, but then he wanted me to look at Akron's future.

Both of us remembered well the *Goals for Greater Akron* program launched by Mayor John Ballard and General Tire Chairman Jerry O'Neil in 1973. The "Goals" program, directed by Barbara Hiney, laid the groundwork for much of the area's life over the last 25 years: the creation of *Leadership Akron*, improved public transit, 9-1-1 emergency service, and of course - - County Charter Government.

The "Goals" program had also produced a surge of public involvement: hundreds of people appeared at public forums to voice their opinion about the future of the community. This was a

time when industrial change was ravaging the city's base of employment and leaving vacant one-by-one, the storefronts of downtown. Serious issues of race had moved into federal courtrooms as the city of Akron was ordered to hire and promote more African-American police officers and fire fighters.

In 1974, when the city last planned its future, no one "fed-exed" a package overnight. No one in Akron city hall received a fax. Akron had 4 radio stations broadcasting the news. There were 5 channels we watched on TV. Interstate 77 stopped at Ridgewood Road in Fairlawn.

Akron had changed. The world was changing faster.

In the second week of December, 1998 and on short notice, 60 community leaders showed up for breakfast at Tangier to tell us that the time was right to look far into Akron's future. Plusquellic and I had not agreed on what to call the program or how far to look forward. The group's consensus was that 25 years was about right. Father Norm Douglas came up with "Imagine Akron." I added the dot between the words, and talented *Inventure Place* artist Laurie Mobley designed the logo.

The only directions we received from the mayor and city council were to give everyone a chance to participate, and make the project truly representative of all the people of Akron. Unlike *Goals for Greater Akron*, our charge was not to look at the region, but at the city itself, with due regard for our position as a regional center of commerce, government, and media.

We gathered an 18 member Advisory Board, representative of every area of Akron. At the first meeting, we realized that we didn't have a member who was

under 30, and we didn't have a woman who worked at home and who had small children. We added each one.

Next, we needed to construct the public conversation.

Historian Daniel Boorstein has said that planning the future without looking at your past is like putting cut flowers into the ground and expecting them to grow. I knew that in 1874, Akron industrialist Lewis Miller created the Chautauqua Assembly, where people could come together and teach each other. Had the job of getting people involved in the public life of the community changed all that much in 125 years?

We convened a "Citizen Assembly," the first of 12 such meetings. They were conducted in-the-round as a conversation between one speaker at a time and the moderator, with as many people listening-in as who attended. Every assembly was re-broadcast on Time Warner Cable.

Veteran city officials were surprised at the quality and quantity of positive comments coming from our meetings. At the assembly on housing issues, two men addressed the difficulty of developing rental housing as landlords. They confessed (after the meeting) that they had come prepared to "bite our heads off," but as they listened to the flow of comments from others, and saw how positive each speaker was, they decided that they could participate and express themselves in positive ways.

Imagine.Akron assemblies became what civil discourse looks like.

If a well-advertised large group meeting open to the public could assure the widest possible participation, then, we reasoned, small groups devoted to a single topic could assure thoughtful treatment of the array of options from which the city would choose its future.

Forty "Workgroups" were identified. They were organized by how the city would deliver services to families, to neighborhoods, in support of economic development, and resources. Each Workgroup would be convened by a Moderator, a neutral force to guide the conversation; and each workgroup would be assisted by an individual with expertise - - often a city worker - - whom we called a "resource delegate."

Workgroups met up to six times for 90-minute sessions and completed written summaries of their deliberations that are appended to *Imagine.Akron's* final report.

One of the lasting contributions *Imagine.Akron* might have made to the city is the benefit obtained from city workers and residents sitting together to discuss issues. The high regard developed for talented city employees by workgroup panelists, and the respect for the collegial wisdom of residents gained by city workers, would indeed be a valuable asset in managing problems in the future.

THE YEAR 2025

Imagine.Akron is not about guessing what the future will be like between now and the year 2025.

We could make a list of the things unimaginable to people in 1975 which we take for granted today. (In 1975, the chairman and founder of a major computer company told the press that he couldn't think of a reason why people would need their own personal computers in the future!)

To a large degree, *Imagine.Akron* has attempted to define fundamental values whose longevity transcends technological change. The Goals enclosed in our final report are milestones which will steer us as travelers on our path through the next quarter-century. These goals arise out of 18 months of a public dialogue in which over 1,000 voices have been heard. Accompanied by the reports of our Workgroups, the summa-

ries of comments gleaned in our citizen assemblies, and the statistical results of our public polling, these Goals help define our aspirations as a community.

The year 2000 has been defined by the public media as an artificial boundary which provides an excuse for looking back and looking forward.

There is real change underway, and a review of literature about the future reveals trends of great significance that Akron would ignore at our peril in doing future planning.

Social theorist Peter Drucker observes that in Western history, there have been moments every 200 years or so when society has re-arranged its political structure, its basic values, its arts, and its institutions. America in the late eighteenth century saw just such changes. The Washington D.C. based Center for Strategic and International Studies suggests that today - - in the year 2000 - - we are observing another such transformation.

A thoughtful analysis suggests that this transformation, evidenced through trends, is shaking the foundations of our society.

SOME TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT AKRON'S FUTURE

I. Population

Life in the year 2000 is vastly different from life in the year 1900 because of many inventions. But among basic institutions: family, government, and church - - few changes matter as much as the increase in life expectancy. For a man in 1900, that was 47. Today, most men expect not only to live - - but to live actively - - well into their 70's, 80's, or 90's.

Dr. Gregory Stock of the School of Medicine at UCLA wonders if we are not genetically reconfiguring ourselves, such that by the year 2050, expectations for life span may reach 150. Research

on the Human Genome will transform us in ways we cannot yet imagine. DNA technology will offer treatments and/or cures for Alzheimer's disease, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, sickle-cell anemia, and cancer. Just as vaccines of the 1940's and 1950's eliminated scourges of medicine, new gene therapies seem to be announced monthly, steadily eliminating the diseases which are responsible for death. Indeed, one futurist suggests that by 2025, death may arrive only when body parts wear out, or by accident, or more ominously - - by choice.

For Akron, the "graying" of the population is a certain and challenging issue. When there is one frail 85-year old in the neighborhood, snow removal, trash removal, and leaf pickup are still manageable. But as the baby-boom generation hits its 70's in the year 2015, different assistance may be required in the delivery of every public service, from transit to the size of type on street signs.

There are other, and less well-publicized population predictions to watch as well. There is a coming flood of youngsters. Beginning in 1985, demographers labeled a new "baby boomlet" that will ultimately be larger than the baby "boom" of 1945-1960. Today, the number of children under 18 is larger than the peak of the post-war era. High school enrollments are expected to surge; elementary enrollment will surge; and college openings will become more competitive. By the year 2015, there are expected to be 82 million teenagers in the US. In addition to new pressures on schools, this is an age-group most responsible for incidents of criminal activity as well. Akron enjoys a low crime rate today, but as the teenage population soars by the year 2015, new concerns for education and safety will arise.

While Akron has pockets of Asian and Latino immigrants, the city's diversity has largely remained unchanged for 25 years. Between now and the year 2010

there will be an intensified pressure for the migration of some 20 million refugees worldwide, with a million people a year being added to the world's homeless ranks. Inevitably, Akron will be required to "do its share" of managing a newer, larger immigrant population from Africa and Asia, challenging our schools, our housing supply, and our community.

2. *Growth of the Information Economy*

In the information age, knowledge is the commodity of the economy. This is more than a subtle shift in focus. Just as genetic science may be reconfiguring our life span, the new economy is reconfiguring the definition of our work life.

The ATM machine allowed us to be our own bank teller. Automation may replace thousands of retail jobs in the future - - from placing our own order at a fast-food restaurant to ordering clothing on-line.

Who does quality control for Federal Express? We do. The customer follows the trail of the package on the internet with the routing number we are provided.

Colleges are eliminating paper (and paper pushers) in their registration process shifting all the work to the student, to do it on the internet.

Companies will use alternative office strategies more, including telecommuting. In 1998, there were 10 million American workers doing their jobs outside of the "office" at least 3 days per month. The trend is growing, and is so pronounced at IBM, that 20% of its 270,000 workers spend at least 2 days each week out of the office. Because of employees sharing office space, IBM has saved \$1 billion per year in real estate costs in 1999. By the year 2005, perhaps one out of five US workers will telecommute. That is, they will not be defined by their physical workspace.

When Dr. Benjamin Franklin Goodrich arrived in Akron in 1870, he needed three things from Akron to create a new rubber business: land, water, and labor. The person who arrives in Akron today to start his or her new Information business has different requirements. Land and office space become secondary in the Information economy, and people to work in the business can be found anywhere they presently live. Attracting new business to Akron in the future will be as much about available bandwidth and the quality of life as any other criteria.

Akron continues to rely heavily on manufacturing for its economic well-being, where workforce issues also predominate. Peter Drucker tracked people who make "things" as compared to making their living through ideas and information. In 1950 a majority worked in manufacturing. By 1990, it was 20%. By the year 2010, Drucker believes that no more than 10% of people in developed countries are likely to be involved in the manufacture of products. Like agriculture and food production, a small percentage of the workforce will be able to manufacture all the goods the world will need. Akron manufacturers are finding it increasingly difficult to find people who will do assembly line work, heavy labor, or technical jobs in manufacturing. Their continued presence in Akron depends heavily on how Akron responds to the challenge of supplying a reliable workforce for these jobs.

3. *The Redefinition of Work and Leisure*

In the Information economy, the radical notion emerges that human beings are the ultimate source of economic value and are not interchangeable cogs in the industrial machine. Information companies are developing new relationships with employees. There is minority and gender equity because information is color-blind and gender-neutral. IBM, once the most traditional of

American companies, now offers spousal benefits to partners of gay employees. In a knowledge economy, the "inventory" rides up and down the elevator each night, and as companies pursue their economic self-interests, they will do what is necessary to recruit and retain competent people, regardless of their race, gender, disability, or sexual preference.

Work itself is being re-organized. Old authoritarian, hierarchical models are disappearing. Interdisciplinary teams which utilize collaborative methods create products, and enhance manufacturing, marketing, and sales. As boundaries fade, there is an increased emphasis on new work relationships, connecting diverse fields with one another.

Giant corporations are dividing themselves into smaller units to operate within the spirit of small companies. Titles are dispensable. Companies following "best practice" models eliminate titles, private offices, and perks. The "boss" is most often a team leader who directs a group of 20 to 50 people, where authority is shared. Decisions are made quickly, and the company remains nimble to address constant change.

This ability to remain "nimble," to act on new business opportunities within days rather than weeks or months was highlighted in *Imagine Akron's Conversation in the Round on e-business*. Bertrand Gray of Oracle Corporation urged cities and schools to become more like modern business in this regard. To be nimble. The ability to move quickly may often be the difference between success and failure.

In the past, the city has employed sharply defined systems to deliver utilities to consumers: water, sewer, electricity, natural gas and cable TV. Just as de-regulation of private utilities has caused these lines to blur, the lines drawn between services to be provided by the County, the City, the School Board, the Library Board, and the Parks Board will become less meaningful to

consumers. Citizens will rely on "government" to provide services necessary to support their lives, with little concern for artificial boundaries.

Over the past 25 years, the private sector has re-configured itself in new ways to address change. The City of Akron is pretty much organized to provide services the way it was in 1975.

There have been experiments with team-relationships in Public Services which have demonstrated success. But as job titles and job categories become less important in the new age, the City will be challenged to match the efficiency of the private sector and remain within the limits of a Civil Service system designed for the 20th century workplace.

There is probably not a single 25-year old today who expects to join a company and remain with the same company for his or her entire work-life. It is true today, and will become more likely in the future that every working person will have serial careers. Four or five changes in jobs will seem normal during a work-life, and "retirement" will become a word of the past.

The City and the Schools will be challenged to provide sources of the constant re-training that will be necessary to support a local economy. Rapid changes in computer technology require ongoing education. For a workforce to match the jobs that will become available, new skills must be taught and publicly-funded education will support workforce demands.

An offshoot of the knowledge era also reduces the emphasis on "things" and increases the emphasis on "experiences." We will still need manufactured goods, but mature consumers will be as likely to shop for things to do as they will for things to use. Families look for enrichment activities for their children. They will walk more, bicycle more, and travel out of town more. Mature workers whose families are raised will look for hobby classes, entertainment, and leisure activities that are diverse and

first-rate.

For Akron, the 1990's have positioned the City to take advantage of a leisure economy that will include downtown arts and entertainment, museum exhibits, interactive education, University classes, and professional sports. The City will be challenged in the future to meet an increasing demand for music, shows, festivals, swimming, skating, skateboarding, and arena sports which will serve not only residents of Akron but also residents within a one-hour drive.

4. Acceleration of scientific developments

The technology we use every day was hardly even imagined in 1975. We can only guess what new technology will bring us by the year 2025.

Today's Internet is the model-T Ford of the worldwide web. The internet will profoundly transform our social, governmental, educational, and business lives. Already, U.S. auto manufacturers have collaborated in a business to business supply chain. GM, Ford, and Chrysler-Daimler require their suppliers to provide bids online, using the power of connectedness to diminish old purchasing practices.

Doctors at the Cleveland Clinic receive medical information online about patients, and Akron's Summa Health system is building an information web that will enable doctors within its system to more easily access data about patients digitally.

Internet devices will replace the personal computer and its attendant rigamarole to gain access to online services. Getting the news and the weather will be instantaneous, as will checking out movie schedules or airline flights.

A new world of wireless devices will permit parents to track their children; doctors to use implanted receptors to track the body's vital signs; and our cell phones will be the agent of instant communication, permitting us to use its pulses to access vending machines or

charging purchases at stores without the need of a credit card.

Continued research on fuel cells suggest to some futurists that the year 2025 may be the Age of Hydrogen. Electric plants will be decentralized, and the power grid as we know it may be eliminated. With improvements in fuel cell technology, each home or business will have its own power plant, much as each home now has a furnace.

Within this trend is concealed the end of the "oil era." By the year 2025, we may be very near the peak in oil production which will begin a long, slow decline. There will be a growing importance of natural gas and the concurrent development of hybrid electric cars. The year 2000 has already seen a new Honda, Toyota's RAV-4-EV and the General Motors EV-1. By the year 2020, 99% of cars in use today will have completely turned-over, and the likelihood increases that such vehicles will be the norm.

It is fair to observe that the City is not prepared to manage advanced technology, let alone the ethical issues that accompany the application of some innovations. The City has no coherent means for receiving, reviewing, and implementing the array of scientific change that will continue to assault our traditional systems over the next 25 years.

5. Media Convergence

In 1975, the Cable News Network was an infant. Along with the fledgling national newspaper *USA Today*, both were highly criticized and predicted to be failures. The Internet was unknown except to a handful of academics and defense personnel. What can we foresee today that will change the way we consume news in the next 25 years?

The merger this year of America On Line and Time-Warner is just the beginning of our television set becoming our web browser. The same cable that brings 100 TV channels into our home has become the same cable that brings

us the internet. Soon, the same cable may bring us our telephone service.

This revolution in how we access media is underway now, and each year -- next year, and the year after that, will deliver dramatic change to our home and workplace alike.

Hints of the future are present now. What the satellite receiving dish has done for television channel options is about to happen to radio programming. Auto parts maker Delphi Co. is experimenting with Satellite Digital Audio Radio Service (SDARS) technology. Listeners can tune in up to 100 channels of digital-quality, commercial-free programming around the clock and across the continental United States -- 50 channels of news, weather, sports, and talk programming, in addition to 50 channels of music. The music channels will be divided into genres and subgenres such as album rock, alternative rock, modern country, classic country, Tex-Mex, etc.

Field testing of the satellite-repeater system will begin within months, with the commencement of broadcasting set for early 2001.

Just as FM radio killed the appetite for listening to music on AM, satellite radio with its near CD-quality of music may deliver a fatal blow to local radio as we know it, and the knockout punch may be delivered before 2005.

Television is going digital. The New York *Times* suggests that the new broadcast service TIVO, with its ability to download live programs to a hard-drive in the home will change the face of TV forever. TIVO permits live TV to be paused in mid-action. That's merely a novelty. By the year 2004, the *Times* suggests, prices will shrink for computer memory. \$500 will buy enough memory to hold the inventory of an average Blockbuster video store, and then local TV as we know it, will likewise be delivered a fatal blow. The programmer becomes the viewer, and a computer memory will "offer" programs to individual viewers based on

their personal preferences for music, sitcoms, nature shows, science, or WWA wrestling.

As cable communication and wireless communication linked by satellites converge, so will all of our choices for media. Just as internet subscribers today receive newsletters tailored to their interests about their profession or about their their hobbies, in the future, they may be able to program their web browsers to receive news they want to see and avoid the news that does not interest them.

Akron was one of the first "wired" cities in the nation with two-way cable when cable TV was in its infancy. The cable infrastructure is being upgraded throughout the city to provide digital services to homes and businesses. The City provides some limited oversight to the cable TV industry through its franchise agreements, but will need to remain nimble as media technology changes on almost an annual basis.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM *IMAGINE.AKRON:2025*

Are there themes generally that cross the subject-matter lines into which we divided our 18 months of dialogue? It is the question that I have been asked most frequently, and as a reporter and editor of the thousand voices that we have heard, I have identified the following broad themes.

Confidence:

The residents of Akron and the City workers who joined our discussions echo the sentiments expressed by Vaclav Havel, the writer and president of the Czech Republic, who said "We are in an age when everything is possible."

As our panelists grappled with issues that affect every urban community, the pattern that emerges from their discussion and reports is that Akron can find a solution -- if we communicate enough

and if we are willing to collaborate enough.

Mentally ill people being drawn downtown to diminish the atmosphere of safety? Akron can manage the problem if our Hospitals, health agencies, police, and legal communities will make a commitment to solve the problem.

Pre-school children struggling to gain early reading skills? Akron can find solutions if the Schools, the City, and the pediatric health community will sit down together to face the challenge.

On Sunday, September 10, 2000, after I had prepared this report, I was moved by the letters extracted from the Summit County Historical Society's 1950 Time Capsule. These letters were written by a hundred people 50 years ago. The almost apocalyptic view they expressed about Akron's future, not knowing if nuclear bombs or a Third World War would permit us to survive, stand in sharp contrast with the vibrant, positive outlook that our panelists share about Akron's future today.

Change:

There is a sense among our panelists that Akron has spent much of the last 25 years getting ready for whatever is coming next. Among those who participated in our discussions, the 1990's were viewed as the decade when we were able to remove what wasn't useful to us and build what will be important to our future.

There is a readiness to accept the changes brought on by the aging of our population and the implementation of new technologies. In our poll, 86% want the City to see the importance of the internet in providing information. 78% want the City to change the way it approaches planning for pedestrians and cyclists.

With regard to Education, many of our panelists are impatient with the baby steps the Schools have taken to address teaching and learning compe

tence. In this area, it may be that the people are prepared for "revolutionary" change rather than "evolutionary" steps. In our poll, 94% make the judgment that the Schools do need more money. Akron residents are divided on whether or not it can be justified in the present system. If it is not astonishing that 79% of our respondents want school districts to share resources more, it is startling that over 80% would support a consolidation of school districts to achieve improved economies.

The question begged by our 18-month conversation is whether or not the leaders of Akron - - in the City, the County, the Schools - - are as ready to lead change as the people are to accept it.

Communication:

Is Akron at risk of losing its identity? Our panelists value Akron as a regional and national force but raise the concern that we have lost the infrastructure to communicate effectively with one another - - a media infrastructure which creates cohesive bonds within the community.

When the "Local News" page of Akron's daily newspaper is awash with stories from Canton, Massillon, Wadsworth, and elsewhere, it reminds us of the struggle the newspaper has to maintain readership across a wider geography. The consequence however, is a declining interest for covering news which is particular to the residents of Akron.

In our poll, 62% of our sample still rely on the newspaper for most of their information about local affairs. Fewer than 1% looked to Akron's weekly newspaper which is all local news. 95% say they still rely on the *Beacon Journal* "most often." But of the BJ's readers in our poll, only 60% actually subscribe to it, meaning that the acquisition of Akron news is often dependent on whether or not residents purchase the Sunday newspaper at the gas station or grocery store.

Ten percent (10%) of our sample rely on the radio for local news, but when asked the question, "WHICH radio station do you listen to most often," our respondents listed 26 separate radio stations as their first radio station of choice!

Fifteen percent (15%) of our sample rely on television for local news. This means that in the 30-minute newscast offered by one of four Cleveland TV stations, after the paid advertising, the sports, the weather, and the chatter between news anchors, Akron viewers will have a minuscule opportunity to learn about the city of Akron; and then, only the most dramatic stories that appeal to all of Cleveland and northeast Ohio are likely to be included.

The community feels disconnected with Akron issues, Akron leaders, Akron sports, and Akron events. The solution suggested most often in our discussions and in our poll was to restore a locally - produced television newscast. 86% of our polling respondents felt it was important, and 67% labeled such an effort, "very important."

On February 29, 1996, Paxson Communications Corporation terminated Akron's only local TV news, terminated some 60 employees, and subsequently moved "Akron's" TV station to the wider, more profitable Cleveland market. Despite this putative larceny of Channel 23 - - one of the city's prized assets - - this removal was permitted in the federally deregulated environment. The Federal Communications Commission renewed Paxson's TV license for Channel 23 until the year 2005.

Some would say that it is merely inconvenient that Akron high school athletic teams; Akron charities, arts, and culture; and Akron business stories are seldom elevated to the requirements to appear on Cleveland TV. If there is a more sinister consequence of being the largest city in the United States without its own locally - produced television newscast, it lies in the ability for

Akron people to review, select, and nurture candidates for public office. To have confidence in our public institutions, and to affirm the uniqueness of our community, requires a level of communication which is absent today.

A second solution proposed is for the City itself to become a provider of information on an increased basis. Across demographic lines, 90% of our polling sample believed the City should provide information much as it provides any other utility. The City collects information daily on our safety and on our health. Such increased services could be internet based and ultimately include an array of information not now being provided online by any entity.

Collaboration:

What makes Akron different is what can make and keep Akron great. No characteristic of our community distinguishes us more from other cities our size and larger than our tradition of collaboration. No word is used more often throughout the range of data we collected in our community dialogue to describe future aspirations for Akron.

Akron's history of collaboration is evident in the city's past successes: growing our municipal university into a state institution which is recognized nationally; operating a medical school among multiple institutions; attracting the National Inventors Hall of Fame to Akron; creating a Summit to manage children's issues among a dozen different agencies; opening the Mustill store complex at the Cascade Locks Park; and launching the first Joint Economic Development District in Ohio which is now the subject of national acclaim. Outsiders marvel at what Akron accomplishes through cooperation among government entities and through collaboration between public and private entities. I have often characterized this phenomenon with the phrase that Akron is "the largest small town in America." The size of our community permits us to manage difficult problems

with a proportionality that big cities can't have, and with assets that small towns don't have.

As our Workgroups tackled hard issues for the future, the solutions almost always involve a collaboration that would unite the strength of our assets - the City and County working together, the City and private agencies combining forces, Hospitals, Schools, the Library, the University - - all bringing components to a joint venture. As this report is being prepared, a new collaboration is being suggested among groups that seek funding for Culture, the Arts, Recreation, Entertainment, and Sports. The CARES initiative is just such an idea that may work in Summit County because of the community's high expectations for collaboration.

In our polling, 80% of the respondents want increased sharing of resources among schools, 70% want increased cooperation among government agencies, and 92% support cooperation among our Hospitals.

Imagine.Akron's Workgroup reports suggest a variety of collaborations: joint committees among agencies, interdisciplinary teams, multi-disciplinary teams, consortiums, clearinghouses, networks, and task forces. In writing the final statement of Goals, I elected to consolidate the concept into one word - the word that Lewis Miller used 100 years ago, "assembly." It suggests a different approach to problem-solving, an approach that modern companies in the private sector are exploiting with great success: the use of teams without the encumbrance of titles. The notion that a group of people meeting collegially are smarter than any one individual on the team. Making individuals on the team accountable for the success of individual components to the solution. Where the whole will produce results greater than the sum of the components.

In our city's history, I see one moment in time that captures the potential of Akron's special collaborative nature.

May 12, 1935. On that day, Henrietta Seiberling invited a stranger in town to come to her home to meet a friend. In the gate lodge of Stan Hywet, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith created the largest self-help organization the world has ever seen. Alcoholics Anonymous could have started anywhere. I think that the series of coincidences that combined to produce that meeting and nurture that idea, may only have been able to occur in Akron.

Citizenship:

The primary duty of city government is life support. Supporting the lives of individuals, of families, of neighborhoods, of business. Citizens are both "employers" of public officials and "customers" for the services they provide. In the private sector, the relationships between employers and employees have changed dramatically in 25 years. In the public sector, the relationship between citizens and public officials is relatively unchanged from even 100 years ago.

One result of the *Imagine.Akron* program could be that the way Akron City Hall interacts with its citizens might change forever.

In 1836, when Seth Iredell was elected Akron's first mayor, all 166 men who voted in the election probably knew the candidates personally, and all of the electors probably knew each other!

At some point in time, it came to be that citizens took an interest in municipal government only when their personal interests were being taunted by a proposed ordinance or zoning issue.

At some point in time, it came to be expected that many of the decisions about the city's future would be made by planning or engineering experts.

At some point in time, it came to be that the citizens abandoned the public officials they elected as mayor and council the day after the election.

In several important ways, *Imagine.Akron's* 18 month dialogue

among Akron residents challenges the present way that City Hall and city residents do business with each other.

In late 1999, the 16th class of *Leadership Akron*, meeting as an *Imagine.Akron* assembly, suggested that the dilemma of how to attract competent and interested people to elected office could be addressed in part by increasing citizen involvement in the daily processes of governance. Citizens needed to be actually present in the structure of municipal decision-making, before they can offer the kind of nurturing to elected officials that will always attract the best talent to seek public offices.

In late 1999 and early 2000, some 400 Akron residents volunteered to be part of an *Imagine.Akron* panel. After investing themselves in this dialogue, some 400 panelists who attended meetings of our Workgroups are waiting for their next assignment.

Can the City adapt its structure of governance to include citizens in meaningful discussions about policy and planning before the decisions are actually made? Is there a role for panels of citizens to participate as focus groups to add breadth and depth to the continuing conversation about the City's future plans?

The experience shared by city employees and citizens who participated in workgroups suggests that there need to be more structured and planned opportunities for interaction. Presently, residents too often meet city employees only at times of crisis or conflict - receiving a traffic ticket, responding to an emergency, inspecting for violations of city codes, or on opposite sides of the table at a public hearing.

The interests of government and the interests of residents can be joined in a continuing conversation that should be part of the implementation of *Imagine.Akron's* final report.

GOALS STATEMENTS

- I. Education**
- II. How Akron should deliver services to families**
- III. How Akron should deliver services to neighborhoods**
- IV. How Akron should deliver services that support economic development**
- V. How Akron should develop resources to support families, neighborhoods, and economic development**

IMAGINING AKRON

Part IV

From all of the sources of information generated in this project:

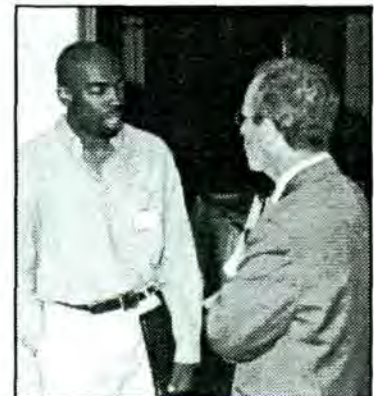
- Comments from 18 different Assemblies;
- Reports of 38 Workgroups;
- Polling of 402 Akron residents, demographically representative of the larger community;
- A study of the national trends that will likely impact Akron;
- Feedback from questionnaires, speeches, and personal contact.

We assembled a summary of Akron's vision for its future:

Goals	To which the community aspires,
Discussion	Of the goal as it has emerged from all sources, and,
What Will Be Required	To attain the Goals, as viewed by the Workgroups and Assemblies.

These Goals, Discussion, and Requirements are organized as follows:

- Education
- How Akron should deliver services to families
- How Akron should deliver services to neighborhoods
- How Akron should deliver services that support economic development
- How Akron should develop resources to support families, neighborhoods, and economic development



In the course of this discussion, the following terms are used:

- Assembly** refers to a meeting, a committee, a coalition, a consortium, a task force, a multi-disciplinary or inter disciplinary team, or a network.
- Business** refers to the private companies located in Akron which offer employment to residents.
- City** refers to the municipal government of the city of Akron, Ohio.
- County** refers to the county of Summit, Ohio.
- Foundations** refers to the Akron Community Foundation, the GAR Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and the 20 other foundations administered locally.
- Hospitals** refers to Akron General Health System, Summa Health System, and Childrens Hospital Medical Center.
- Library** refers to The Akron-Summit County Public Library.
- Museums** refers to Akron Art Museum, National Inventors Hall of Fame, Akron Zoo, Stan Hywet, Summit County Historical Society, and Hower House.
- Schools** refers to Akron's Public Schools and private, parochial, and charter schools.
- University** refers to The University of Akron, with recognition that Kent State University will play an increasingly prominent role in issues related to the Akron metropolitan area.



Goal: By the year 2025, all families who reside in Akron will be offered publically funded education which will deliver the highest levels of learning achievement.

Discussion: In our 18 months of deliberations, and in our poll of Akron residents, no single issue was mentioned as more important to Akron's future than Education. In questionnaires, Workgroups, and Assemblies, Education emerges as the standard by which many people will judge the city. There is a sense that Akron cannot be a *Great* city without having *Great* Schools.

Schools attract families. Families support improved housing. Improved housing creates desirable neighborhoods. Desirable neighborhoods attract new workers, new jobs, and elevate the standard of living overall. There is a feeling that if there is one child who does not have the chance to be well-educated, all residents of the city suffer.

Akron schools benefit from public support. Recently, strong public/private partnerships have been organized through the Summit Education Initiative and the dialogue promoted by Common Ground.

Akron schools have the vote of confidence by a slim margin of residents today. In our poll, 52% gave the schools a grade of "C" or better. What is especially telling, is that 94% of respondents agreed that the schools require more money. Of those with that opinion, they are divided into 3 camps: they are willing to pay; or, that more money is needed but would not be well spent; or, the schools need increased funding, but homeowners cannot afford it.

How Akron schools use the resources they have remains an issue with a majority of residents and voters. Akron residents believe that sharing resources with other districts could result in desirable economies. Over 81% of our scientifically selected random sample of residents believe that consolidating Akron schools with other districts would improve efficiency.

School officials and community interest groups have been serious and steadfast about making evolutionary changes in Akron schools. Is it possible that Akron residents may be ready to be approached with *revolutionary* solutions?

For example, among *Imagine.Akron* panelists, these solutions would include extending the school day to accommodate parents' schedules, and even extending the school year to diminish learning loss over summer vacation. Year-round schooling would fit modern schedules more closely and would be more suited to the information age, rather than the 19th century agrarian model. Respondents in our poll are overwhelmingly in favor of cooperation with other school.

The community at large should be a classroom for the schools. Education of youngsters and adults takes place at hospitals, at business offices, and at other public buildings and museums.

Education

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Among parents, a clear priority is the amount of attention that can be given to each child by the schools through individual learning plans.

What will be required: As a community, Akron needs to find ways to honor the work performed by teachers. Akron schools should be a place where good teachers want to be employed. New models of school management should be explored, including the growth of teams in school buildings where the job of “principal” is as much a team leader as a manager.

Schools should continue to develop an appreciation for multiple learning styles which will lead to more individualized learning plans.

Of necessity, schools must embrace technology, but remain nimble in moving to new technologies that are rapidly developing.

Too often, the public discussion about schools deliberately excludes those with ideas that seem radical or implausible. The community needs discussion to include home learning, charter schools, and distance learning if it is to be complete.

Goal: By the year 2025, all families who reside in Akron will be offered Early Childhood Education which would assist every child to achieve an appropriate level of literacy by the end of the child's primary education.

Discussion: Preparing children to read is crucial to solving later education problems. Where parental involvement is limited, solutions are more elusive. There is a feeling in Akron that this is an issue that the community can respond to effectively and creatively.

Preparing a child to read can start before the child's first birthday. Early reading is dependent on an entire environment: physical and emotional factors; and an array of family issues that can determine early reading success. These kinds of issues can be addressed by a motivated community through services already in place. One model for managing many of these issues is the Head Start--programs affiliated with the Akron Public Schools provide teacher training and curriculum support.

While Akron boasts many fine programs that benefit pre-schoolers, including those supported by the City, the County, the Schools, Childrens Hospital, and private agencies, nowhere is the variety of educational, social, recreational, and health programs effectively catalogued for public consumption.

What will be required: An assembly of organizations related to early childhood issues should agree on a diagnostic inventory of what is required to promote early reading and find ways to communicate the requirements to every Akron parent. The community of pediatric providers should be part of this effort, to lay the groundwork for literacy after a child is 6 months old.

This early-reading assembly should include community centers, the Library, museums, Schools, Churches, and adult literacy programs.

As a first step, this assembly should develop a family-friendly community resource guide which can be maintained online, and updated not less than annually, which will describe the full array of services available to parents for pre-kindergarten children.

Goal: By 2025, Akron will be a center for lifelong learning which will promote the intellectual growth of the community, supply necessary links to physical and mental health, and diminish the effects of aging. Lifelong learning programs will supply tools to the entire population for economic self-sufficiency.

Discussion: "Education" typically focuses on Kindergarten through 12th grade, with an acknowledgment of the importance of a college education for 18-25 year olds. The overall health of the community will be judged in part by the degree to which learning experiences are available to everyone -- on a continuum that begins soon after birth and expires only when an individual can no longer function as a learner.

The benefits of continuous learning experiences to counteract the aging process are well-documented. As Akron becomes older, opportunities to learn become increasingly important.

Few people now and in the future will select careers at age 25 in which they can expect to be employed until they are 70. It is more true today, and will become increasingly true in the future, that re-training for new skills will be commonplace. Individuals may change careers four or five times during their working life. Changing careers will be seen as normal, not exceptional.

New technology demands continuous training for those who must master it. Some of this training will be web-based on the internet, but there will be a place for community classrooms where technical skills can be enhanced. There will be a demand for learning interpersonal skills, and a demand for education in a wide variety of interests, hobbies, arts, music, and crafts -- for learning's sake alone -- which may be taught by mature residents with significant life experience.

Learning will be viewed not as "going to school" but as recreational, a component of an active and full social life.

What will be required: Adult-learning will be seen as a necessary component of the Schools' mission to the community. Schools become a partner in each neighborhood which will look to nearby classrooms for training for new jobs and new technology and important life skills. The use of public facilities should be anticipated for year-round, day-long use. The community must embrace adult literacy programs like Project LEARN. In coming years there will be an increasing need to offer English as a Second Language to newly arrived residents.

The University is well-equipped to manage an older population as non-traditional students will seek learning unrelated to the requirements for a degree.

An assembly of educators should be convened to discuss collaborative requirements. The City, the Schools, the Library, the University, the Hospitals, and Museums all extend educational opportunities to residents.

Goal: Before 2025, the Community and Schools will recognize the equal importance of educating and training residents for jobs in public service, health care, and technical jobs in business and industry.

Discussion: A question repeated throughout our discussions has been, “where are we going to get workers to do *fill in the blank* in the year 2025?” It was asked about public service jobs like police, fire, street repair, and sanitation; health care jobs like nurses’ aides, medical technicians, and care-givers for the elderly; and industrial jobs like assembly line workers, manufacturing equipment operators, and warehouse workers.

For Akron Business, there are few issues more important than knowing how Akron will develop a workforce within the community that will sustain industrial and manufacturing operations in the coming years. Employers find the search for a quality local workforce daunting, especially the search for enough people who will be available for jobs that require a level of skills-training different from a college degree.

In the past, this type of education has been called “vocational” education and has suffered from a public perception that the training provided and the jobs to be filled are second-rate. If Akron is to prosper economically and fill the fundamental positions that permit the city and community to maintain first-rate services, the community at-large must elevate jobs in public service, health care, and those industrial jobs that require technical training or physical labor, and provide the first-class training that will match the community’s expectations for service.

What will be required: The Schools, the City, the Hospitals, and the University should create an assembly of interest that will strategically place the education for public service jobs, health care, and industrial positions on a par with education for college-bound students.

Goal: Before 2025, Akron will become a hospitable place for all people, regardless of age or level of physical activity. Akron will adapt its government buildings and services, and encourage similar accommodations in the private sector, so that these factors which often accompany advanced age are respected in planning.

Discussion: The word “retirement” will defy definition. The age of a person will be less important than his or her ability to function physically and mentally. By 2025 centenarians will be commonplace.

Individuals will expect to reside in home-like settings with assistance available as needed. Older adults will insist on having homes where pets are permitted and an array of amenities are available. Public transportation will be a key component of remaining at-home and mobile.

As health care becomes less involved in the management of disease, and more attuned to the maintenance of healthy lifestyles, the community will need to provide a place with trained staff for monitoring the physical systems of residents on an ongoing basis.

Our panelists understand that an aging population will require more city services. In our poll, 85% of respondents believed it to be “important” for the city to have an office that would coordinate services for older residents.

What will be required: Immediate attention to building design and construction, so that each new project - - whether residential or commercial - - permits 100% accessibility to the first floor of every structure.

Planning by Hospitals to anticipate the impact of new medicine (e.g., gene therapy) on traditional systems that required capital-intensive investments. Hospitals will need an improved coordination of services. Managing the care for an aging population of residents presents an opportunity for collaboration on developing a center specifically oriented to the monitoring of physical systems in individuals over 70. This will include individuals who are not well-insured. The shift to a wellness model permits Akron hospitals a unique opportunity for collaboration.

Public Transportation should include expanded choices, perhaps a “hub” system, featuring home pick-up of residents, and delivery to the hub for connections throughout the Region.

Akron planners need to view downtown as an ideal center for older persons, with dining, recreation, health care, learning, and transportation readily available. Presently missing from the mix is first-class housing, which should be viewed as a component of a healthy downtown.

Every planning choice made by the City, the Schools, the University, the Hospitals needs to take into account today the impact of changing demographics over the next 25 years. There is strong support for the City to develop a central office that will plan for the aging population and coordinate services.

Goal: By 2025, the delivery of Health Care to residents of Akron will reflect a level of collaboration among Akron's health care systems that will provide 100% accessibility to the system regardless of ability to pay. New programs of collaboration will provide innovative community health services.

Discussion: Presently, Akron benefits from three major health systems operated by Summa, Akron General, and Children's which provide an extremely high quality of surgical and medical care, comparable to any major city in the United States. No single factor contributes more to the high quality of health care in Akron than the medical education programs at all three systems and the coordinated benefits realized from the Northeastern Universities College of Medicine.

In the year 2000, after a decade of squeezing down health costs, combined with rapidly increasing developments in medical technology, health care is at a crossroad. The question of how to pay for expensive treatments made possible by rapid developments in technology and medical education programs remains open. Akron residents enjoy a tradition of locally owned and locally managed health systems which have not denied care to any patient due to an inability to pay.

Akron is recognized statewide for its collaborative efforts in public health management. Before the year 2025, health delivery systems in cities the size of Akron will be forced to consolidate in ways not yet expected. Akron hospitals have excess capacity in almost every area, a trend which will continue.

Some portions of the health care bill are controllable. For example, one-third of the cases seen by Children's Hospital are the result of social pathology rather than medical pathology: lack of immunization, teen pregnancy, youth-on-youth violence, drug use, and child abuse. While Akron has excellent programs to address each one of these issues, the coordination is fragmented.

Similarly, as gene therapies become more common, and incidents of disease are less of a factor in medical care, unhealthy behaviors will be targeted as a means of improving health in the adult population with attention to nutrition, physical activity, substance abuse, and violence.

What will be required: Convening an assembly of health care providers including the City, the County, public and private agencies, and Hospitals, together with the Schools, the University, and the Medical School, to develop an integrated approach to education, prevention, intervention and health services.

Developing immediate and substantial programs of Hospital collaboration, modeled on Akron's successes of creating a distinguished regional burn center, managing a neighborhood clinic, and collaborating on community-wide hospice services.

Health Care

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Examining creative methods of reducing overall health care costs including a more innovative use of home care and hospice, and giving attention to alternative treatments -- particularly for management of pain.

Developing a uniform record keeping system that will ultimately be accessible by professionals city-wide on an internet-based system, with due regard for issues of privacy.

Requiring strong physician involvement in all aspects of health care planning.

Increasing attention to behavioral health care, and improving the collaboration among community agencies which are often better equipped to intervene at early stages. Hospitals are the treatment centers of last resort for mental illness.

The community must call on the Hospitals to coordinate the purchase of new equipment and construction of new facilities. A community-based review system for allocating capital will permit a more orderly development of cost-effective facilities.

Goal: Akron should preserve the unique character and identities of its neighborhoods. A cohesive neighborhood increases the economic value of homes, contributes to a heightened sense of security, and produces mutual assistance -- especially between generations of neighbors.

Discussion: The major reasons why people live in Akron are either their "roots" -- they were born here or their family is here; or their "choice" -- they have selected Akron as the better place for them to live. It is significant that in our poll of Akron residents, more than half are either thinking about moving or would move from the city if they could afford it.

In the future, people will choose Akron as their place of residence because of its schools and its neighborhoods. Akron offers advantages of affordable housing, proximity to work, and the amenities that only a city can offer.

Suburban residential areas provide a valuable choice for people who are attracted to the Akron area for business reasons: the wide-open spaces of Bath, the large and historic homes of Hudson, the lake living of Coventry, and the newer developments of Copley, Stow, and Tallmadge.

Residents who participated in our Assemblies and Workgroups understand clearly the benefits of how consistent architecture creates neighborhood character. A choice to live in West Akron, Firestone Park, Goodyear Heights, or any of Akron's 21 neighborhoods, is accompanied by an appreciation for the character of the area. In our poll, by 3:1, respondents favored rehabilitation of older homes to the construction of new housing.

There will always be people who will choose the city for their residence: singles, young marrieds, families, and retirees. They like being able to walk to a neighborhood business district, having public transportation readily available, living in an inter-generational neighborhood, the historic character unique to older homes, and the proximity to clubs, theaters, sports, museums, and the University.

What will be required: The City should make neighborhood character a factor in planning choices. New construction and re-zoning will have greater economic value when building or remodeling is carried out with appreciation for the architecture unique to the neighborhood. The City should develop a protocol for future development that will include aesthetics as a basis for issuance of zoning and building permits.

The City shall continue to purchase vacant land as older homes are demolished and "bank" parcels for new development. Construction of new single family housing units presents an opportunity to develop housing consistent with a demand for new urban dwellings.

Remodeling of older homes and construction of new homes in the city should require 100% access to the first floor of any home by persons with physical limitations. This is a sensible solution to planning for adequate housing an aging population.

Goal: Before 2025, school buildings should become centers of learning and technology open to the adjacent community. Neighborhoods are linked to neighborhood schools. School buildings are a place from which the neighborhood derives some of its identity. Construction of new school buildings through the year 2025 provides opportunities to collaborate on appropriate uses of new buildings.

Discussion: Akron residents see themselves as “neighbors” to public and private schools. When they need to identify for others where they live, many residents will describe a neighborhood by the elementary or secondary school building closest to them.

Between 2000 and 2025, almost every Akron school will be rebuilt or substantially remodeled. The Akron Public Schools have an opportunity to create new buildings that meet the needs of a wider community and to significantly involve the local community in the school environment.

A neighborhood may be the most effective point of contact to bridge the “digital divide” between families who are computer savvy, and families who are not. The school building houses the instruments to make a difference: computers, teaching software, and skilled educators.

The neighborhood school will have recreational facilities that are appropriate to its grade levels. Facilities like playgrounds, pools, and gyms need to be available to families at times other than when school is in session.

What will be required: In planning for the next 25 years, the Akron Public Schools should include as part of their strategic plan, a component related to the outreach that can be accomplished by broadening the use of each facility it maintains.

The Schools should maintain a mission broad enough to include skills-training for residents of any age.

Facilities construction and use should be coordinated with other entities that will build centers for education and recreation: the City, parochial/private schools, the Library, Museums, the University, and Hospitals.

Convene an assembly among the City, the Library, the Schools, the YMCA/YWCA, private/parochial schools, the University, the hospitals, Metroparks, and others, to identify ways in which collaboration will provide neighborhoods with centers of lifelong learning and recreation.

Goal: By 2025, there will be a network of neighborhoods in Akron working to enhance the quality of life in each area of the city. The city should coordinate assemblies of neighborhood residents that will enable each community to identify assets and improved systems of access to neighborhood resources.

Discussion: By 2025, people living in Akron should have pedestrian and bicycle access to basic services in the neighborhood in which they reside including recreation, a pharmacy, a library, and fresh food.

Neighbors look out for one another. "Neighborhood watch" programs will require updating as technology permits more effective communication with city police through telephone, cable, and the internet.

Block clubs should have a choice in coming years to evolve into neighborhood assemblies which could involve residents in the management of issues within their community.

An assembly of neighbors could identify assets, catalogue them in a manner that will provide the greatest access to neighbors, and create an information center that could be staffed by city police officers, fire fighters, or recreation personnel. Such information centers could be planned as part of new construction of recreation centers, branch libraries, fire stations, or schools.

What will be Required: A consistent approach by the City to the management of neighborhood issues. The City, in cooperation with groups like Leadership Akron, should develop leadership training programs. One aspect of such a program would be mentoring of younger residents by older residents.

City Council could permit neighborhood assemblies to have more of a "say" in street improvements, beautification, historic preservation, and the like. Neighborhood assemblies could be permitted a limited choice of spending funds allocated by Council, based on objective policies that would be established.

Goal: Before 2025, Akron will be a city where people will choose to live because of the quality and diversity of housing options. Urban dwellers will find first class housing both downtown and in neighborhoods, and will find affordable housing throughout the city.

Discussion: The health of the city depends on its ability to attract residents. Being a center of work, tourism, and entertainment adds luster to the city, but the ability to maintain a diverse population of people who choose to live within its boundaries will determine Akron's future. Home ownership and public education are inextricably linked -- success in one area breeds success in the other.

A significant number of Akron residents see the city's older housing stock as an opportunity. Our poll reveals that more residents would rehabilitate older homes rather than clear land to build new homes. In the past, Akron has suffered from a lack of consistent guidelines governing the rehabilitation of older homes.

Akron will continue to attract renters. Rental housing is subject to a registration procedure that allows the city to monitor its rental units, and, where necessary, provide services to ensure that rental housing is habitable. Groups actively involved in the Housing Network seem to lack funds to effectively communicate the services they have to offer.

What will be required: The City has done much to retrofit aging housing. In the future, this should continue to be a priority in planning and capital decisions. Standards of rehabilitation should include aesthetic provisions that will ensure, to the extent it is possible, architectural consistency within neighborhoods and sensitivity to standards of historic preservation.

Many residents would be encouraged to restore and maintain their homes if the city provided incentives for appropriate rehabilitation and provided technical assistance to home owners that would assist in maintaining the older housing stock. Services to home owners and renters may presently be available, but they need to be better communicated. The proposed 2-1-1 service telephone number may provide such coordination. Housing workshops should be held in cooperation with the private sector so that companies who are committed to effective restoration of older homes can showcase the advantages of preserving colloquial architecture.

An assembly among City departments should collaborate with property owners and landlords to effectively create, implement, and monitor housing solutions for home owners and renters.

For the City to stimulate rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods, there must continue to be investment by the City in public works and creative financing from private lenders and/or publicly guaranteed loans to make rehabilitation affordable.

Construction of every new building downtown or adaptive re-use of older buildings should include a survey of housing opportunities as part of the construction.

Goal: Before 2025, Akron should provide high quality, cost effective, efficient, environmentally sound public services judged by customer satisfaction. This will be possible by subscribing to a model of continuous improvement. In each of the following areas, improvements can be made: 1) reducing waste to landfills; 2) increasing the longevity of street paving; 3) removing snow from residential streets earlier and better; and 4) decreasing the frequency of, and improving the handling of animal complaints.

Discussion: The City Service Department in recent years has moved its workforce to a model of involvement in decision-making teams, and aspiring to a higher quality of service. More can be done. Akron residents, when asked about their own experiences in interacting with City departments, judged the response to a request for service as either “good” or “excellent” in only 50% of the responses, and 50% as “fair” to “very poor.”

What will be required: Akron could become the first municipality in the country to use compliance standards widely in use in industry as a tool for judging customer satisfaction. The City would need to make a commitment to continuous improvement, much as industry does in meeting ISP 9000 requirements.

1. To reduce landfill waste, the City should join with other governments to lobby for less wasteful packaging of consumer items. The City’s commitment to recycling can only be effective if residents use it. There must appear to be incentives for recycling, and if it is determined to be cost effective, recycling should extend to all residents and all businesses, with weekly pick-up of recycled items. The City needs to join with other community groups to educate home owners about the benefits of composting waste as an alternative to dumping.
2. To improve the lifetime of paving, the city needs to invest significantly in research that would permit a main thoroughfare in Akron to be re-paved according to standards now widely followed in Europe. This experiment would consist of increasing the depth of the roadbed and using the best quality paving materials to double the life of paved surfaces. This experiment will determine whether there is a cost benefit to Akron, in that maintenance costs could be recovered from the higher investment for such paving.
3. To improve removal snow from city streets, the City should continuously evaluate alternatives to salt. To improve snow removal from residential streets, a standard of plowing whenever snow reaches 5” might require the City to examine the hiring of small contractors to assist in residential paving.
4. To decrease the frequency of animal complaints, an assembly of groups involved with pet handling needs to be convened: city animal wardens, veterinarians, county animal control, animal rights, and animal welfare groups. In collaboration with neighborhood assemblies, pet spaying and neutering needs to be promoted.

Goal: By 2025, the city of Akron will have created an assembly of groups which will manage recreation as an essential amenity to guarantee the quality of life in Akron and in each neighborhood. Recreation choices would include open space, urban space, and new and existing water resources.

Discussion: The City of Akron has an excellent recent history of providing well-maintained parks and community centers with numerous recreation opportunities.

In the future, there will be an increased emphasis on walking and cycling. Presently, not all Akron streets are pedestrian/cycling friendly.

Some recreation needs are not being met in Akron: an ice rink for recreational and team skating, a city natatorium open to all with universal swimming instruction, roller skating, cross-country skiing, and skateboarding are some such needs.

Some of these needs may best be met in the future by the private sector or non-profit sector with leadership from the City. Some City initiatives have included minor league baseball, women's professional softball, and the Citicenter Athletic Club. These are models of public/private cooperation which may become a template for future recreational developments.

What will be required: A master plan, integrating all recreational opportunities is needed. An assembly of groups with vested interests in recreation should be convened to develop a targeted attack on these issues. Such an assembly would include the City, Metroparks, CVNRA, the University, the Schools, the Ohio-Erie Canal corridor, YMCA, YWCA, CYO, and the Jewish Center.

There needs to be Improved communication of recreational opportunities. Presently such information is fragmented. Once all recreational opportunities are unified, the public will have improved access to all that is offered.

Future development should adopt a standard for review that includes recreational use. New highways and street improvements and the development of commercial areas can include bike or walking paths which could be added without significant cost. Akron buses should add bicycle racks to accommodate cyclists who will also rely on public transit..

Goal: Before 2025, new technology and new fire stations will present the city with an opportunity to use fire stations as neighborhood centers for health and safety information. An aging population will present challenges to fire/EMS professionals who will require different training.

Discussion: Akron fire fighters have earned a positive reputation among Akron residents for professionalism and service. There is a general level of satisfaction with fire and EMS services.

In the next 25 years, many of Akron's fire stations will need to be replaced or substantially remodeled. This fact presents the city with an opportunity to merge neighborhood stations with new technology.

As the population ages over the next 25 years, particular challenges face the department in dealing with elderly residents with physical limitations which may preclude mobility in an emergency and which may result in significantly increased ambulance calls.

Private ambulance service is suffering the same crisis as the rest of the health care community in lower medical reimbursements from insurance and Medicare. Transportation which these companies presently provide may be in jeopardy and highly dependent on how such reimbursements are managed in the future.

There is a strong tradition of cooperation among fire departments who for many years have had mutual assistance pacts. In the future, departments within Summit County should consider a higher level of collaboration. The capital costs of remaining current with new technology may force such cooperation.

While most residents encounter fire/EMS service at the moment of a crisis, business customers of the department's fire prevention bureau, have a different relationship which should be subject to the same standards of continuous improvement as put in place for other City service departments.

What will be required: Increased collaboration can begin with more joint training and discussions about equipment purchases, education about fire prevention, and building code enforcement. A long-range plan about possible unified fire service county-wide should be considered by an assembly of local communities.

Fire fighters have unique work schedules. The method of employing, training, compensating, and scheduling fire safety professionals should be subject to continuous review.

Closer links with social service agencies will enable the department to exercise more flexibility in handling calls from elderly residents who may require a wider range of services than offered in a crisis environment. As neighborhood assemblies develop, the fire department will find local meetings an ideal place to share information, and develop wider education opportunities.

Goal: By 2025, fear of crime will be reduced. The visibility of police will be heightened. Crime will be reduced. Communication between police and the public will be improved.

Discussion: The Police department provides services on a continuum with extremes at each end: the application of violent force against violent offenders at one end, and officers escorting lost children home at the other end. In between, there are a range of skills requiring officers to be proficient in weapons and new technology, developing scientific evidence, and intervening in family disputes.

What will be required. The City should adopt a department-wide philosophy of community policing. This would stress the prevention of crime, and permit police officers to be viewed as partners with neighborhood residents in solving safety problems. Community policing views officers as colleagues of social service professionals to improve the treatment of the mentally ill and provide accountability for the behaviorally disturbed.

There needs to be more frequent contacts between police and young people in non-threatening situations. The presence of police officers in schools is largely viewed as positive.

The police department will continue to survey new technology as a necessary component of modern law enforcement. This would include the sharing of information via the internet. Citizens would be able to make reports to police via e-mail and receive public records electronically. The department should review the desirability of placing overnight incident reports on-line for access by residents.

The technology that has been implemented to provide 9-1-1 service should be reviewed to determine if a "reverse 9-1-1" alert system from the department to targeted residents would be beneficial and to determine how the extension of 2-1-1 information service to the community will assist in reducing police response to issues which are better managed by social service agencies.

As neighborhood assemblies become organized, police officers have a critical role to play in developing crime prevention programs and using assemblies for education. The police presence in each neighborhood would be emphasized and lead to a feeling of heightened safety.

Diminishing resources, should require a greater degree of cooperation among police agencies in Summit County. Collaboration should occur in areas of training, sharing technology and expertise, information systems, and building facilities for training and facilities for prisoners.

Goal: Before 2025, the community will provide adequate facilities and programs for misdemeanants to undergo corrections experiences that will serve as a deterrent to crime and which will provide meaningful rehabilitation, not only for the defendant, but for the family to which the offender will return.

Discussion: Crime is transgenerational. If rehabilitation progress is to be made, treatment needs to involve the family members of the defendant in a misdemeanor criminal case.

Women who are incarcerated need to have continuing contact with children if the cycle of criminal behavior is to be interrupted.

Technology has provided options to incarceration, including home confinement that permits a defendant to function as a provider, but within a set of limitations that continue to deter unacceptable behavior. Other technologies can more precisely deliver information critical to the determination of crime, such as retina scanners for drug use, which will have increased reliability.

What will be required: Facilities which the City will own should be designed to be flexible with moveable pods that can change as an imprisoned population changes.

The city needs to convene an assembly of local corrections workers to determine the need for new facilities, along with the extent to which for-profit or non-profit organizations can manage the detainment of misdemeanants. Such an assembly should also determine the need for a central computer network that would provide information about offenders and be available to police, the courts, and schools. Collaboration with state and federal corrections and law enforcement personnel would be essential.

Corrections should also be viewed as an opportunity for community service which can be part of some sentencing options open to judges.

Goal: By 2025, the infrastructure which delivers basic services to residents and businesses will need to be replaced. A systematic, strategic approach must be developed now to ensure the most effective use of a significant capital investment.

Discussion: Akron grew more rapidly than any city in the U.S. between 1910 and 1920, more than doubling in population. This came at a time when cities were learning how to provide water, sewer, electricity, gas, and telephone utilities to urban areas. Much of Akron's basic systems were first constructed during this period and have been slowly, unevenly replaced.

By 2025, most systems will need to be replaced with new materials which will have a 100-year life. Since 1940, repairs to the system have been made without the type of planning that will ensure longevity. Akron should plan to replace its basic systems in a manner that will ensure delivery of utilities out to the 22nd century.

In recent years development of JEDD's has extended utilities into new areas. The last time the city conducted extensive projections about future water usage/supply was 1986. New technologies are becoming available that should be factored into future planning. A new regulatory environment by federal and state government will dictate to the city requirements which will impact planning.

What will be required: Convening an assembly of experts to determine the urgency and extent of replacing Akron's utility systems, and the development of a long-range (50 year) plan for each of the following areas:

Water: Examine future needs compared with capacity. Look at acquisition of land for new reservoirs, the development of well fields on city land, the development of technologically appropriate methods of water conservation, and an examine the treatment of storm water for recycling.

Sewer: Develop a construction plan that will eliminate overflow, and ensure proper treatment.

Power: Plan for use of alternative technologies including fuel cells, and natural gas. Look at the possibility of hydroelectric power from the Gorge dam; and the Norton hydroelectric project. Consider adding gas wells to city property; and review the steam system in downtown Akron.

Telecommunications: Determine how to meet the increasing demand for bandwidth, through fiber optic cable or wireless, and review whether or not regulation of fiber optic cable is needed.

Government oversight: In fields where technology dictates rapid change, where competition among providers is increasing, examine how to regulate and finance utility systems with an assembly of public/private sector representatives.

Goal: In 2025, Akron will be recognized as a center of excellence for research, technology, manufacturing, and information. The regional economy will reflect the constantly changing business climate. The City will provide the support and amenities necessary to retain businesses and attract business which will choose to locate here.

Discussion: The City will need to identify space for growth of businesses that require buildings and land. Often this space will be outside of the municipal limits. JEDD's have proven to be an effective win/win solution for Akron and its neighbors.

Akron's growth and vitality is linked to adjacent communities. Development of the local economy should be viewed on a regional basis, with the City entering into partnerships to share resources and in some cases, provide municipal services on a fee basis to other governmental units, whenever feasible.

What will be required: A commitment to first-class municipal services and utilities on which business depends for its daily life. Developing an entrepreneurial environment in City government that makes it easy to do business here.

Eliminating government boundaries as a barrier to doing business. Convening an assembly of government leaders from the region to constantly review how services can best be provided to the economic region of which Akron is one part, especially as it concerns public transportation and air transportation. Integrating private research centers, institutions of higher learning, and government to effectively transfer technology so that it can be applied in the entrepreneurial economy. Maintaining an assembly of research interests.

Review the structure and future use of existing regional planning agencies. Identify whether new alliances with Canton and Stark County will benefit the regional economy, as present alliances with Portage and Medina counties have produced benefits.

The City should host an assembly of JEDD boards to review the present functioning of the districts, and to recommend changes, if any, in the structure of future districts, together with creative approaches to the use of JEDD revenues.

The City must be aware of the global nature of business today, with an understanding of European, Latin, and Asian business practices. Readily available language translation services need to be available. As neighborhood business districts develop, there can be an appreciation of cultural diversity by making available foods and services important to business residents from other cultures.

Developing a workforce that matches the needs of regional business, by creating a seamless system of education that flows from secondary schools to advanced training and/or a university education, to positions in business.

Goal: By 2025, the regional system of transportation will provide an array of regional transportation choices including advanced highway technology, transit, air, cycling, and rail services.

Discussion: Many of today's transportation problems arise from accumulated years of deferred maintenance. As the city and state attempt to catch-up with repairs, there is increased congestion together with frustration by motorists and a diminution in the quality of city life.

Other transportation dilemmas arise from a failure of access management: that is, controlling growth at a pace consistent with the ability of the transportation system to handle traffic. Montrose, outside the city limits of Akron, is cited as an example of this dilemma.

A fundamental issue is the choice by residents of the area to rely 100% on the automobile for transportation -- whether a short trip, or an intercity trip. There are some indicators that suggest that people would use public transit and rail if it were easy to use.

Metro has been acquiring railroad right-of-ways in anticipation of future use. Discussions are underway about possible light rail connections that would permit travel between Akron-Canton-Kent-Cleveland.

Metro and AMATS are experimenting with Intelligent Transportation, which uses highway sensing devices, remote control of traffic lights, and computerized messages to assist in avoiding congestion.

What will be required: The City should have as its highest transportation priority the preservation and maintenance of the street grid, with appropriate experimentation on new paving methods to avoid frequent re-paving.

Coordinate development among governmental units, so that road connections between jurisdictions are planned to meet new development.

Increase the ease of use of transit, including posting fare and route information on the web. Develop public transit "hubs" that will permit easy access to inter-city transit, trips from Akron to Cleveland, to Canton, to Kent, and to Medina.

There needs to be a consciousness in all future development within the city that urban dwellers prefer walking and/or cycling, if roadways can be built to accommodate pedestrians.

The City must join with other economic interests in an assembly on the future of air transportation and the need to support development at Akron-Canton airport as a new hub for air transportation to northeast Ohio.

Goal: By 2025, Downtown Akron will be a center for transportation, business, the visual and performing arts, entertainment, and will be a residential neighborhood, hospitable to older and younger residents alike of all income levels.

Discussion: Downtown Akron has been undergoing a transformation since the 1960's when urban renewal replaced factories with Cascade Plaza. In the 1970's, Ohio Edison's commitment enabled the construction of Akron Centre. In the past 20 years, the City has assembled a critical mass of activity downtown: Lock 3 park and Canal Square; Citicenter and the Main St. Streetscape; the John S. Knight Center, the National Inventors Hall of Fame, Canal Park, and Canal Place; and the University's re-use of Polksy's and the occupancy of O'Neil's by Roetzel and Andress.

If the last 40 years has been spent on "hardware," the promise of the year 2000 and beyond is to program downtown with the "software" to make the central business district a vibrant and robust attraction that will lure residents and visitors alike.

By the year 2004, if population trends continue, Akron will be the center-point of a 50 mile arc that will include more people within an hour's drive than any other place in northeast Ohio.

Downtown has been fortunate to have energetic inhabitants which attract thousands of guests to downtown each week: the University, EJ Thomas Hall, the Civic Theatre, the Art Museum, the Library, the Akron Aeros, a new "restaurant row," and three highly successful *First Night* programs.

In the future, the Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP) will utilize its newly-designated Special Improvement District to maintain high standards of cleanliness and safety; to develop transportation loops; and to duplicate the energy of *First Night* with *City Faire* and similar programs.

The promise of the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor presents downtown with the backdrop for future success: a nationally recognized landmark that brings status, funding, and the one ingredient that seems to have spurred success in other cities: water.

What will be required:

Downtown should be attractive:

Akron's best design practices need to be showcased.

Architectural achievements will be on a par with Knight Center and Inventure Place.

Adequate green space, tree and flowerscapes, and monumental works of public art will make downtown feel different.

Downtown,

Page 2

Downtown should be approachable:

Good signage is needed to identify access to parking, and the way to attractions.

Well-lighted pedestrian ways with a visible police presence will make visitors feel safer.

A transit hub where buses, commuter rail, and automobiles converge will make the center city accessible to all.

Downtown should be diverse:

A variety of musical entertainment and a blend of dining choices will make the center city open to all residents.

In addition to affordable housing downtown, there also needs to be first-class housing that will attract residents for whom the amenities of the center city will be a principal reason to locate there.

Business headquarters will locate downtown as well as incubators for entrepreneurial start-ups.

Downtown should be interesting:

An arcade of history museums housing collections of memorabilia related to rubber manufacturing, airships, marbles, pre-history, and social history should occupy space that would not otherwise find a ready tenant.

A retail incubator would permit start-up art galleries, craft stores, and food enterprises operated by persons looking for careers later in life and young entrepreneurs who need some support to create new retail business.

Downtown should feel safe:

The community at large, Hospitals, Health Agencies, the City should address the population of mentally ill people who gravitate to the downtown. The City should develop appropriate legislation that will assist safety forces in managing a difficult urban problem.

To achieve these goals, the City should host an ongoing assembly with DAP, the University, the County, and downtown stakeholders. A major facilities assembly should be convened to plan for the significant capital that would be required to build and maintain other possible venues: an arena, an aquarium, a botanical garden, an IMAX theater, a water park on the canal, and ideas yet to be spawned.

The City should clearly identify the responsible post at City Hall for coordination of downtown planning and construction to make investment downtown attractive and easy.

Goal: By 2025, the quality of life in Akron will be enriched by a financially stable community of arts, culture, entertainment and recreation organizations which will produce significant economic benefits through tourism.

Discussion: The caliber of the arts and recreation community is one measure by which Akron is judged by those from outside the city. As it becomes easier for business to locate headquarters operations anywhere, limited only by access to bandwidth, the quality of leisure activities may be a fatal criterion to attracting business, if all else is equal.

Akron has a mature cultural life, developed over a half-century: a resident symphony orchestra, ballet company, and theater; a steam train, and guided tours of the city. Akron can boast well-maintained historic home museums including one nationally recognized showplace, Stan Hywet.

Despite these assets, the city has no focused program of promoting tourism and no packaging of assets to create an impression of Akron as a destination. Smaller communities without Akron's assets have mustered their assets into more attractive packaging.

Twenty percent of the U-S economy consists of dollars spent on tourism. Ohio is 6th in the nation in dollars spent -- some 14 billion dollars. Trips to Ohio's Amish country, Cedar Point, and King's Island cannot occupy families for more than a few weekends a year. Akron has much to offer to garner a hold on this important part of the economy.

The aging population - - interested, vital, mature adults with money - - will be buying experiences more than purchasing merchandise, including the experiences made available by EJ Thomas Hall, the Civic Theatre, the John S. Knight Center, and the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

What will be required: With the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City should convene an assembly that will develop the resources to make Akron a tourist destination: a focused, coordinated effort with a single responsible authority that is well-funded and highly motivated.

A regular assembly would be convened of those groups invested in tourism to do the following:

- Develop an identity for Akron and the Akron area that will "sell" it outside the region;
- Coordinate advertising and marketing;
- Produce annual and seasonal events;
- Create profitable tour packages;
- Provide education to the hospitality industry so that hotel desk clerks become well-informed ambassadors of the region at every point of contact; and
- Construct new attractions and establish vehicles for funding tourism assets.

A well-maintained and uniform system of signage throughout the region will assist in packaging attractions for the visitor.

Goal: By 2025, Akron will be a center of technology and manufacturing which will be well-defined to a national market. Akron Business and Akron residents will enjoy the highest quality of life.

Discussion: Akron residents who participated in our 18-month discussion believe regional ties are important, but they reject any suggestion that Akron is a suburban area to Cleveland or merely a component unit of an undefined metropolis loosely referred to as the “north coast.”

To market the city’s strengths to new businesses and new residents in a national advertising or marketing campaign will require Akron to “brand” itself: how it is unique, how it can distinguish its differences from other cities or regions, and how the residents define what *Akron* is.

Panelists in our discussions rate Akron favorably. So did 73% of the respondents in our poll. It is difficult to condense Akron’s positives into a single sentence, although the chairman of *Imagine.Akron* has attempted to define the city’s best attributes with the phrase, “the largest small town in America.” Akron residents possess a quality of life determined in part by affordable housing and a low crime rate with big city amenities of musical theater, good restaurants, professional sports, first-rate golfing, boating - - and before the year 2000 is out - - hike and bike access to a national recreation area. Like a small town, commuting to work in Akron is easy. Our professions and our public and private sectors enjoy a long history of collaboration.

Akron is often defensive about its rust-belt past. Manufacturing remains an important part of the local economy but *relies heavily on advanced technology invented and produced here*. Akron residents have not fully recognized the city’s place as a center of materials research, second to none on the globe. The Akron area still possesses the principal research operations of four Fortune 500 companies.

What will be required:

- 1) Convene an assembly of communications leaders to define Akron. It is the Polymer Summit: with the University of Akron the center of a region with CWRU to the north and KSU to the east that can support entrepreneurial energy in the field of materials research and polymer start-ups.
- 2) Recognizing Akron’s leisure time assets as crucial to the formula that will be used by those reviewing Akron in the future as a site for new business. Consider an assembly of professionals who would convene under a new umbrella - - the Akron leisure Development Group – coordinating non-profit entities with existing and start-up entertainment businesses.
- 3) Analyzing the benefits of living in Akron: affordable living, low crime, easy commutes, family-friendly; and communicate these attributes to a national business community hungry for telecommuting centers where quality of life for employees is often second to available bandwidth as location criteria.

Goal: By 2025, the City will provide information to residents as a basic service. The community will support news sources that will enable Akron to maintain a citizenry with homogeneous and cohesive interests of governance.

Discussion: No single concern about Akron was voiced more frequently in our discussions than the need for better communication. The way Akron learns about itself has changed. Newspaper circulation and readership has declined. Radio has become fragmented. Television is the dominant news source for most people, but Akron is the largest city in the United States without its own locally-produced television newscast.

In our poll of 402 Akron residents, 85% felt it was important to restore local TV news, and 67% of the scientifically-selected sample said it was very important.

A good example of the problem is the *Imagine.Akron* program itself, which over 18 months garnered 600 column inches of newspaper coverage, 600 spot announcements on radio and cable TV, 20 hours of prime time cable TV programming, 90,000 residential mailings, 1,500 flyers, and even a night time message on the Goodyear blimp. Of our 402 poll respondents, 83% had never heard of *Imagine.Akron*.

An overwhelming concern of program panelists was how Akron can remain a homogeneous community with support for its institutions and its leadership if information is not easily accessible. While 95% of our polling sample said they read the *Beacon Journal* “most often” for local news, only 60% said they subscribe. When asked to name the one radio station they listen to “most often”, our 402 respondents picked 26 different radio stations!

The media landscape is undergoing a revolution. Radio – as we have known it – is likely to disappear by 2005, giving way to satellite radio transmissions which will offer thousands of instant audio selections. Television – as we have known it – is likely to disappear by 2010, as the cost of computer memory plummets and the convergence of television, cable, satellite, and the internet becomes integrated.

Akron has enjoyed a high degree of market penetration by personal computers. In our poll, half of all respondents had internet access at their home, and half of the remainder had internet access at work or elsewhere. While 85% of our polling sample believed the city should be making an effort to increase the amount of information it places on the internet, less than 5% felt it was the best way to communicate with the public. (Television being first.) But when asked if the city should provide information services, much as it provides water, sewer, police or fire, 90% of our respondents felt that the City should provide information as a basic service to residents.

Media

Page Two

What will be required: The City should review its deployment of technology on all levels. An assembly of City managers with a representation of residents should review whether information can be better provided by the City to residents through the internet or through cable television.

The City should determine if cable television access, or an available broadcast channel can occupy the breach created when Akron's locally-produced television newscast was terminated by the private owners of Channel 23.

The Business community should convene an assembly of retail and trade advertisers to determine if private investment can support independent, locally - produced television programming that would include local news, local sports, and entertainment.

Goal: By the year 2025, Akron will utilize the non-profit sector better, recognizing that volunteers in charitable and social organizations, together with members of faith-based congregations, can often manage some problems better than government. Akron should develop new models for non-profit organizations with consistent methods of financial reporting and leadership training.

Discussion: There is no country on earth where the arts, social services, and charities rely so heavily on volunteers. What is done by government or business elsewhere is often governed by and maintained by dedicated volunteers in the U.S. As we enter the 21st century, one change in community behavior which has had an impact on our ability to maintain these organizations, is the degree to which commitments of job and family limit the amount of time available to volunteer. Consequently, the number of hours invested in public service is diminishing, while the need for donated time is increasing.

In the future, Akron has an opportunity to create new types of public service organizations which will follow new models of governance, accounting, and operations. These organizations will look to the private sector for successful models of management. They will attract volunteers whose time will be wisely invested. In not-for-profit organizations, there is no consistency in financial reporting. Volunteer boards of trustees spend an inappropriate amount of time struggling with codes of regulation and financial statements, problems that can be easily remedied.

Volunteer service to the community is an important component of a balanced life. Donating time in a way that is totally different from jobs performed at work enrich an individual's daily life and needs to be encouraged and supported by employers as an economic benefit to the company and to the community.

Akron's churches are the source of great vitality and manpower but have not realized the potential that exists within their shared beliefs. With regard to providing services to the mentally ill, and to families struggling with problems, people of faith often can provide an environment of love and acceptance in a way that government and agencies cannot. Churches also provide stable anchors for neighborhoods.

What will be required: Foundations can provide leadership in developing new models of non-profit business with uniform financial reporting that will permit volunteer board members to use their time wisely on the mission of the organization. Foundations can direct a collaborative effort that would provide some basic services to non-profits on a coordinated basis such as financial audits, marketing and advertising, computer services, employee benefit plans, joint purchasing agreements, and the like.

A new "Akron Plan" of volunteer service should be created by an assembly of business leaders and non-profit leaders to permit individuals to "bank" time for volunteer service that is used

POLLING REPORT



Imagine.Akron: 2025
Household Survey

Prepared by The Center for Policy Studies:

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Michelle Henry, M.A., Data Collection Manager

September 2000

The Center for Policy Studies was commissioned by the City of Akron's Imagine.Akron: 2025 Project to poll Akron residents on a variety of topics focusing on their future vision of the city. This survey was a collaborative effort between the Imagine.Akron: 2025 project and The University of Akron's Center for Policy Studies. The Center administers the Urban University Program, which helped to fund a portion of the poll. The questions for the poll were formulated by the Center for Policy Studies based on substantial findings from other portions of the research that had already been conducted by the Imagine.Akron: 2025 project staff. The questionnaire covered several different topic areas: residents' attitudes toward the City, residents' opinions regarding education and the economy, and residents' views on communication, collaboration and community. This report will focus on these major areas.

Survey Methodology

The Center for Policy Studies surveyed 402 Akron residents. The study used an RDD (Random Digit Dialing) sample of telephone numbers that were randomly generated by computer. Each household was asked a screening question to determine Akron residency. The respondent from each household was chosen at random ensuring a representative sample of the population. The approximate cooperation rate was 31 percent.

The Center for Policy Studies prepared the questions for the survey based, in part, on the findings of other segments of the Imagine.Akron: 2025 project. The survey instrument was tested on July 5th and fielded on July 6th. The interviewing process took approximately 5 full sessions, ending on July 12th. Smaller staffs of interviewers were brought in for the remaining 3 sessions to complete the interviewing phase of the poll. Interviewers at the Center for Policy Studies are professional interviewers who have completed a comprehensive training program, which concludes with both a skills assessment and screening exam. Most calling took place between the evening hours of 5:30 - 9:30. However, some interviews took place during daytime hours to accommodate respondent schedules. The interview lasted 14 minutes on average.

Demographic Profile

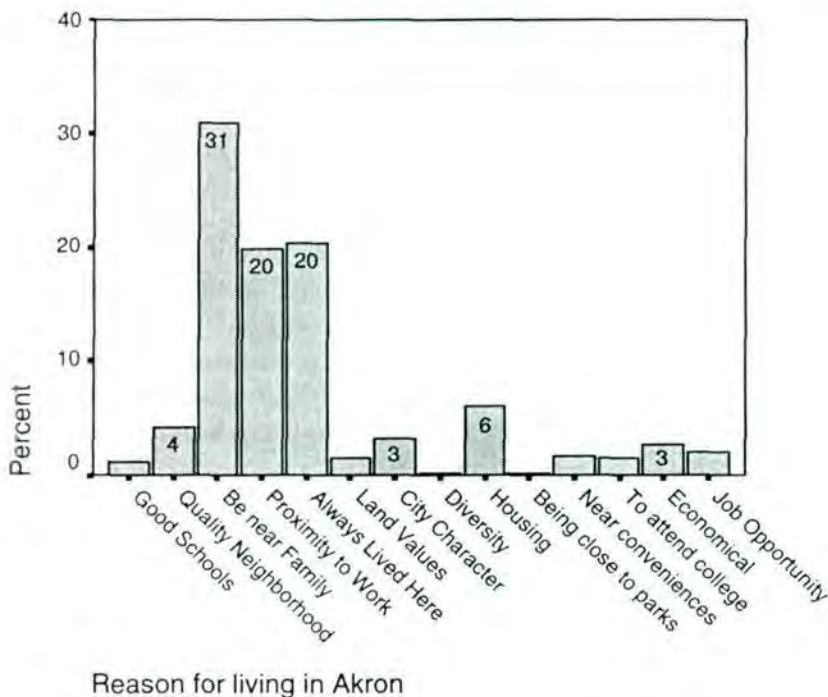
Of the 402 respondents surveyed in this poll, 74 percent are white and 26 percent are non-white. According to the 1990 Census data, these percentages represent the demographic breakdown of Akron. Sixty three percent of the respondents are female and 37 percent are male. This figure shows a slight overrepresentation of females in this study, which is common in telephone surveys. Gender was not shown to be a significant factor in any of the responses. The median age was between 35 and 44. Thirty-one percent are single while 47 percent are married. Thirty-four percent of the respondents have a high school diploma and 17 percent have a college degree. According to Census figures, in 1990 twenty-two percent of Akron residents had a high school diploma and nine percent, a college degree. While these figures show a slight overrepresentation in this study, level of education was shown to be a significant factor in responses in very few questions. In order to ascertain the area of Akron in which the respondents live, they were asked for the name of the nearest elementary school and their zip code. The responses for both of these questions are evenly distributed indicating a good representation of the city of Akron. Sixty six percent of the respondents own their own home while 31 percent rent their home and 3 percent indicated they have another housing arrangement.

Attitudes toward the City of Akron

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents have lived in Akron over 20 years. Fifty-two percent were raised in Akron and 48 percent moved to Akron. When respondents were asked to give the main reason for living in Akron, 3 responses represented 71 percent of those surveyed; 31 percent live in Akron to be near family, 20 percent because they grew up in Akron and 20 percent to be close to work. Significant determinants in these choices include length of time lived in Akron and whether the respondent moved to Akron or was raised in Akron.

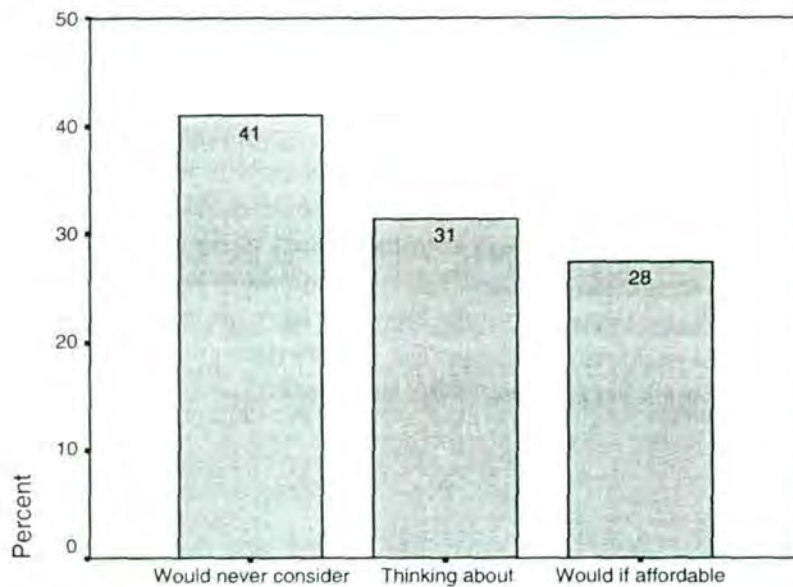
Respondents who have lived in Akron more than 20 years cite proximity to family as the prevailing reason for living in Akron. Respondents who have lived in Akron less than 10 years and respondents who have moved to Akron to live are more likely to have chosen Akron because of work. Respondents who were raised in Akron cited equally, the proximity to family and having “always” lived in Akron as the main reasons for living in Akron

Figure 1



When asked about the possibility of moving from Akron, 41 percent stated that they would never think of moving, 31 percent are currently thinking about moving and 28 percent would move right now if they could afford it. The significant determinants in these responses were age, marital status, number of children in the household, length of residency in Akron and ownership of a home. Respondents 55 and older are more likely to not consider moving while 18-54 year olds are more likely to be considering moving. Those with 1 child or no children are more likely to remain in Akron while those with more than 1 child are considering moving. Those who have lived in Akron for more than 20 years are not as likely to consider moving as those who have lived in Akron less than 20 years. Those who own a home are more likely to not consider moving and those who rent are more likely to move if they could afford it. Respondents who are either retired, homemakers or unemployed are not considering moving while students and employed respondents are thinking about moving.

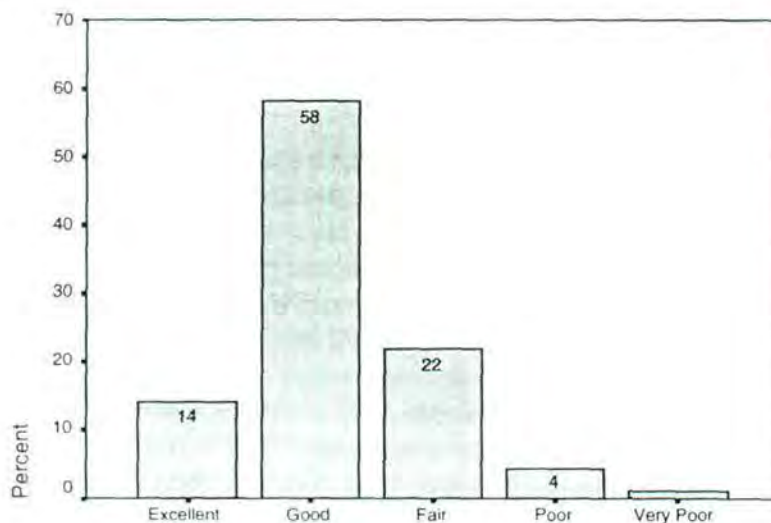
Figure 2



Views on moving from Akron

Respondents were asked to assign a rating to Akron as a place to live. Fourteen percent of the respondents rated Akron as an excellent place to live, and 58 percent rated it as “good.” As comparison, in other recent surveys by the Center, a local small city received 49 percent “excellent” and 44 percent “good” ratings from its residents; a township in the region received 24 percent “excellent” and 66 percent “good” ratings. Thus, while positive ratings were given by 73 percent of Akron respondents, the responses are less enthusiastic than measured in recent surveys of neighboring communities. The only factor determined to be significant in this area is the ownership of a home. Those who own a home are more likely to rate Akron favorably than those who rent, though a majority of both groups rated Akron favorably.

Figure 3

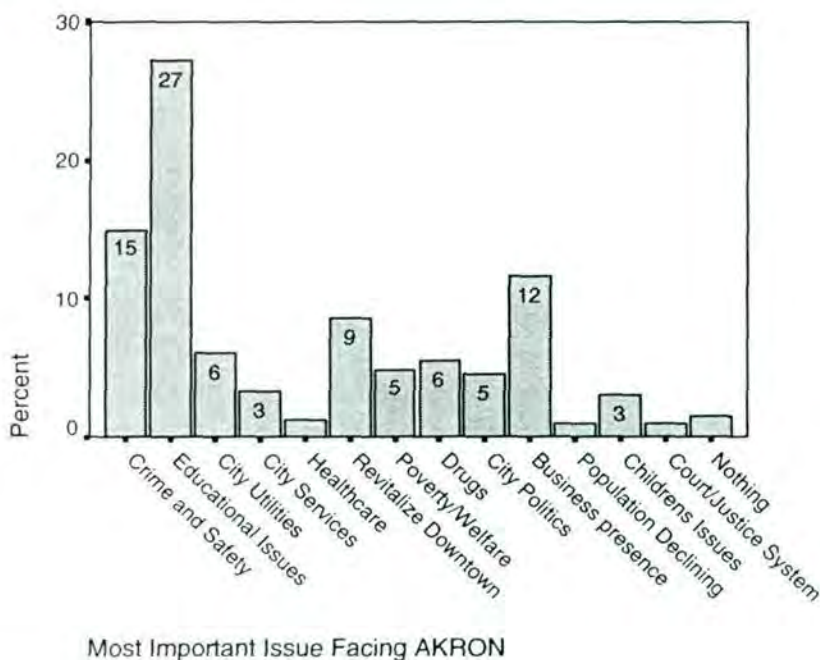


Rating of Akron

When asked what was the most important issue facing Akron today, 27 percent felt that education was most important, while 15 percent indicated crime and safety and 12 percent, the maintenance of business and industry in Akron. Significant factors in this outcome were the number of children in the household, age, marital status and education. Respondents who were either single or between the ages of 18 to 24 identified crime and safety as their top concern while respondents with children and respondents with high school diplomas and above identified educational issues. Respondents with less education than a high school diploma identified city services as the most important issue facing Akron.

Another significant determinant of responses to this question is that the more children in the household being surveyed, the more likely the respondent was to identify educational issues as the most important issue facing Akron. This also holds true for higher levels of education.

Figure 4

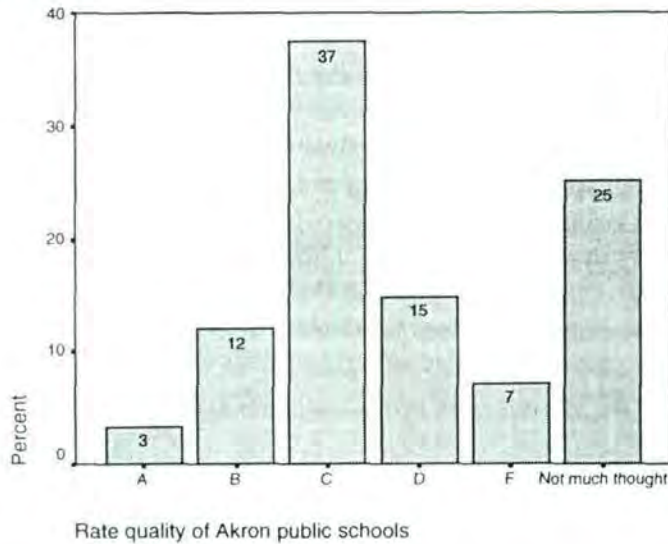


Education

Sixty-one percent of the respondents have no children in the household, 15 percent have 1 child and 24 percent have 2 or more. Sixty five percent of those with at least one child in the household attend Akron Public Schools while 8 percent attend a private school and 4 percent are home schooled.

On the topic of education, respondents were asked to give a letter grade to the Akron public school district. Sixty-seven percent gave the district a passing grade, 52 percent of which fell in the average and above average categories of A, B or C. Twenty-five percent had not thought about this issue, while 7 percent gave the district a failing grade of F. The research found that respondents who have not lived in Akron over 5 years were more likely to indicate that they had not given this topic much thought.

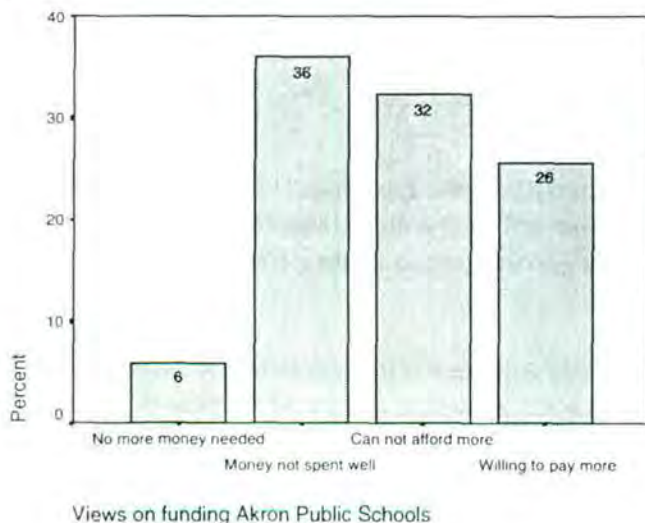
Figure 5



Respondents were then asked about funding Akron public schools in the future. Ninety-four percent of the respondents thought schools may need more money. Of those, 36 percent of the respondents feel that it would not be well spent, 32 percent feel they are unable to afford more taxes and 26 percent are willing to pay. Six percent feel the schools do not need more money.

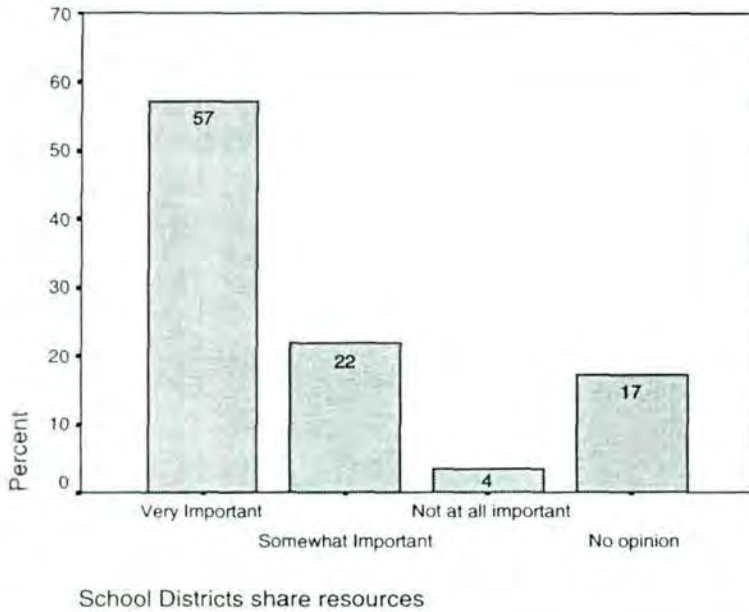
There was a significant difference between marital status on this question. Widowed and divorced respondents felt they were unable to afford more taxes while singles, married and separated respondents do not think additional funds will be spent well. Another significant difference was by level of education. Those who had not received a high school diploma are more likely to be unable to afford more taxes. Those with some college and above lean toward not believing the money will be well spent. There were no significant differences found among respondents who either do not think the schools need more money or those who do think the schools may need more money and are willing to pay more.

Figure 6



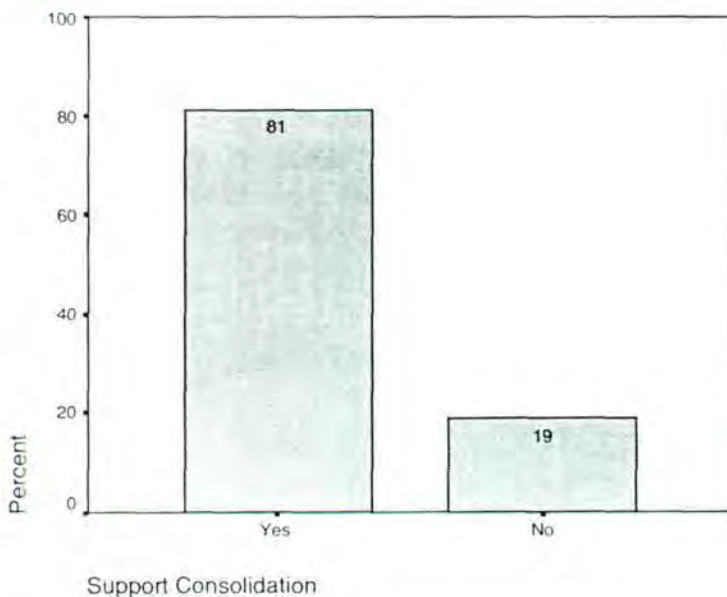
There was overwhelming support for school districts in Summit County to find more ways to share resources. Seventy nine percent felt that this was important, 57 percent of which indicated that sharing resources is 'very' important.

Figure 7



Respondents who answered that sharing resources was either very important or somewhat important were then asked if they would support this resource sharing if it meant consolidating school districts. Eighty-one percent of the respondents asked this question responded favorably.

Figure 8

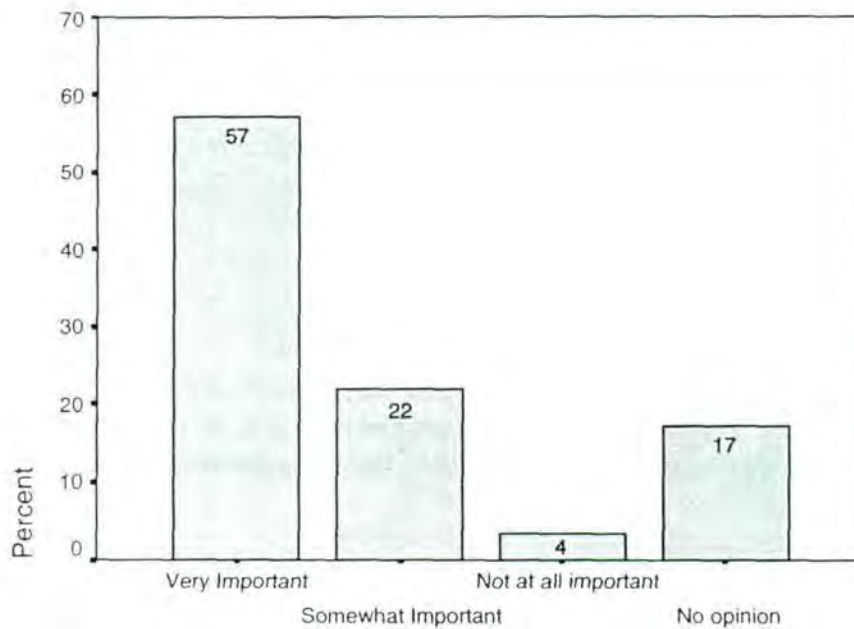


Economy

The median income for city of Akron residents was \$27,543 in 1990, according to Census data. The median income in this study fell in the \$30,000 to \$39,000 range, which, allowing for inflation, is a close representation. Fifty-three percent of the respondents are employed full time, 8 percent part-time and 21 percent are retired. Of those working, 59 percent work within the city of Akron and 95 percent drive themselves to work.

Several questions were asked regarding residents' shopping and entertainment habits as they pertain to Akron. Sixty-six percent of the respondents chose to shop inside Akron, 34 percent outside (see figure 9). Those who have lived in Akron 6 years or more were more likely to shop inside Akron than those who have lived in Akron 5 years or less.

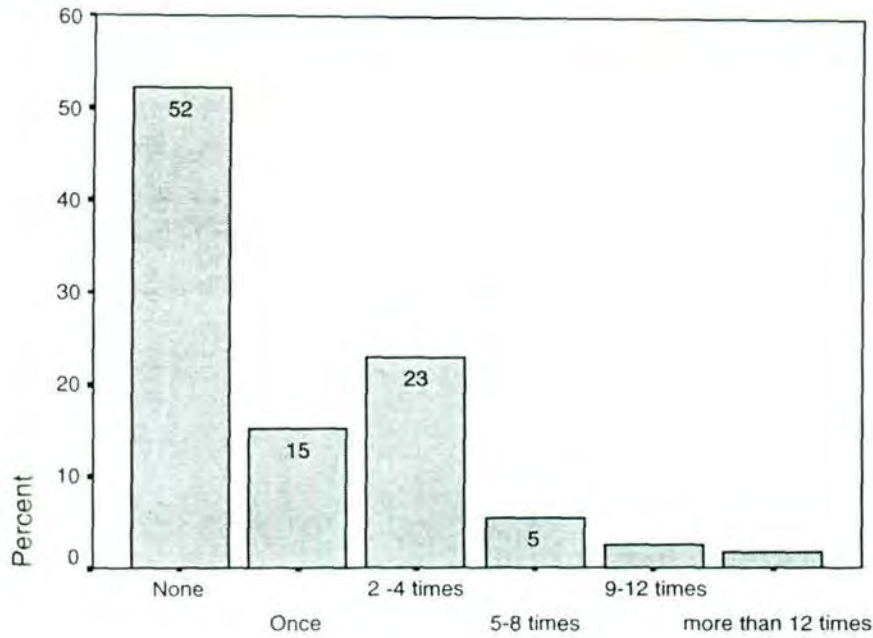
Figure 9



School Districts share resources

When asked how often respondents sought out entertainment in Akron over the last month, 48 percent of the respondents indicated that they frequented downtown Akron for entertainment at least once over the last month. Twenty-three percent sought entertainment downtown 2-4 times in the last month while 15 percent did so once (see figure 10).

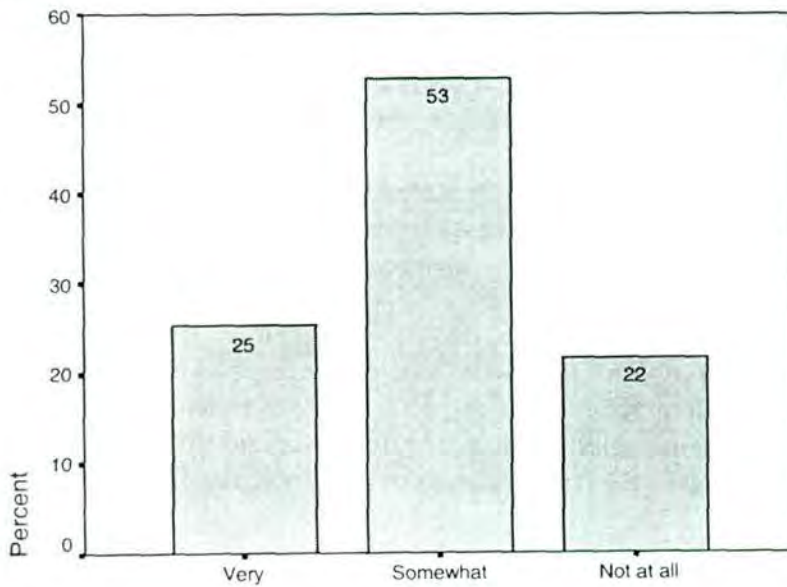
Figure 10



Frequenting Akron for Entertainment

Respondents were also asked how safe they feel in downtown Akron. Overall, 53 percent feel somewhat safe, 25 percent, very safe and 22 percent do not feel at all safe.

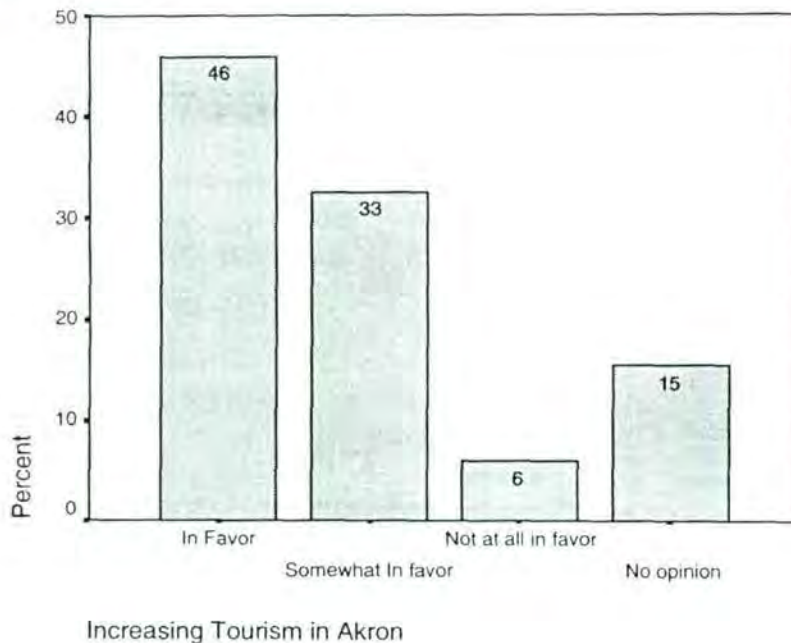
Figure 11



Feeling of safety in Akron

Since Akron has many attractions as a tourist destination, respondents were asked their views on encouraging efforts to increase tourism in Akron. Forty-six percent felt that tourism should be encouraged, and 33 percent were somewhat in favor of this.

Figure 12



Communication

Respondents were asked what source of information they used to get most of their information about local affairs and entertainment. Sixty-two percent of the respondents answered that they receive their information from a newspaper, 14 percent from TV news, 10 percent from the radio, 8 percent from family and friends and 3 percent from the Internet.

Ninety-five percent of the respondents indicated that they read the Akron Beacon Journal most often for local news, sixty-three percent of which have a subscription to the Akron Beacon Journal.

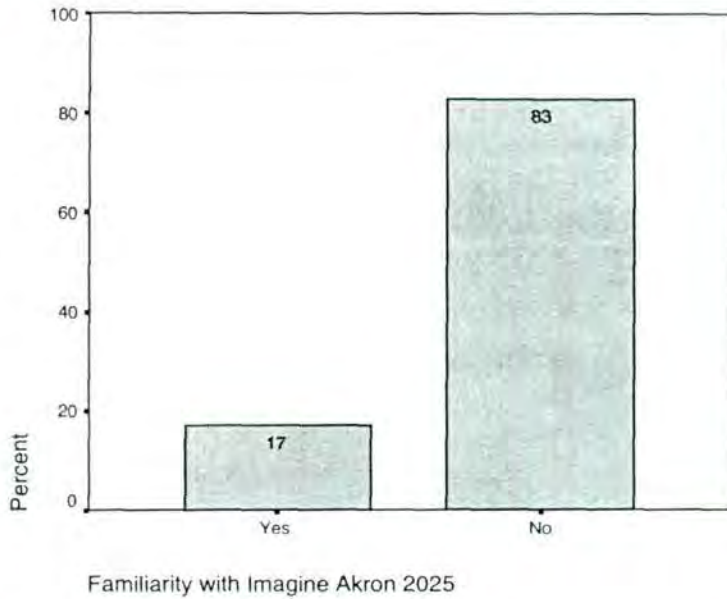
The respondents identified 26 stations as being listened to most frequently. Responses were evenly distributed with the exception of WAKR, which received the largest share of listeners at 10 percent. Overall, approximately 40 percent of the respondents listen to an Akron based radio station. Sixty percent of the respondents, then, listen most often to a radio station outside of Akron. Since this project is interested in the fragmentation of audience, this finding is very demonstrative.

The 4 major network affiliates, ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX, received a combined total of viewers at 56 percent while cable stations are watched most frequently by 31 percent of the respondents.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents have access to the Internet from home. Of the 49 percent who do not have access at home, 58 percent have access from someplace other than home.

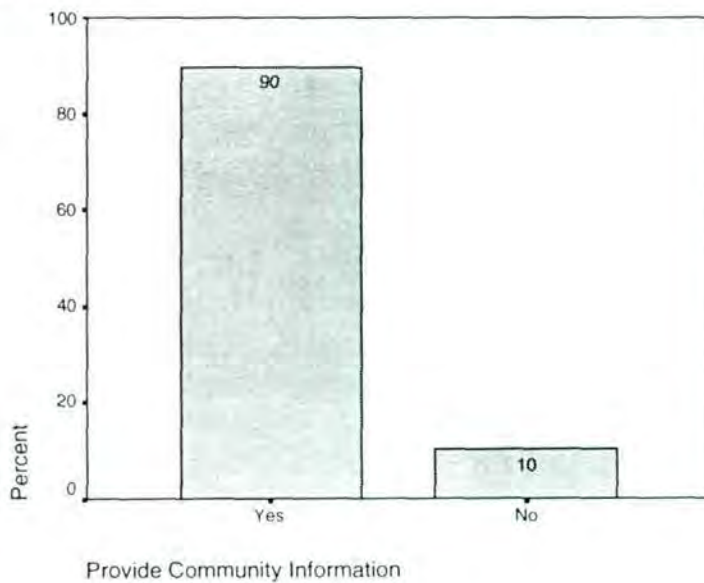
Respondents were queried about their knowledge of the Imagine.Akron: 2025 project, which has received significant coverage on the radio, in the newspaper and on cable television. Eighty-three percent of respondents had not heard of this project, although respondents with postgraduate education were more likely to have heard of Imagine.Akron: 2025.

Figure 13



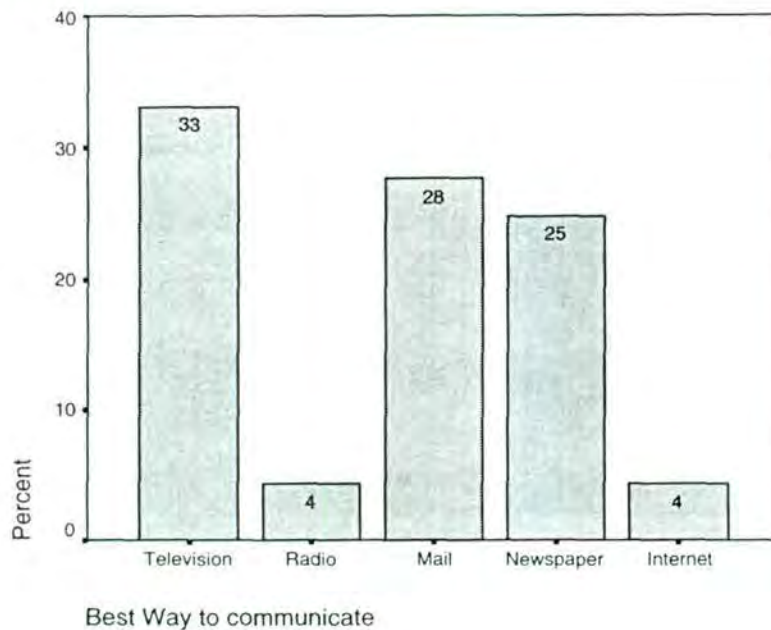
A series of questions were asked focusing on communication between the city and the residents of Akron. There is overwhelming support (90% of the respondents) across demographic lines for the City of Akron to provide information as a basic community service, much like water, sewer, streets, police and fire protection.

Figure 14



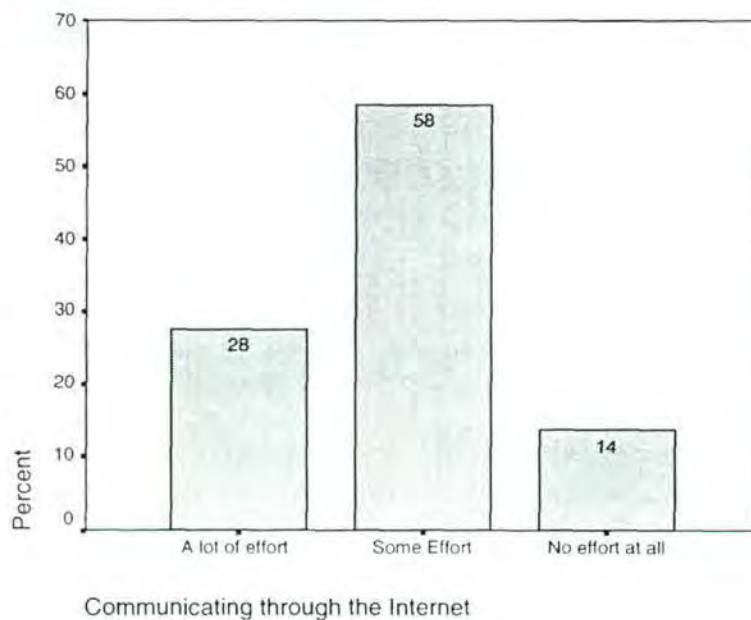
Those who answered favorably towards providing information as a basic service were then asked what they felt to be the best way for the City to communicate with its residents. Thirty-three percent responded television, 28 percent mail, 25 percent newspaper and 4 percent for both radio and the Internet.

Figure 15



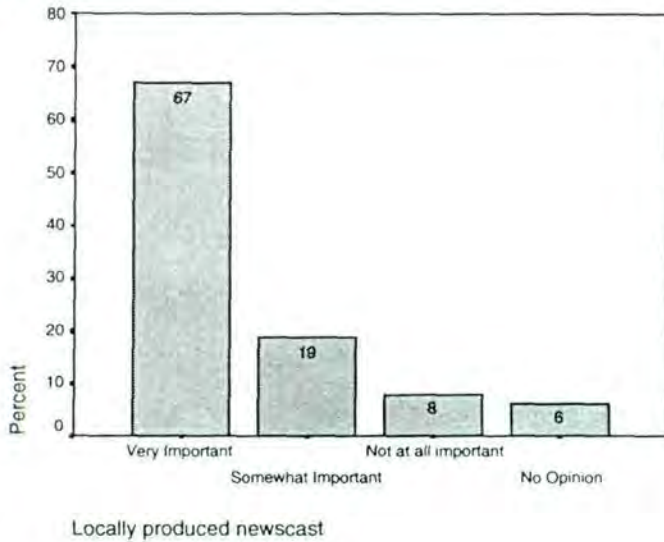
A majority (58 %) of respondents felt that the City of Akron should place "some" effort on communicating with Residents through the Internet, 28 percent felt "a lot" of effort should be placed in this area while 14 percent said "no" effort at all.

Figure 16



In keeping with questions dealing with communication, respondents were asked how important they felt it to be for the city of Akron to try to find a way to restore a locally produced television newscast in Akron. Overall, 86 percent felt it is either very important or somewhat important to do so. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that it is “very” important for Akron to make such an attempt.

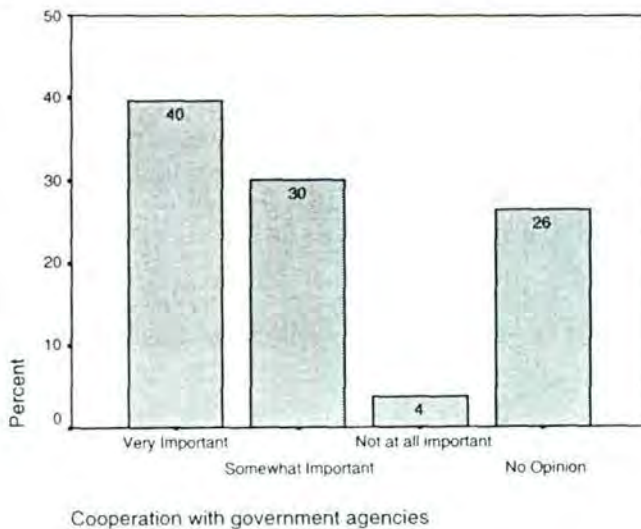
Figure 17



Collaboration

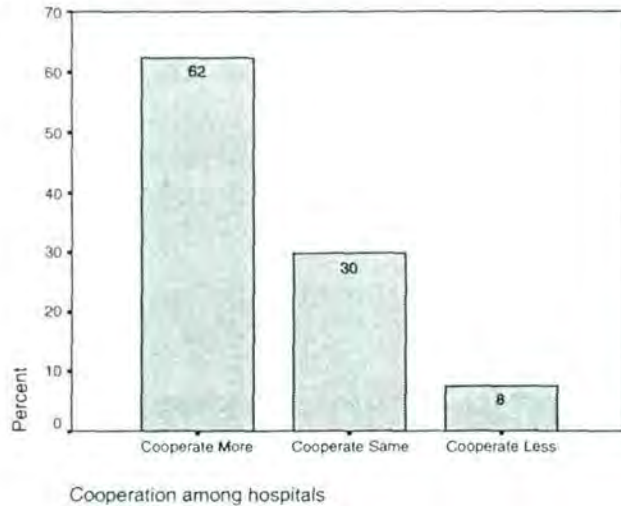
Turning now to the topic of collaboration, 40 percent of the respondents said it was “very” important to find additional ways to cooperate with governments of neighboring cities and government agencies, 30 percent chose “somewhat” important.

Figure 18



Based on recent discussions regarding the relations between Akron's three hospital systems (Summa Health System, Akron General and Children's Hospital), respondents were asked if they felt that the hospitals should find ways to collaborate more in providing health services and compete less, should continue their current level of cooperation or should compete more and cooperate less. Sixty-two percent of the respondents felt that the hospitals should cooperate more while only 8 percent felt they should cooperate less.

Figure 19

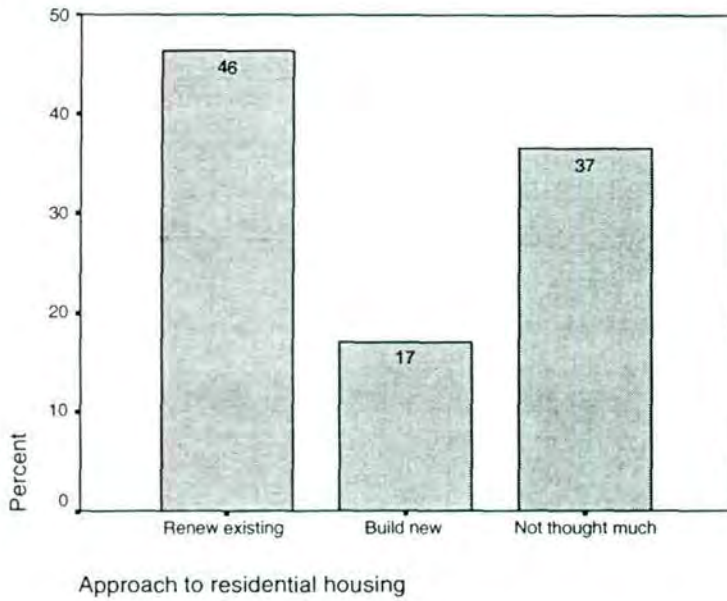


Another area in which respondents were queried about collaboration was education. As noted earlier, there was much support for sharing resources between school districts even if this resource sharing necessitated consolidation.

Community

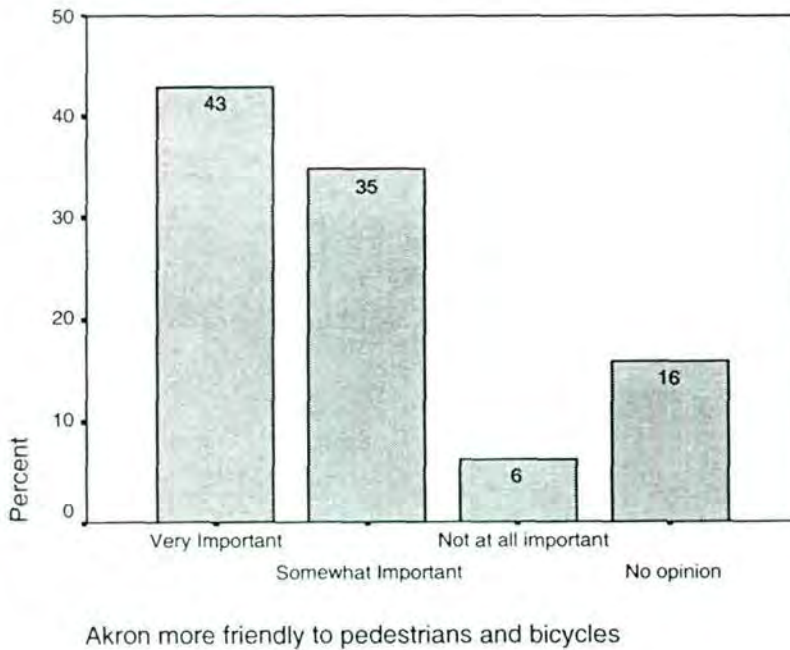
Respondents were asked their views on how Akron should approach residential housing in the future. Forty-six percent of the respondents believe that the City of Akron should focus on renewing existing housing while 37 percent have not thought much about this issue. Only 17 percent would build new developments. There were several significant differences on this topic. Non-whites are more likely to support building new developments than whites. Likewise, those who own their own homes are more likely to support renewal than are those who rent.

Figure 20



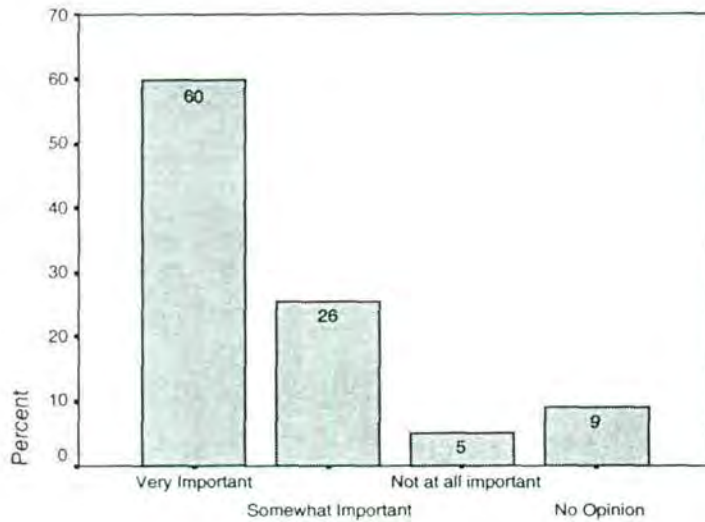
Forty-three percent felt it was “very” important for Akron to be friendlier to pedestrians and bicycles while 35 percent felt it was “somewhat” important. The group most likely to support more pedestrian and bicycle friendly policies were between the ages of 25 and 34. Twenty-three percent of the respondents have the opportunity to ride a bicycle at least once a month.

Figure 21



60 percent responded that it is “very” important for Akron to create an office to focus on issues for people over 65 and 26 percent think it is “somewhat” important. It was noted that thirteen percent of the respondents are responsible for the care of someone over 70.

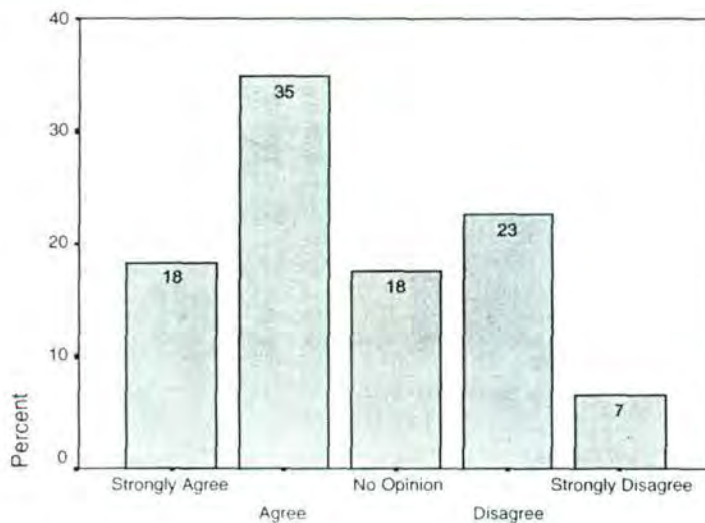
Figure 22



Create office to focus on age 65 and up

Volunteering in public service organizations is important to the vitality of a community, yet citizen participation is declining. Hence, respondents were asked how they felt about businesses providing time off from work for volunteer activity. Thirty-five percent agreed that business should support employees volunteering by giving time off and another 18 percent strongly agreed.

Figure 23

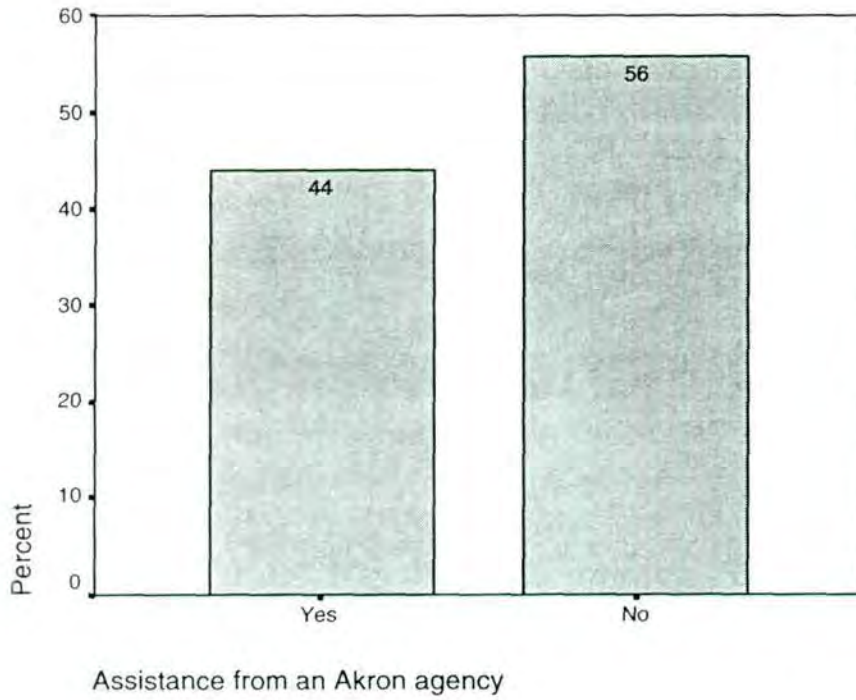


Business support for volunteering

Customer Service

Several questions were posed regarding the need to request assistance from the city of Akron and the response they received. Fifty-six percent of the respondents had never had to ask for assistance from an Akron agency. Of those who had requested assistance, 51 percent responded receiving an “excellent” or “good” response compared to 30 percent who responded receiving a “poor” or “very poor” response.

Figure 24



APPENDIX

- I. COMPOSITION OF WORKGROUPS**
- II. WORKGROUP REPORTS**
- III. SUMMARIES: CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES**



**COMPOSITION
OF
WORKGROUPS**

Imagine.Akron: 2025 Workgroup Members

Mark Albrecht	Central Business District
Donald G. Amsberg	Visitor Development: Akron as Tourist Destination
Michelle J. Anderson	Workforce Development
Leah Anglin	Entertainment Opportunities
Sandy Auburn, Ph.D	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Scott Backus	Central Business District
Christopher C. Bame	Community ID: Media
Kathleen Barlow	Housing--home ownership
Joyce Basile	Community ID: Media
Mary Baumgardner	Infrastructure
Dr. William H. Beisel	Continuing Education for Adults
Dolores Jean Bell	Housing--home ownership
Bill Bennett	Workforce Development
David Bennett	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Deb Berentz	Art/Culture/Museums
Louis G. Berroteran	Community ID: Media
Jerry Black	Housing--home ownership
Marie Black	Housing--home ownership
Art Blair	Housing--home ownership
Alan Bleyer	Health Care
Charles L. Bond	Community ID: Marketing
Pamela S. Bonner	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Charles E. Booth	Community Development
Raymond L. Borom	Housing--LL/T
Virginia Bowman	Joint Economic Development
Zach B. Brandon	Regional Partnerships
Michael Brillhart	Housing--LL/T
Dennis P. Brinton	Research: Public & Private Institutions
Sonya Buckus	Housing--home ownership
Robert L. Bunnell	Infrastructure
William Bush	Workforce Development
Sharon Butler McCray	Development Citizen Participation Government/Community
Theresa L. Butler	Continuing Education for Adults
Michelle Byrd	Historic Preservation
Diana Caldwell	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Kenneth Caldwell	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Roy Call	Health Care
Donald L. Carpenter	Joint Economic Development
Tracy Carter	Health Care
Laura Casenhiser	Delivery of Services to Families;
	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Ralph Christ	Housing--LL/T
Cee Christiana	Community based corrections
Jennifer Civilariullo	Infrastructure
Mark Civilariullo	Infrastructure
Mr. Mark Clark	Secondary Education
Robert Clark	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
George W. Clarke	Community based corrections
Nancy Clem	Workforce Development
Randy Cole	Regional Partnerships
Claudia J. Coleman	Neighborhood Organization
Sharon L. Connor	Neighborhood Organization

Kirt Conrad	Regional Transportation
Kevin Cook	Regional Transportation
Malcolm Costa	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Malcolm J. Costa	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Mary Craddock	Neighborhood Organization
David Crandell	Infrastructure
Karen A. Cross	Services for Persons with Disabilities
Hattie L. Cunningham	Services for Seniors
Ted Curtis	Housing--home ownership
Harriet Cutler	Community Development
Ken Dague	Historic Preservation
Dan Dahl	Entertainment Opportunities
Yvette M. Davidson	Central Business District
Kathleen Davis	Early/Primary Education
W. M. Davis, M.D.	Health Care
Chester Decker	Charitable & Religious Organizations
Pamela Decker	Municipal Services
Beth Delagrange	Housing--home ownership
Chris Derry	Community Development
Ed Dieringer	Community ID: Marketing
Sharon Dietzel	Health Care
Father Norm Douglas	Charitable & Religious Organizations
Elaine Downing	Art/Culture/Museums
Cammeron Drager	Services for Persons with Disabilities; Higher Education as Community Resource
Stephen A. Dubetz	Municipal Services
Raymond H. Dunkle	Art/Culture/Museums
Vicki Earle	Regional Transportation
John Edwards	Police Services
Karen Edwards	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Marianne Edwards	Continuing Education for Adults
Dr. James R Emore	Workforce Development
Jeffrey E. Ennis	Fire & EMS
Jimm Etters	Community Development
Tom Evert	Police Services
Rick Ewing	Entertainment Opportunities
Joyce M. Fairfax	Community ID: Marketing
Marlene Fickes	Police Services
Ralph Filaseta	Regional Transportation
Donna Fish	Police Services
James Foster	Community Development
Lois Foster	Police Services
Pamela J. Foster	Community ID: Media
Erin Fowler	Secondary Education
Cece Fox	Housing--home ownership
John Frank	Historic Preservation
C. L. Franklin	Housing--home ownership
Howard Friedman	Secondary Education
Michael Gaffney	Charitable & Religious Organizations
Natalie Gelfo	Police Services
Nan Gelhard	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Craig Gilbride	Police Services
Trenton Gill	Housing--home ownership
Mitch Gingrich	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development

William Glaeser	Community ID: Media
Roger Glenhorn	Joint Economic Development
Pearl Marie Goddard	Services for Seniors
James Golub	Infrastructure
Tony Gorant	Health Care
Timothy C. Gorrell	Secondary Education
Kurt Gramlich	Services for Persons with Disabilities
Paul Gramlich	Services for Persons with Disabilities
Patrick Gsellman	Outdoor Recreation
Cynthia Hale	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Gus Hall	Police Services
Dr. Stephen F. Hallam	Central Business District
Susan Hamo	Entertainment Opportunities
Lisa Hanna	Leisure/Hospitality Development
Lynn L. Hastman	Services for Seniors
Brian Hatfield	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Dan Hayes	Secondary Education
Linda S. Hayes	Municipal Services
Melissa Hays	Community Development
Joani Hedderick	Services for Children
Jeff Heintz	Community ID: Media
Dennis Helsel	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Mary L. Hensley	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Barbara Hiney	Police Services
Lee Ann Hinkle	Municipal Services
Miller Horns	Historic Preservation
Aaron Huber	Art/Culture/Museums
Harold L. Hudson	Early/Primary Education
Mary Ann Jackson	Art/Culture/Museums
Mary Ann Jackson	Community ID: Marketing
Rich Jankowski	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Diane Johnson	Workforce Development
Michelle Johnson	Higher Education as Community Resource
Linda Jones	Municipal Services
Mark Jones	Regional Partnerships
Anne Jorgensen	Higher Education as Community Resource
Rose Juriga	Services for Persons with Disabilities
Mitchell Kahan	Art/Culture/Museums Entertainment Opportunities
Greg Kalail	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Steve Kasarnich	Workforce Development Health Care
Ardith Keck	Outdoor Recreation
Rita Keenan	Central Business District
Rita Kelly	Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods; Development Citizen Participation Government/Community
Mel Kent	Community Development
Mr. and Mrs. Kidwell	Municipal Services
Carl Kieffer	Art/Culture/Museums
Richard King	Community ID: Marketing
R. Karl Kircher	Municipal Services
Hubert E. Kirkland	Secondary Education
Dr. George Knepper	Historic Preservation
Starlet Knight	Research: Public & Private Institutions
Virginia M. Koehler	Neighborhood Organization
Ron Kopp	Historic Preservation

Elinore M. Korow	Art/Culture/Museums
Rev. Raymond J. Kovach	Early/Primary Education
Kim Kreitz	Early/Primary Education
Doreen K. Kuster	Workforce Development
Norman J. Kutz	Infrastructure
Thomas J. Labbe	Community Development
Howard Lawson	Workforce Development
Steve Libby	Police Services
Esther Linton	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Chief William M. Lohrum	Police Services
Tom Long	Historic Preservation
Alice Lovett	Housing--home ownership
Shirley Lowery	Services for Seniors
Dr. John A. MacDonald	Art/Culture/Museums
Linda MacDonald	Art/Culture/Museums
Meghan MacDonald	Art/Culture/Museums
Renee Maciag	Neighborhood Organization
Holli Mallak	Community Development
Ken Maly	Police Services
Linda Marcin	Cabinet on Education and Delivery of Services to Families
Phil Marcin	Cabinet on Education and Delivery of Services to Families
Katharyne Marcus	Historic Preservation
Patricia Marmaduke	Continuing Education for Adults
Mark A. Marple	Neighborhood Business Districts
Steve Maurer	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Alice May	Charitable & Religious Organizations
Christine McClintic	Municipal Services
Frances McGovern	Historic Preservation
Paulette L. McGregor	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Mary Ann McGuckin	Municipal Services
Douglas Merideth	Secondary Education
Mr. Richard Merolla	Joint Economic Development
Rick Merolla	Housing--home ownership Joint Economic Development
Gregg Mervis	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Jody Miller	Historic Preservation
John Miller	Historic Preservation
Ruth E. Miller	Development Citizen Participation Government/Community
Diane Miller-Dawson	Municipal Parks & Recreation; Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Suzel Mitchell	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Robert E. Mohler	Services for Seniors
Mary C. Monsour	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Paula Moran	Historic Preservation
Theresa Morelli	Housing--LL/T
Betty Morrisette	Police Services
Robert P. Morrison	Municipal Services
Asya Muhammad	Services for Seniors
Pat Munka	Central Business District; Entertainment Opportunities
Barbara J. Murphey, Ed.D.	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Vivian Neal	Services for Children
Judy Nicely	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Amy Nicholls Swanson	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Vincent E. Novak	Continuing Education for Adults

Sally Nyburg	Services for Seniors
Tony O'Leary	Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods; Fire & EMS
Joe O'Neill	Community ID: Media
Tim Ochsenhirt	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development; Research: Public & Private Institutions
Jo Ann Oelschlager	Art/Culture/Museums
Mark A. Ohlinger, AIA	Central Business District
David Ost	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Loretta Ostroski	Municipal Services
Mike Owen	Entertainment Opportunities
Connie Pacanovsky	Community ID: Marketing
Helen Paige, R.N.	Health Care
Cindy Petkac	Outdoor Recreation
Albert L. Ploenes	Research: Public & Private Institutions
Douglas J. Powley	Police Services
William K. Prather	Services for Seniors
Angela Price	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Debbie Prinz	Art/Culture/Museums
Dr. Luis M. Proenza	Joint Economic Development
Theresa B. Proenza	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Donna A. Pulling	Development Citizen Participation Government/Community
Carlee Purcell	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Elizabeth Quirk	Services for Children
Leslie S. Radwany, Jr.	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Bertha Ray	Municipal Services
Bob Reed	Municipal Services
Richard Rexroad	Secondary Education
Isabelle Reymann	Health Care
Dan Rice	Historic Preservation
Barbara Rickenbacker	Early/Primary Education
Anne Riegler	Continuing Education for Adults
Juliann Riley	Visitor Development
Francis Robinson	Art/Culture/Museums
Gertrude Robinson	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Gary M. Rosen	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Jeff Rosenberg	Entertainment Opportunities
Sandra Rossi	Community based corrections
Margaret Roy Herring	Services for Children
Jeannette Ruggierio	Housing--home ownership
Dr. David Sam	Community based corrections
David Samuelson	Entertainment Opportunities
Dan C. Sarvis	Higher Education as Community Resource
Lyn Schott	Outdoor Recreation
Mark Schweitzer	Historic Preservation
Raymone Scott	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Alison Seefeldt-Ekechuku	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Nanci Self	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Joyce Serdinak	Police Services
Michael Sermersheim	Regional Transportation
David L. Shaw	Early/Primary Education
Elsie K. Simmerman	Visitor Development
Jean Skoblar	Services for Children
Evelyn Smith	Municipal Services
F. Eugene Smith	Central Business District

John Smith	Continuing Education for Adults
Mark Smith	Historic Preservation
Sandra R. Smith	Visitor Development
Stephanie A.S. Smith	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Tina Smith	Charitable & Religious Organizations
Kelli Smith-Ball	Community ID: Media
Martin Sokolich	Outdoor Recreation
Jeff Sperry	Art/Culture/Museums
Judge W. F. Spicer	Historic Preservation
Greg Spinos	Municipal Services
Cindy Stefanik	Outdoor Recreation
Heather Stotlar	Community based corrections
Rose Strelbicki	Housing--LL/T
Karen Strickland	Services for Children
Sharon Stuver	Outdoor Recreation
Skip Summerville	Outdoor Recreation
Mark R. Sutter	Charitable & Religious Organizations
David Swartz	Community Development
Betty C. Taylor	Art/Culture/Museums
Diane Thomas McCort	Community Development
Daniel Thomas	Community Development
Craig A. Thompson	Outdoor Recreation
Ralph Thompson	Outdoor Recreation
Mary Tompkins	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Constantine Toscidis	Higher Education as Community Resource
Tony Troppe	Historic Preservation
Daniel Vaeth	Neighborhood Business Districts
Barbara A. Venesy	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Families
Orrin Von Koenig	Housing--LL/T
Todd Wade	Neighborhood Business Districts
E. Lee Wagoner	Neighborhood Business Districts
Nancy Jo Walfish	Services for Seniors
William Walker	Cabinet on Community & Economic Development
Timothy J. Walsh	Visitor Development
Howard Walton	Infrastructure
Mary A. Weaver	Central Business District
Mike Wendelken	Leisure/Hospitality Development
Wendy Wiggins	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Judy Wilfong	Municipal Services
Pam Williams	Fire & EMS; Development Citizen Participation
	Government/Community
Margaret L. Wilson	Regional Transportation
Mary Ann Wilson	Services for Seniors
Virginia Ballard Wojno-Forney	Historic Preservation
Bob Zajac	Community ID: Media

Imagine.Akron: 2025 Moderators

Scott Armstrong	Cabinet on Community and Economic Development
Judge Jane Bond	Leisure/Hospitality Development
Stephen Brand	Community Identity and Cohesiveness: Marketing
Laura Carey	Services for Children
Laura Casenhiser	Regional Partnerships
Randy Cole	Research: Public and Private institutions
Malcolm Costa	Development of Citizen Participation in Government/Community
Harriet Cutler	Community based corrections
Paula Davis	Charitable and Religious Organizations
Dale Gibbons	Regional Transportation
Becky Gilliam	Services for Seniors
Wendy Greathouse	Neighborhood Organization
Cheryl Harvey Kernander	Early/Primary Education Issues
Frank Horn	Neighborhood Business Development
Ardith Keck	Community Identity and Cohesiveness: Media
Doug Kohl	Housing--home ownership
Michael Kolk	Entertainment Opportunities
Joan Lauck	Outdoor Recreation
David Lieberth	Historic Preservation
GinaKaye Maddox	Workforce Development
Phil Marcin	Cabinet--Education and Delivery of Services to Families
Tina Merlitti	Housing--Landlord and tenants
Elizabeth Nocera Davis	Visitor Development: Akron as Tourist Destination
Ellen Otto	Art/Culture/Museums
Joann Robb	Continuing Education for Adults
Dan C. Sarvis	Municipal Services Group
Joyce Sawyer	Higher Education as a Community Resource; Services to Persons with Disabilities
Billy Soule	Fire & EMS
Janice L. Sturkey	Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods
Jane Thompson	Community Development
Ralph Thompson	Services to Persons with Disabilities
Carol Todd Thomas	Central Business District (DAP)
Howard Walton	Infrastructure
Pam Williams	Health Care; Police Services
Gigi Woodruff	Joint Economic Development (JEDD)
Sara R. York	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Mike Zeleznik	Health Care
Laurie Zuckerman	Secondary Education Issues

Imagine.Akron: 2025 Resource Delegates

Mark Albrecht	Community Development; Cabinet on Community and Economic Development; Central Business District
Leah Anglin	Visitor Development: Akron as Tourist Destination
Joe Asher	Municipal Services Group
James W. Barnett	Research Public & Private Institutions
Dr. William H. Beisel	Continuing Education for Adults
John Boal	Community Based Corrections
Cynthia Capers	Health Care
Nancy Cook	Housing--home ownership
Nancy Csonka	Entertainment Opportunities
Father Norm Douglas	Charitable and Religious Organizations
Jerry Egan	Regional Partnerships
Robert Harris	Municipal Services Group
Dr. Jon M. Hawes	Community Identity and Cohesiveness: Media
Chuck Heimbaugh	Neighborhood Business Districts
Brent Hendren	Workforce Development
Joanne Karm	Early/Primary Education Issues
Tom Long	Historic Preservation
Donna Loomis	Secondary Education Issues
James McClure	Infrastructure
Dave Moore	Joint Economic Development (JEDD)
Bill Murphy	Regional Transportation
Vivian Neal	Services for Children
Connie Nolte	Cabinet on Education and Delivery of Services to Families
Patricia Nuspl	Municipal Services Group
Theresa B. Proenza	Higher Education as a Community Resource
Dr. George E. Prough	Community Identity and Cohesiveness: Marketing
Peggy Reid	Services for Seniors
Alison Roberts	Central Business District (DAP)
George Romanoski	Fire & EMS
George Romanoski	Police Services
Arden Scholles	Continuing Education for Adults
William Spalding	Municipal Parks & Recreation
Tom Tatum	Leisure/Hospitality Development
Robert Taylor	Housing--Landlord and Tenants
Ralph Thompson	Outdoor Recreation
Helen Tomic	Neighborhood Organization
Rita Young	Art/Culture/Museums

WORKGROUP REPORTS

IMAGINE.AKRON WORKGROUPS

Cabinet on Education and Delivery of Services to Families

- Services for Children
- Services for Seniors
- Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Health Care
- Early/Primary Education Issues
- Secondary Education Issues
- Charitable and Religious Organizations
- Continuing Education for Adults
- Higher Education as a Community Resource

Cabinet on Delivery of Services to Neighborhoods (No Written Report)

- Neighborhood Organization
- Housing- home ownership
- Housing- Landlord and tenants
- Municipal Parks & Recreation
- Police Services
- Community based corrections
- Fire & EMS
- Municipal Services Group
 - Animal Control
 - Trash pickup
 - Street Repair
 - Snow Removal

Cabinet on Community and Economic Development

- Community Development
- Workforce Development
- Joint Economic Development (JEDD)
- Central Business District (DAP)
- Neighborhood Business Districts
- Infrastructure
- Regional Transportation
- Research: Public and Private institutions
- Historic Preservation
- Leisure/ Hospitality Development
- Entertainment Opportunities
- Art/ Culture/ Museums
- Outdoor Recreation(Metroparks, Canal Corridor, CVNRA)
- Visitor Development: Akron as Tourist Destination

Cabinet on Development of Resources (Group not formed)

- Development of Citizen Participation in Government/Community
- Community Identity and cohesiveness: Marketing
- Community Identity and Cohesiveness: Media
- Regional partnerships

CABINET ON EDUCATION AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Phil Marcin, Moderator
Connie Nolte, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Diane Caldwell, Ken Caldwell, Laura Casenhiser, Robert Clark, Malcolm Costa, Cynthia Hale,
Linda Marcin, Les Radwany and Barbara Venesy

VISION: Greater Akron, Ohio, is known globally as an ideal community in which to be born, raise a family, and live a full and productive life. In particular, living in greater Akron will mean that each person will experience the dignity of a quality lifestyle without regard to race, religion, culture, age, or gender:

- ◆ Life long high quality educational opportunity second to none
- ◆ Access to high quality health care dispensed responsibly, funded equitably, and focused on optimal utilization of preventative health care
- ◆ Better communication and cooperation by community service providers, religious organizations, and charitable groups would provide clear and easy access to delivery of services to all Akron citizens.

Goal: Quality, Life Long Educational Opportunity, Efficiently Delivered in a Secure Environment, Clearly Supported by an Involved Community, Which Provides the Skills and Knowledge Needed for a Successful Life in the 21st Century

Strategies:

Financing

- Need new methods of funding public schools – less reliance on local property tax
- Regionalize education, i.e. centralize and share purchasing, transportation, special education, discipline, and other common district needs (There are 611 districts in Ohio)

Better Use of Existing Resources

- Institute a longer school year and day to reflect current trend of both parents working.
- Rethink the way we provide educational services, e.g. mall type structure, older adults tutoring in schools, utilization of university and industry technical and vocational services etc.
- Examine impact of voucher system as well as benchmark other alternative proposals on the future of public school education

Improve Accountability

- Ensure the quality of instruction remains high by continuing to use world class and widely accepted educational standards when available and develop new ones as new educational demands require
- Develop and use effective methods of measuring student learning
- Encourage increased parental involvement as essential
- Reconceptualize teacher education at the University level and utilize this to promote effective teacher continuing education / Staff development
- Ensure Education/Training is Focused and Relevant

Resources:

- Establish regional/state committees to get consensus on financing.

- **Community and Education leaders have and will continue to make it clear that the job of the Education Industry at all levels is to prepare people to be able citizens with the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful.**
- **Examine national and international innovative education models for new solutions**

Goal: People, as Responsible Partners in Maintaining Their Own Health, Have Access to Affordable Quality Health Care and Pharmaceuticals and a Delivery System Which Respects Them in Mind, Body, and Spirit.

Strategies:

Increased Focus on Preventative Health Treatment and Education

- Establish programs, which encourage community wide engagement in the promotion of healthful lifestyles – nutrition, exercise, stress and anger management, and responsible use of substances.
- Participate in effective prescribed preventative health care, education programs, and voluntary testing. Health insurance credits could be earned.
- Ensure a healthy environment for residents

Improved Cooperation Among Health Care Providers of Different Disciplines including Holistic and Alternative Medicine

- Expand utilization of Hospice and In Home Care for those afflicted with illnesses and disabilities for which there is no current cure.
- Encourage maximum positive family participation in the delivery of care and support to maximize patient comfort and minimize cost.
- Establish mechanisms whereby doctor and other health care providers can more easily and effectively inform the patient (and their families) of the benefits and risks of various alternative treatments.
- Encourage the responsible development of genetic health care advances by encouraging community wide dialogue focused on sound ethical principles.
- Encourage Hospitals, Clinics, Medical Centers, and all Health Care providers to pool their resources in a cooperative way and eliminate duplication and under-utilized equipment and facilities.

Establish Proper Balance Between Quality and Cost in the Delivery of both Physical and Mental Health Care.

- Schedule widely publicized seminars, fairs; etc at which participants would earn credits toward insurance coverage or health services.
- *Provide access to rehabilitation services and improved facilities for the permanently disabled.*

Resources:

- **Many fine Health Care providers reside in the area.**
- **The community supports research and development and values health care as a means toward improving the Quality of Life.**
- **We are fortunate to have a community that believes in and supports research and development and values health care as a means toward improving the Quality of Life for all and is interested in determining the best ways to make that happen.**
- **We have a knowledgeable populace, which recognizes that a clear relationship exists between chosen life styles and other socioeconomic factors.**

Goal: Delivery of Services for Everyone is focused on Providing Those Services

Needed to Optimize a Person's Highest Possible Quality of Life.

Strategies:

Increase the Availability of Primary Needs which Encourage Independence

- Provide educational and health care services that will allow those being served to be able to live independent and successful lives. The primary needs to allow this are the accessibility of transportation to a job and day care for children and/or elderly. The availability of these can be improved with the following points, although additional funding may be needed as well.
- Utilize regional Common Interest Clearinghouses and a single universal application form for all Social Services.
- Categorize Social Services by the "help needed".
- Make lists available at a variety of public locations via counselors, computer kiosks, web sites, libraries, schools, listings in phone books, etc.

Utilize Hidden and Largely Overlooked Community Help System

- Create opportunities for increased volunteerism. Change the paradigm of "Retirement Age" to better utilize the talents of mature adults.

Resources:

- **Community consensus is strong that everyone is entitled to the Opportunity of a decent living.**
- **We value the dignity of the individual, but insist on a proper balance between individual rights, responsibilities, and the common good.**
- **The community enjoys relative economic prosperity and has excellent prospects for growth both commercially and technologically.**
- **We have a large and caring pool of volunteers who respect the value of limited resources, are well educated, and are skilled problem solvers with a strong work ethic.**

Goal: Expanded Cooperation, Tolerance, and Understanding Among All Religious And Charitable Organizations Leads to Greatly Enhanced Capacity to Work Effectively with Governmental Agencies to Facilitate the Delivery of Services.

Strategies:

Increase the Availability of Primary Needs which Encourage Independence

- While quality services necessary for those who are incapable of helping themselves will continue to be provided, the main focus will be to provide educational and health services for people to live independent and successful lives. Beyond the assurance of a secure environment, basic health care, and the necessary economically relevant skills, transportation to work and day care for children and/or elderly are essential
- Expand Akron Area Association of Churches (AAAC) to include all belief systems.
- Expand Akron's program "Coming Together" to include focus and goals for Religious and Charitable Organizations.
- Allow Local input in Regional Charitable Initiatives.
- Eliminate duplication of services where possible.

Use a Unique and Often Underutilized Community Help System

- Recognize that religious and charitable organizations can often be utilized to address spiritual and emotional needs more effectively than governmental agencies.
- Increase public accountability by religious and charitable organizations and this will lead to better public support.

Resources:

- A strong and active church community exists in the area.
- Akron people care for others.
- There is a large and caring pool of volunteers.

WORKGROUP ON SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Laura Carey, Moderator
Vivan Celeste Neal, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Joanni Hedderick, Margaret Roy Herring, Elizabeth Quirk, Jean Skoblar and Karen Strickland

Overall Objective: Akron will be a family friendly city in the year 2025.

Assumption:

Akron currently offers many of the “basics” needed to be a family friendly city. The general public is not fully aware of all that Akron has to offer that will improve the quality of family life. All children up to the age of 18 need to be considered in developing a family friendly city.

I. Current Issues in the year 2000:

- Stressed children
- Safety of children
- Digital Divide (gap in availability of technology to all children)
- Equality of health care to all children
- Adequate health care coverage for all
- Mental health care availability and access
- Quality education
- Access to recreation
- Need for family friendly workplaces

II. Considerations: Changes and trends

- Aging population
- Rapid advancement of technology
- Increased longevity of life
- Increase of number of parents working outside of the home
- Increase of ethnic groups/diversity
- Economic growth
- Welfare reform

III. Goals and Objectives

The goal for the year 2025 is to improve the quality of family life by: 1) improving/expanding current “basics”. 2) developing new programs and 3) increasing awareness with the general public of what Akron has to offer.

A. Objective: Increase availability of comprehensive health care to all children.

I. Strategies:

- a. Provide affordable, accessible healthcare to include:
 - i. Medical
 - ii. Vision
 - iii. Dental

- iv. Mental Health
 - v. Wellness Programs
 - vi. Prevention Programs
 - b. Local lobbying for changes in legislation
 - c. Increased awareness of existing healthcare programs/services
 - d. Provide wellness programs for children
- 2. Resources
 - a. Community Resource Guide
 - b. Politicians
 - c. Volunteers
 - d. Area hospitals and HMO's/Insurance Providers
 - e. Medical Professionals

B. Objective: Expand mental health services.

- 1. Strategies:
 - a. Increase quantity/quality of mental health programs
 - i. Drug and alcohol prevention and treatment
 - ii. Anger management
 - iii. Suicide prevention
 - iv. Stress management
 - v. Parenting skills programs
 - vi. Independent living skills for adolescents
 - vii. Expand medical health insurance to include mental health coverage
 - b. Increase awareness of available programs in:
 - i. Schools (public and private)
 - ii. Churches
 - iii. Healthcare providers
 - iv. Day Care Centers
 - c. Increase funding for mental health programming on local, state, and national levels.
 - d. Increase funding for advertisement of programs
- 2. Resources:
 - a. Elderly population for volunteering and mentoring
 - b. Church involvement
 - c. Community Resource Guide (to be developed)
 - d. College students for volunteering and mentoring
 - e. School guidance counselors
 - f. Mental Health professionals

C. Objective: Provide safety for children

- 1. Strategies:
 - a. Increase availability and affordability of:
 - i. Before school programs
 - ii. After school programs
 - iii. Sick care programs
 - iv. Summer programs
 - b. Implement emergency drill programs in all schools and day care centers, to include:
 - i. Weather
 - ii. Violence

- iii. Catastrophe
- c. Increase and improve violence prevention programs in all schools and day care centers.
 - i. Violence prevention education for staff, students, and parents
 - ii. Metal detectors, police in school
 - iii. Screened admittance devices or locks at all doors.
- d. Provide full time, daily youth programming during school breaks.
- e. Consider year round school schedule
- f. Provide screening process for media influences
 - i. Television
 - ii. Internet
 - iii. Radio
- g. Provide swim lessons to underprivileged children
- h. Provide safety, baby-sitting and "home alone" courses for children
- i. Provide Independent Living Workshops for adolescents
 - i. Time Management
 - ii. Life Skills
 - iii. Taxes and Balancing a checkbook

2. Resources:

- a. Law Enforcement Departments
- b. Fire Departments
- c. Schools
- d. Employers
- e. American Red Cross
- f. Community Resource Guide
- g. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- h. Character Counts! Akron

D. Objective: Increase availability of technology for all children

1. Strategies:

- a. Increase public access to computers for underprivileged children
- b. Train parents of underprivileged children on computers
- c. More computers in schools

2. Resources:

- a. Boys and Girls Clubs of Summit County
- b. Community Resource Guide

E. Objective: Improve quality of education

1. Strategies:

- a. Improve academics
- b. Update facilities
- c. Decrease drop out rate

2. Resources:

- a. Retirees as volunteer tutors and mentors
- b. College students as volunteer tutors and mentors
- c. Schools

F. Objective: Increase access to recreation

1. Strategies
 - a. Build a recreation/community center in Akron with a swimming pool
 - b. Provide public transportation to recreation/sports facilities
 - c. Focus on wellness and exercise
 - d. Increase quantity of wellness programs for children
2. Resources
 - a. Community Resource Guide
 - b. Boys and Girls Clubs of Summit County
 - c. YMCA and YWCA

G. Objective: Develop family friendly workplaces

1. Strategies
 - a. Encourage employers to offer:
 - i. Flex-time
 - ii. Child care
 - iii. Family leave
 - iv. Job sharing
 - v. Part-time employment
 - vi. Flexibility
2. Resources
 - a. Akron Regional Development Board
 - b. Society for Human Resource Management
 - c. Character Counts! Akron

H. Objective: Develop a Family-Friendly Community Resource Guide

1. Strategies:
 - a. Guide should be published/revised annually.
 - b. Guide should be available on the internet for regular updating
 - c. Guide should be produced in abundance and receive widespread publicity and distribution
 - d. Guide should be comprehensive in coverage of family activities, programs, and services. Suggested categories to list:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. recreational activities ii. community events iii. sports programs and facilities iv. art and culture v. libraries vi. health care programs vii. mental health programs viii. educational programs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ix. academic assistance programs x. safety courses xi. volunteer opportunities xii. child care xiii. before and after school programs xiv. summer youth programs xv. Suggested list of no-cost family activities
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2. Resources:
 - a. Infoline
 - b. Service organizations (i.e. Junior League, Kiwanis, Rotary Club)
 - c. Senior Citizen groups (i.e. AARP)

WORKGROUP ON SERVICES TO SENIORS

Becky Gilliam, Moderator
Peggy Reid, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Hattie Cunningham, Pearlmarie Goddard, Lynn Hastman, Shirley Lowrey, Robert Mohler,
Asya Muhammad, Sally Nyburg, Bill Prather, Nancy Walfish and Mary Ann Wilson

INTRODUCTION

The members of the Services for Seniors Workgroup wanted to send a strong message to the organizers of the Imagine.Akron:2025 Program that Akron is a great place in which to live, work and retire! We need to recognize and enhance the programs that are working. Our comments below are only meant to improve an already great community. Because we feel so strongly about Akron, once we develop some of the ideas below, Akron should be marketed as a great place for seniors. The community gemstones that are all supported by the City – the parks, gardens, recreation facilities (including golf courses), Akron Roundtable, expressway system, the University of Akron, art museum, Don Drumm and Gallery, other area artists, the culture, historical restorations, Stan Hywet, Perkins Mansion, John Brown home, Soap Box Derby, Alcoholics Anonymous activities, Humane Society and other pet rescue groups, strong churches – synagogues – and temples, Quaker Square, economic development, good jobs – need to be promoted internally to local residents. Many citizens in the area take for granted what a great place Akron is.

Thank you for allowing us to have a voice in what Akron will become over the next 25 years!

[The following issues are listed in order of importance per written and oral survey results from the workgroup.]

I. Medical

- **Goal:** Provide affordable, accessible and available health care services for all senior citizens.
[Privacy issues should not be overlooked in achieving this goal.]
- **Strategy:** Develop a downtown one-stop wellness center where seniors could get all basic health needs addressed in one place, i.e. dental, audio-visual, feet, internal problems, mental health issues, physical therapy issues, skin, labs for blood work, pharmacies, other testing facilities, etc. [Akron General's Wellness Center was used as an example only it should be geared toward seniors and should be centrally located.]
- **Resources:**
 1. Doctors and related health care workers recruited to these centers based on their interest in working with seniors. They should be willing to take pro bono cases.
 2. Those recruited should commit to practice at the Center for a specified period of time and to take volunteer work.
 3. Demographic data for Akron/Summit County to determine the best location for the first Senior Wellness Center and then satellite centers, as needed.
 4. One of the benefits of this arrangement is the ability of the various specialties to share equipment and labs, and other resources.

5. Other resources: volunteers, planners, facilitators, physical equipment, knowledge, hi-tech networking, and transportation.

• **Other important ideas in this topic:**

1. We need more affordable in-home health providers so seniors can stay in their own homes longer.
2. We need either better care in nursing homes or more stringent enforcement of laws regulating care, with legal consequences if not met.
3. We need to train caregivers better on caring for seniors – seniors have their own psychological and social issues and concerns.
4. Prescription Plan available to all (Public Policy issues).
5. Is there a danger of hospital closure in this area?
6. There is a tie-in with physical health and association with domestic animals. Studies show that people with pets live longer. Most residences for seniors don't allow pets. This needs to be addressed along with provisions for pets of deceased seniors.
7. Many hospitals now have trained dogs that visit hospitals for therapy. This should be expanded.
8. We need to do a better of job making monitoring programs available to all seniors; i.e., checking the usage of prescription and over the counter drugs, assuring that exercise is taken when appropriate, breathing, and other issues (under safety).
9. Research shows that when seniors stay active, and have a social life, they stay healthier. Many are lonely and won't leave their homes/apartments because they don't know how to reach out to others or lack the transportation to get to activities. There needs to be more employment or volunteering opportunities, and a better way of getting there. SCAT's hours do not enable many seniors to take advantage of all the wonderful activities in the area.

Housing, transportation and medical are all interrelated. Since many seniors don't drive, or need assistance getting to doctors, and other activities, the location of housing and the availability of transportation is important.

II. Communication

• **Goal:** Better educate, inform and disseminate information to all citizens, especially seniors, regarding seniors' programs and services available in Akron/Summit County.

• **Strategy:**

1. Establish a deputy mayor's office in charge of Services for Seniors. This office would serve as a clearinghouse for information – using both technological and traditional means of communication. Seniors Programs and activities must be researched so the information can be better disseminated and updated.
2. Initiate a special color-coded section in the front of the phone book (much like the *Government Offices* section) for all senior resources to be placed together in one location. Use bold, large print so it can be easily read, and do not use acronyms that seniors don't understand. Use a senior citizen as an adviser when organizing the section. Be consistent in how information and organizations are described.
3. Local companies could pass out information packets to retirees when doing their final exit interview.
4. Market Akron as a place where seniors are important – if more seniors remain here to live or to vacation during the summer, it would be easier to develop programs as the customer base would be larger. Schedule Seniors' events - recruit seniors' events into the area.

5. Need to periodically monitor and reassess all strategies to assure that they are working to achieve the desired goals.
6. Need to develop a web page. As the baby boomers age, they will be expecting information on the Internet.

• **Resources:** (for Strategy #1 – Deputy Mayor)

Akron Beacon Journal, Public library, businesses, volunteers, seniors' family members, city offices, federal/state and private funding, grants, foundations, local groups—Lions, Kiwanis, etc., religious organizations, local organizations already existing that provide services for Seniors.

• **Other important ideas in this topic:**

1. Create mentoring services with high school or college students or younger seniors.
2. Create senior rooms in libraries where information could be placed.
3. Have more public service announcements.
4. *We need other ways of communicating besides audio and visual due to the number of seniors who have visual or hearing impairments.*

III. Safety – (includes crime, fire, transportation, physical hazards, fraud)

• **Goal:** To assure that all seniors in the Akron area live without fear (of issues that can be dealt with).

• **Strategy:**

1. Create a structured program for keeping in touch through neighbors and family.
2. Create a mentoring program using students or younger seniors.
3. Educate seniors about multiculturalism.
4. Provide free or low cost legal counseling.

• **Resources**

1. The Deputy Mayor's Office (for Seniors) that we established in II above should be given the financial resources to create some of these programs.
2. The APD, AFD and paramedics should be involved and undergo awareness training for where seniors live, their activities, their routines, etc.
3. Special neighborhood unity programs to create public awareness. Senior citizens are a great source of untapped wisdom and their numbers and percentage of our total population grow exponentially each year.
4. Fraud is a big problem for the elderly. The Bar Association should sponsor a free clinic for advice to older seniors who no longer have the capacity to make sound financial decisions. Free consultations could also be offered on a variety of topics. Develop a phone-in service or scheduling appointments at seniors' homes.

5. CPA's go to seniors' homes to assist with income taxes.

Thank you again for allowing us the have input on this most important project and we'll be checking the phone book next year for the Seniors' Section.

Lastly, the group members assembled a Seniors' resource file that we will submit with this report. The contents are listed below:

Contents of Current Resource File:

1. Information from Metro Regional Transit Authority – services for Seniors (SCAT).
2. Handouts from the Area Agency on Aging: Elder Rights Attorney, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Programs and Services, copies of Senior Sentinel, Summit Co. Elder Abuse Prevention Coalition, other brochures on Financial and Medical issues.
3. Information on Assisted Living and Independent Living Facilities in the area.
4. Handout from the Social Security Administration on benefits.
5. Magazine, calendar and Aging Connection brochure from the Ohio Department of Aging.
6. Senior Access magazine (Feb/March 2000) from Akron General Medical Center.
7. Internet information on OASIS.
8. INFOline brochure – also Senior Info Line Brochure.
9. Home with Help brochure [non-medical home care].
10. Telecommunications brochure [Americans with Disabilities Act].
11. Seniors' Speakers Bureau [info].
12. Senior Citizens Against Crime pamphlet [Stark County Prosecuting Attorney].
13. Shared Living Facilities for Older Adults at Edwin Shaw brochure.
14. Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities – brochure of services.
15. Home Health Services from Senior Workers' Action Program [SWAP] brochure.
16. Directory of Mental Health Services in Summit County.
17. Summa Health System's Premier Years flyer.
18. Ohio Works First – flyer.
19. CAREtenders Senior Solutions – flyer.
20. Planning for an Aging Society from the American Planning Society.

Facilitator's note: At our first session, there was a lengthy debate over 'who is a senior' and at what age does senior start. There was agreement that 70+ would meet the definition but as the age got younger, more members disagreed as to the starting point. While individuals in their 20's may think that 55 is *senior*, those who are already there clearly disagree. The adage that old age gets older as you do surely fits.

Each week as the discussions became more specific, it became apparent that a cookie cutter approach for all seniors is not appropriate. Age is certainly a state of mind and there is a huge difference between the needs of most 55-year olds and most 95 year olds. Many young retirees are concerned about their aging parents and wonder what housing arrangements will accommodate two sets of seniors!

As medical concerns dominated almost every week's discussion, there was very little attention paid to physical fitness needs of aging Akronites. Most research shows that an important ingredient in staying vibrant and healthy as a 60 or 70-year old is staying active and getting exercise. Most residents of seniors' facilities in the area are either in wheelchairs or using walkers. As we start planning for increasing numbers of seniors in the Akron area, this very important aspect of good health should not be overlooked.

WORKGROUP ON SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Joyce Sawyer, Moderator

Workgroup Members:

Karen Cross, Cammeron Drager, Kurt Gramlich, Paul Gramlich & Rose Juriga

I. Goals

- A. Create a more "user-friendly" city.
- B. Full implementation of existing laws.
- C. Involvement of persons with disabilities in the process of "improved Akron."
- D. Equality of all persons regardless of disability.
- E. Encouragement of contact and exposure, open and integrative of all.
- F. Respect for and recognition of the independence of persons with disabilities and their desire to take responsibility.
- G. Remove "seams" from system through collaboration.
- H. Eliminate the "pecking order" of disabilities; make city events benefit wide range of disabilities, not only one.
- I. Relief and support for families of persons with disabilities.
- J. Comprehensive source of information of all services.

II. Attitudes Needing Modification

- A. Historical perspectives perpetuate old attitudes.
- B. Patronizing persons with disabilities.
- C. Increase public awareness of widespread desire for persons with disabilities to be independent, "hand-out mentality" rare.
- D. Follow-up to de-institutionalizing persons with disabilities into old age.
- E. Conflict between "disabled" persons and "elderly" persons.
- F. Mental illness is a disability; alcoholism and drug abuse are NOT.
- G. Superficial support for persons with disabilities facilities; "not in my backyard."
- H. Inquisition regarding nature or cause of a person's disability.

III. Suggestions

- A. Form support groups for persons with disabilities.
- B. Issue a comprehensive brochure for persons with disabilities with a guide to specific types.
- C. Telephone "hot line" that persons with disabilities could call with ideas and frustrations.
- D. Households marked with indication that there's someone who can help living at a particular address.
- E. Printed or computer-generated maps with accessibility marked of handicapped parking spots.
- F. Produce public service TV spots to help sensitize others to situations that persons with disabilities deal with on an everyday basis.
- G. Appoint nursing home ombudsmen to inspect periodically.
- H. Arrange for local medical students to work on community-based home care.
- I. Design a website containing information useful to persons with disabilities and keep updated and current (announce through TV and radio PSA's).

- J. Parking spots for persons with disabilities
 - i. Mark more clearly.
 - ii. Enforce the punishment of those misusing handicapped spots.
 - iii. Surveillance of people who misuse parking; make offenders public (i.e., posting in P.O.)
 - iv. Website to expose those in "iii" above.
 - v. Notary on site.
- K. Adjust new schools for handicapped.
- L. Incentives to add more bathrooms to public buildings.
- M. Motorized wheelchairs at zoo, etc.
- N. Prosthetic devices should be included in Medicaid.
- O. When retrofitting older buildings, use removable barriers; can be done by degrees.
- P. All doors of medical facilities should be wide enough for wheelchairs.
- Q. Doorjambs need to be flatter.
- R. Public commending of businesses providing good accessibility (i.e., visible sticker).
- S. Interpretation (sign language) at all public meetings.
- T. Those studying sign language or needing practical experience sign at public meetings (possible reduction of tuition).
- U. City material printed in large print (type-face).
- V. Provide microphones for sound amplification at public meetings.
- W. Broadcast public meetings to home computers.
- X. Equipment, which is provided, should be serviced and upgraded as necessary.
- Y. Contact local businesses for donations.
- Z. Investigate other progressive cities—ideas.
- AA. Follow guidelines for "visitability" in local housing industry (developed by Home Builders Association of Greater Akron, the Tri-County Independent Living Center and the Urban Neighborhood Development Corp.). These guidelines refer to creating new residences, which can be visited on the first floor by physically challenged persons.
- BB. Recreational facilities accessible.
- CC. "Day care centers" for persons with disabilities to provide secure location while family members go to work; also center for persons with disabilities before "sheltered workshops" open for them in mid-morning.
- DD. Availability of insurance rider to cover expense of day care for persons with disabilities.
- EE. Parking spaces for persons with disabilities, which have space between them to allow passage of a wheelchair.
- FF. Arrange restaurant seating for a wheelchair so no one needs to get up to allow the persons with disabilities to be places at a table.

WORKGROUP ON HEALTH CARE

Pam Williams, Moderator
Cynthia Capers, Ph.D., Moderator

Workgroup Members:

Alan Bleyer, Roy Call, Tracy Carter, W. M. Davis, Sharon Dietzel, Tony Gorant., Helen Paige
and Isabelle Reymann

GOAL: Healthy, productive citizens

- To reach our goal of a healthy, productive population we must emphasize education as a means of reducing the incidence of many preventable diseases. In order to target them, we must first identify these health care risks (e.g. smoking, improper diet) and populations (e.g. mentally ill, geriatric, youth).
- Recognizing that universal access to appropriate (e.g. clinic vs. emergency room ~ consumer education needed) health care is necessary we should collect data on population needs. (More home health care? Assisted living? Certain specialties? Facilities? etc.) Similarly, we should assess the needs for the health care workforce (Nutritionist, Physical Therapist, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Specialist, LPN, etc.) to determine strategies for preparing and recruiting the next generation of health care providers. Appropriate training must be available for them. The impact of changing technology and its effect on health care must be kept in mind. Once we have identified and educated qualified professionals the quality of life in the Akron area must make them want to stay. (Other workgroups are addressing this issue.)
- A serious exploration should be made of opportunities for cooperative, communal programs. This could insure the best use of resources in the provision of services. The health care industry in Akron should standardize language and provide a uniform health care record. An umbrella authority or clearing house could be established to develop 1) the coordination of resources, 2) collaboration of services, 3) awareness of available funding, 4) data collection and its use, 5) etc.
- We should insure universal health care coverage to the citizens of Summit County. (We speak of Summit County here rather than Akron because the county is a taxing agent that might be brought into play.)
- We believe that much of the data we have referred to in this report are already available. It just needs to be gathered together and put in the hands of people who can use it. Some resources for this information would be 1) NEOUCOM, 2) The University of Akron, 3) Akron Health Dept., 4) Healthy Summit 2000, 5) Healthy Connections, 6) Local Hospitals
- An ultimate outcome of this work may be changes in legislation and health policy (e.g. reimbursement for education/prevention programs).

This workgroup had two major concerns that they would like to express to the Imagine.Akron:2025 Board.

1. They don't want this report to end up in a file drawer with many others that have been written before by other groups. We can and should begin now to implement some of these recommendations if we are to achieve our goal. Some members of this workgroup, along with other interested citizens, should continue to be involved in the process.

2. The workgroup members feel very strongly that there should have been a practicing physician in the group. They think that this is a point of view that is essential to the process. You are urged to approach one or both of the medical societies in Akron and ask that they get some of their members to address the question of health care in 2025. Their report could be an addendum to ours.

WORKGROUP ON EARLY/PRIMARY EDUCATION

Cheryl Harvay Kernander, Moderator
Joanne Karm, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Kathleen Davis, Harold L. Hudson, Rev. Raymond J. Kovach, Kim Kreitz, Barbara Rickenbacker and
David L. Shaw

Vision: The City of Akron has a unique opportunity to set a new standard in early/primary education particularly as it applies to day-care and before and after school care settings. Akron is large enough to address issues common to many urban areas, yet small enough to respond creatively and quickly to challenges.

Goal: The ultimate goal of Akron's early/primary education programs is to insure that every child *achieves a developmentally appropriate level of literacy by the completion of the third grade* and is poised to move successfully through their remaining school years. In addition, all children in Akron should have the right and the access to receive quality day care (children ages 0-3) and quality preschool education (children 3-5). To realize these goals Akron must adopt a "total quality" child-care and education approach. To an even greater extent than older children, literacy issues for the 0-9 age group are affected by physical, emotional, societal and family factors.

Recommendations for early/primary child education are grouped around three key points:

1. **Prepare the child to learn.**
2. **Make the resources available to aid the child in learning.**
3. **Support the child in learning.**

1. PREPARE THE CHILD TO LEARN

Dealing with special needs and standards for developmentally appropriate learning environments.

Inventories should be completed to identify special needs on a continuum from the obvious, such as speech or hearing issues, to the more subtle, such as learning styles.

In the case of hearing/speech skills, assessment earlier than kindergarten is recommended. The workgroup recommended that if a special need such as a hearing problem weren't identified before kindergarten, that child would face serious literacy challenges. The group felt that assessment by age 3 would be a significant improvement.

Encourage parents to provide some sort of educational setting for preschool children.

Whether through a formal day-care program or informal "play-groups," the socialization and enrichment opportunities provided in-group settings could prepare a child to succeed in school. With a modest effort, the groundwork for literacy can be laid as early as 6 months of age. It was suggested that Children's Hospital and General Practitioners could be conduits of information in helping parents understand the importance of such early education.

2. MAKE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO AID THE CHILD IN LEARNING

Ohio's funding challenges are Akron's funding challenges.

The group recognized that until equitable funding strategies are in place Akron, along with the rest of Ohio, would continue to see discrepancies in the quality of educational opportunities available to our children. In addition to the now well documented financial issues facing our public schools, the group also noted a need for financial resources so more children can attend quality day-care both from ages 0-5

as well as before and after school programs for ages 5-9. The educationally richer day care programs are too expensive for many families. There is a need for financial resources so more children can attend quality day care. One collaboration to model after:

- ◆ The Akron Board Of Education works with their affiliated Head Start programs that provide curriculum support and teacher training. This ensures better preparation for children's entry into public school. There is a need for similar support to all day care and preschool programs.

Teacher support and compensation.

Teaching/day-care shouldn't be a fringe job. For example, in England teachers are revered on a level equal to that of physicians.

The group recognized that teachers earnestly want to help the children they work with and that learned child development models are often obsolete for a given school, neighborhood, class or child. Therefore, ongoing child development education is needed including education for dealing with emerging (often societal) issues.

The current funding system is leading to stratification of communities because of differences in available education funding. Funding can determine both the qualities of teachers in a school and the resources available for those teachers to use.

A more equitable funding system must be devised. Consideration should be given to the number and quality of challenges a particular school must address in determining apportionment. Teacher compensation should be influenced by merit, but not without an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills needed to address the ever-changing issues presented in the classroom.

Year-round Schooling.

The group consensus was that year-round schooling provides better continuity for children's learning, possibly a more balanced schedule for teachers and is a better fit for our society that is no longer agrarian.

Some options the group feels may have merit are:

- ◆ "Looping" where a teacher travels with the class from K to 1 to 2 to 3. Even in schools with highly transient populations this could provide a reassuring base and consistency for the percentage of students remaining. Also, perhaps if widely implemented, it may provide a solid base for transient students to "land in."
- ◆ Rather than "segregating" children based on ability ("smart" kids with "smart" teachers) a recognition of multiple intelligences, different learning styles and personal achievement is valuable and could support the "looping" concept as well.

3. SUPPORT THE CHILD IN LEARNING

Who sets standards?

The group agreed that standards should be set jointly by the community (parents, business leaders, etc.) in conjunction with professional educators at local and state levels.

We noted that education is a loaded political issue and involvement of political leaders should be tempered to the extent office holders are actually involved in the community (are they a parent, business owner, etc.).

While quality standards (and avenues to improve them) exist for K-12 education, standards for preschools and day-care sites address primarily issues of health and safety. The community needs to work with state officials to develop more standards related to program quality and certification of teachers.

Recognize and address that literacy issues in children may also be parental literacy issues.

Parents are a key support for child literacy. Acknowledging that a parent may not be literate, or not literate in English, can help clarify the issues to be overcome in achieving literacy. Once this is clarified other support resources can be identified for the child or, ideally, a literacy program can be offered to parents along with child. In this second option, the program should be sensitive to the stigma attached to illiteracy and the program content veiled by another subject.

Provide before/after school programs—not everyone learns in the same amount of time.

These programs should be enrichment programs, not warehousing kids or just convenient day-care options for parents. Qualities of these programs should include:

- ◆ A spectrum of options, from stimulating free-play to reading help or areas of special interest such as languages or science.
- ◆ Emphasis on involvement not level of achievement, be careful not to stigmatize students who participate for remediation.
- ◆ A sample program has been created by King School's PTA which organizes a variety of programs for a nominal fee.
- ◆ A key issue to resolve: transportation, both for cost and liability.
- ◆ Currently, these kinds of programs aren't offered at the K-3 level, doing so can provide an important opportunity to move more children toward literacy by providing an introduction or extra help as needed.
- ◆ These programs don't have to be school-based (although the school should certainly be involved in their design), they may occur at community, day-care or before/after school care centers.
- ◆ One successful structure for these programs, especially reading, may be to tie them to breakfast programs.
- ◆ Thought should also be given to possible ways to involve children in literacy goals that tie to other literacy activities. Literacy isn't only about two-dimensional pictures and words on a page.

Adapt a multi-cultural mindset.

Recognize diversity. Be mindful of ways to be inclusive not only of Hispanic, Asian and other cultures, but also socioeconomic differences.

If we don't acknowledge difference it will be impossible to address challenges facing different groups. For example, avoid the "taboo mindset" in which a subject is never named because it is distasteful and as a result, never remedied.

Once a challenge is identified, present it to the community. The second challenge may be in articulating to the community why overcoming the issue is important. For example an ESL program for adults may be seen, as an "extra" unless it is shown that there is a significant group of adults with children in school for whom English is a second language.

The best support that can be provided at the early-primary education level to prevent later violence among children/students is parental involvement and support.

In neighborhoods where lack of parental involvement is an issue, and this includes most neighborhoods to some extent, the group recommended the following to help increase parental involvement:

- ◆ Publish guidelines for parental involvement and give to parents at beginning of each school year. Use innovative method of communication including pictures so both parents and children understand them. Topics to be covered: attendance, adequate sleep, proper breakfast, clothing and hygiene.
- ◆ Provide "social resource person/employee" to problem-solve and advocate for families to use available agencies in meeting guidelines. School employee would not be responsible for the ultimate

resolution of problems, only to refer them to the proper agency. One possible model: Barberton's Decker School.

In wrap up discussion, the following observations were made:

Controversies (such as the politicization of school funding) distract our focus from teaching children to read and preparing them to learn.

The group was unanimous in its belief that America needs compulsory education. We all suffer if another's child isn't educated.

WORKGROUP ON SECONDARY EDUCATION

Laurie Zuckerman, Moderator
Donna Loomis, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Mark Clark, Erin Fowler, Howard Friedman, Timothy G. Gorrell, Hubert C. Gorrell, Dan Hayes, Douglas Merideth
and Richard Rexroad

VISION

- We want innovative schools that experiment with all of the factors that influence student learning, including such things as teaching styles, classroom organization, class times, extended school year, etc.
- We want really excellent teachers who genuinely enjoy teaching. Our students deserve that.

ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE YEAR 2025

1. Students will come to secondary school knowing:
 - How to read
 - Basic arithmetic
2. Regardless of curriculum or teaching style in 2025, schools need to provide students with the opportunity to learn socialization skills.
3. Students will come from a wide variety of family structures (e.g., two-parent families, one-parent families, same sex parent families, grandparent families, students living with friends, etc.).
4. Technology will be drastically different and more advanced than what it is today.
5. Many different schooling styles can be effective at educating students (e.g., home schooling, distance learning, Internet learning, classroom learning).
6. Education will be funded in a fair and equitable manner.

SPECIFIC GOALS

Student Needs

- Each student will have an individualized plan for learning and a mentor to help them follow their plan.
- Schools will create an environment that promotes good mental and physical health.
- Teachers will be accepting of students from all different family structures.

Curriculum

- The secondary school curriculum will support proficiency in hard skills and soft skills.
 - Hard skills that must be part of the curriculum include: advanced math, advanced science, languages (other than English), how our system of government works, research skills, technology, and cultural awareness (global and national).
 - Soft skills that must be part of the curriculum include: problem-solving, teamwork, socialization, employability, and critical thinking.

- Research will be done on an ongoing basis to maintain a current understanding of the demands of government and the needs of society, and to be sure the curriculum matches those needs.

Educators

- All teachers will have the skills and desire to connect with students and support their learning.
- The traditional teacher role will be changed. Teachers will be facilitators of student learning, and will consistently:
 - Draw on subject matter experts
 - Provide on-location opportunities
 - Be connected with popular culture
 - Support critical thinking and independent thinking
 - Be open to new ideas
 - Challenge students to learn, rather than imposing knowledge
- Each teacher will have an individualized plan for learning how to teach to the above standards and a mentor to help them follow their plan.
- Teachers will be evaluated on a regular and random basis.
- Teachers will have hands-on subject matter expertise.
- Part-time specialists outside of the traditional teaching field will be increased and developed as educators (non-teacher subject matter experts).

Organization

- The traditional principal role will be changed.
 - School structures will have building managers to manage the facility and the budget.
 - Each department will have a head teacher who motivates, supports, evaluates and mentors teachers.
- Secondary education will be linked to the University.
 - The school system will identify and communicate needed skills for educators on an ongoing basis.
- School districts will be consolidated in order to increase efficiencies and reduce costs.

Facilities

- School buildings and facilities will include a variety of learning centers to support different learning styles and different curricula.

Examples:

- Distance learning facilities (school-to-school, home-to-school)
- Campus-like environment for those students who are learning face-to-face with educators
- On-location learning opportunities, so students can see and touch examples of what they're learning (e.g., visits to manufacturing facilities, rather than memorizing what "manufacturing" means, real or virtual visits to Plains states when studying about the Plains)
- Global learning opportunities, so students can learn languages and culture directly from people in other countries.

The following goal was raised by one group member. While the full workgroup did not agree to all parts of it, some group members found parts of it appealing. It is included here for completeness:

- Schools will be "tracked" in three ways:
 - College Bound
 - Vocational Bound (business, technology, trades)
 - Unsure
- All three tracks will be held in equal esteem by educators.
- Students, parents and educators will join together to select the appropriate track for each student at the end of 8th grade.

WORKGROUP ON CHARITABLE & RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Paula Davis, Moderator
Fr. Norm Douglas, Resource Delegate

Work Group Members:
Tina Smith, Alice May, Chester Decker, Mark R. Sutter, Melinda Tokie, and Michael Gaffney

CHARITABLE & RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS REPORT

Vision: We envision charitable and religious organizations getting to know one another better and effectively collaborating in fostering a more unified, local community of concern, commitment and celebration.

Goals are listed in order of importance to the group members.

- GOAL:** **Bring the financial resources of the government, the spiritual resources of the faith-based community and the active concerns of the charitable organizations together to work for the betterment of the community, i.e. alleviating homelessness and hunger in Akron.**
- Government needs the spiritual resources faith-based communities can provide to assist in solving social issues. Faith-based communities need the government's financial resources to do their work without regard to specific beliefs, and the same is true for charitable organizations.
 - People need one place in the community where they can feel totally accepted, feel and experience **love** while solving their problems. Our group needs to make the personal connections.
 - Spiritual and service oriented agencies can act as the catalysts to get people talking about life choices, when the answers may be rooted in faith systems. The faith-based community has limited resources.
 - **STRATEGIES**
 - Find the spiritual **commonality**, so government, agencies, and churches can work together on issues. Foster a **nurturing** climate within the community.
 - Pursue funding through taxes. A good example is the recent Akron Area Arts Council's (CARES) proposal to the county for a cultural/arts tax to support the nonprofit community.
 - Find the moral commonality with the increasing body of unchurched. Working together does not have to be tied to specific faith doctrines.
 - Create new partnerships.
- GOAL:** **Charitable and religious organizations will build and strengthen community bases and networks.**
- Develop **web-works** of caring communities, either faith- based or nonprofit agency based.
 - A challenge will be how faith-based communities and nonprofits are going to use sophisticated technology to increase respect for the individual and community concern for each other.
 - Our organizations need to create the new **intentional communities** that citizens will identify with in the future. Replacing the neighborhood schools, churches or housing areas of the past.
 - There is a definite need to foster within our city's high school population and college youth a sense of the world needs, a desire to serve their community and a desire to volunteer. Give them a sense of responsibility for the future of their community!
 - **STRATEGIES:**
 - Set up geographic sectors for providing personal care
 - Determine how to coordinate community bases, based on geographic sectors, around

- o faith affiliation, mutual commonality – interests, clubs, family units, etc.
- o **RESOURCES:**
 - ◆ Use technology to keep in touch with people.
 - ◆ Improved data bases, web shopping capabilities, picture/sound capabilities will make it easier to help people and identify their needs. We must make sure individuals not on-line do not get left out of community services. That may become the job of charitable and religious organizations.

GOAL: Charitable and religious organizations need to develop and maintain communication technology.

- Nonprofits and religious organizations are already behind the curve for incorporating technology, software, and training into their businesses due to staffing and money restraints. The community forces need to get them up to speed and allow them to reap the benefits of the internet.
- Virtual volunteering will be a factor.
- Our constituents must provide the **human connections** which will be lacking in the internet delivery of all types of services
- Our children's newest neighborhood is the Web. Through the web, we need to reach them spiritually and get them involved in their community.
- Create **intentional communities** through the internet for human caring
- Technology may help the community in avoiding duplication of services and filling the voids in the delivery of services to the disadvantaged.
 - o **RESOURCE**
 - ◆ Technology will make it much easier to keep track of faith-based or nonprofit organization constituencies- the dilemma is how we use this glut of information to our benefit.

GOAL: Insuring the ongoing financial stability of religious and charitable organizations.

- Executive Directors are taking too much time away from their mission to fundraise, so we should be providing networks, so that long-term funding won't be such a burden.
- Be cognizant that there is local competition among nonprofits for dollars, in addition to the national agencies.
- Akron has lost large corporations and must now, and in the future, get the same level of financial support from more smaller companies. How do they know the existing needs of the nonprofit sector? We feel this can happen through the internet, community forums, and improved communication coverage.
- In the technological blitz, we cannot forget the need for face-to-face appeals, the effectiveness of the old-fashioned door- to door approach to fundraising.
- **STRATEGIES:**
 - o Create a global United Way- not just limited to human services.
 - o Create a community-wide **endowment**, possibly forming a new foundation.
 - o Create a core committee of non-profits to explore **sharing resources**... an incubator for sharing facilities, staff, technology . . . mentoring new nonprofits . . . and then launching them to carry out their mission in the community.

GOAL: Charitable and religious organizations will initiate community SUMMIT meetings.

- Improve collaboration between nonprofit agencies. Acknowledge the **value of collaborating** by creating councils within faiths and service areas.
- There is, and will be, a need for outreach programs and urban missions.
- Promote a stronger sense of stewardship through workshops, summit meetings, and retreats to impact a universal mission.

- Create ways to foster common values individually and corporately.
- Act as a voice of conscience within the community by raising the spiritual aspect of important civic issues.
- Don't forget to consider how the commercial and retail sectors can be involved. Businesses are part of the community too.
- **STRATEGIES:**
 - A short term strategy would be to get existing faith-based groups **dialoguing** with unchurched groups about commonality (Akron Area Association of Churches, Interfaith Council, etc.) We need to look for connections in faith, searching for universal values: respect, responsibility for actions, forgiveness, integrity, hope and/or love. Ethics education needs to be grounded. Youth are not always getting this in the home.
 - Foster connections and discover the underlying sense of shared values.
 - Change the paradigm of more meetings to attend equals more work, to one joint group meeting that will **lessen** the workload by sharing the mission projects and addressing the same issues as a community.
 - Possible *Summit* topics:
 1. *Creating an Internet Volunteer Bank.*
 - ✓ Matching people's skills and talents where they are needed in the community
 - ✓ A data system.
 - ✓ Best vehicle for using the talents of our aging population with more free time to give.
 2. *Spiritual training for volunteers.*
 - ✓ Necessary when working with many nonprofit agencies.
 - ✓ Work together to train citizens how to interact with each other in providing services.
 - ✓ The *Summit* would be designed for probing deeper into community issues, generating an opportunity for reflective and forward thinking

GOAL: Charitable and religious organizations will spearhead a coalition to sponsor a community-wide **CELEBRATION OF COMMONALITY (COMPASSION).**

- FUN! Celebrating our unique gifts and our community's diversity!
- Highlighting one world, one community- our many talents
- Creativity.
- Demonstrations of LOVE
- Mirdock, Rubber Bowl – possible locations
- Once a Year
- **STRATEGY:**
 - Using the proven models of First Night and City Faire, which promote downtown Akron and arts/culture, our event would be coming together to celebrate what inter-connects us as humans, caring for each other and sharing experiences.

WORKGROUP ON CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Joann Robb, Moderator
Arden Scholles and Dr. William H. Beisel, Resource Delegates

Workgroup Members:

Theresa Butler, Marianne Edwards, Patricia Marmaduke, Vincent Novak, Anne Riegler and John Smith

Introduction:

The continuing Education Workgroup met on a regular basis over the course of three months. Our meetings began with discussions of “who” needed to be served and “what” services needed to be developed. We also attempted to learn as much as possible about what opportunities were currently available.

Initially, we spent considerable time discussing technology and how it would play into the future of continuing education. We struggled with imagining 25 years into the future—especially in terms of technology. In our attempt to focus our discussion, we identified three different groups that needed to be considered in continuing education:

- ◆ Adults who are not in the workforce through their own choice—ranging from retirees to stay-at-home moms.
- ◆ Adults who lack the basic skills to enter the workforce.
- ◆ Adults who are employed and seeking to enhance their employment skills.

In the end, we agreed on an inclusive vision and readily identified the tactics which would make that vision a reality.

Vision:

In the year 2025, all segments of the Akron community will have opportunities for intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual growth and economic self-sufficiency.

Tactics:

- ◆ Assure that all citizens have access to the latest technology including the support needed to use the technology.
- ◆ Expand availability of day care/elder care where continuing education opportunities are provided.
- ◆ Provide opportunities that enhance the quality of life (hobbies, recreation, “fun”) as well as expanding intellectual development.
- ◆ Partner with business and industry to design opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed to learn skills needed to develop economic self-sufficiency.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for the unemployed/underemployed to gain proficiency in basic skills such as reading, mathematics and computer literacy.

- ◆ Offer easy access to web-based training supplemented by video conferencing and face-to-face delivery.
- ◆ Integrate employment-training initiatives with identified business clusters—create regional training programs focusing on the clusters.
- ◆ Assure that all segments of the community have input into the development and implementation of programs/services through periodic surveys and representative advisory boards.
- ◆ Provide broadband fiber access or its equivalent to all households.
- ◆ Create a marketing/communication plan making use of various tools—web, print, mail, mass media—to alert the community to opportunities for continuing education.

Resources:

We learned that there are currently many resources, both human and financial, expended on continuing education in the greater Akron area. Although these resources are considerable, they do not appear to be well coordinated. At least part of the solution to providing resources for continuing education relates to better coordination. Exactly who or how that coordination can happen is not clear to us. However, we recognize the importance of taking advantage of what exists before creating new funding streams. Our recommendations focus on developing that coordination.

- ◆ Establish a clearinghouse of all area providers of adult education to coordinate delivery of existing services—both job-related and recreational—to maximize efficiency, minimize cost and assure convenient access by all.
- ◆ Develop a range of funding strategies—including existing revenue sources, self-supporting programs, reduced fees structure—to enable all citizens to participate regardless of ability to pay.
- ◆ Make use of existing public facilities to provide continuing educational experiences for the entire community at locations convenient to their homes.

WORKGROUP ON HIGHER EDUCATION AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Joyce Sawyer, Moderator
Theresa Proenza, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Cammeron Drager, Michelle Johnson, Anne Jorgensen, Dan Sarvis and Constantine Toscidis

Goals:

- I. To provide education and training to meet the needs of a global, technological society.
- II. To enhance the technical, communication and problem-solving skills of traditional and non-traditional students.
- III. To provide creative, affordable opportunities for lifelong learning.

Strategies and Resources:

- 1) Implementation of a K-16 Summit County Initiative.
- 2) Provision of scholarships, tax credits and grants to help finance lifelong learning.
- 3) Development of infrastructure to support enhanced distance learning to businesses and homes.
- 4) Collaboration between businesses, government, and the university for curriculum development, training, certification programs, and research.
- 5) Provision of federal loan repayment for students who elect to teach or tutor in inner city schools.
- 6) Expanded use of Career Passport.
- 7) Development of multi-use facilities to offset costs of new educational facilities and sites.
- 8) Providing opportunities for service learning—i.e., involving students in applied problem-solving such as juvenile crime prevention, care of the elderly, etc.
- 9) Provision of city-subsidized housing, child support and transportation for students needing financial assistance.
- 10) Ongoing use of Akron Regional Development Board's *School to Work Program*.
- 11) Marketing Akron's attributes (lower cost of living, affordable housing, quality of life issues, etc.) so as to retain a skilled labor market.

WORKGROUP ON NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

Wendy Greathouse, Moderator
Helen Tomic, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Claudia J. Coleman, Sharron L. Connor, Mary Craddock, Virginia M. Koehler and Renee Maciag

Having defined neighborhood organization as "that structure which defines and shapes both the physical neighborhood and the neighborhood community", we turn our attention to the specific neighborhoods within Akron. The boundaries of Akron's neighborhoods are nebulous at best, with specific neighborhood monikers connoting wholly separate areas to different residents. Because of this confusion, the Akron Public School System cluster within which they lie has defined neighborhoods here. (See attached map.) This appropriate grouping system allows for discussion about neighborhood concerns which affect the specific Cluster in general, while also allowing each neighborhood to be further subdivided into neighborhoods surrounding the elementary schools within each Cluster. As Akron strives to maintain a healthy community well into the 21st century, the public school system will continue to figure prominently in the image to which a neighborhood clings.

Neighborhood organization is affected by many factors, not the least of which are the assets a given neighborhood can boast. Assets are as prominent as the school system, and as quietly present as a Block Club. When the assets within that neighborhood meet a neighborhood's needs, residents have the best that the neighborhood can offer.

In an attempt to address the needs of Akron's neighborhoods, and to strengthen neighborhood organization in a positive manner, the following goals and implementation suggestions have been set forth.

- I. Akron's neighborhoods must obtain and retain the following essential services within the perimeter of each specific neighborhood. These services include, but are not limited to: groceries, including fresh produce; pharmacy; schools; fuel for transportation; public transportation; parks; health care; information centers; child care; community centers; accessible housing for seniors and disabled; community policing; and recreation.
- II. In a technologically advanced civilization, Akron must retain and maintain services that emphasize concern for the individual. Technology cannot be allowed to substitute ease of use for depth of service. To this end, the following suggestions have been made:
 - A. Implementation and maintenance of neighborhood information stations which are staffed by those having the ability to coordinate a neighborhood's assets to solve daily concerns.
 - B. Realization that as efficient as centralization is, it is the neighborhood which roots people in Akron, and decentralization, and "humanization" of technology will best serve Akron's residents.
- III. The City of Akron must be aware of assets and needs within each neighborhood. In order for Akron to functionally serve its residents, city leaders must help neighborhood leaders to clarify specific goals. It is our recommendation that, at least biennially, neighborhoods evaluate needs and goals at a grass roots level to better assist the City of Akron in addressing concerns.
- IV. The City of Akron must proactively act to train residents from all neighborhoods to work in a leadership capacity, and to encourage active citizen participation, especially at a neighborhood level.
- V. It is in Akron's best interest to involve people from every neighborhood on community boards and in appointed positions. In this technologically diverse society, the ever-widening

gap between the “highly educated” and those who have a different set of life skills should not be perceived as a chasm that cannot be crossed. The more diverse the input, the better the outcome.

- VI. Akron must redefine its concept of public schooling, realizing that it is in the best interest of the population as a whole for neighborhood school buildings to offer fundamental skills training, even vocational training, to any age student who is not college ready.
- VII. It is in Akron’s best interest to encourage the development of neighborhood organizations and neighborhood participation through discretionary funds—issued through council—which community leaders, lead by elected councilpersons, would distribute.
- VIII. Community based organizations, many of which are not-for-profit organizations, should be encouraged to develop through partnerships with the city, and other successful community agencies. A mentoring program for fledgling organizations may encourage success.
- IX. With the certain knowledge that Akron’s senior population will increase, senior citizens should be recruited into leadership roles in Akron.
- X. As the senior population expands, Akron must be proactive in seeking ways to retrofit aging housing stock to meet the physical demands of seniors so that lifelong neighborhood residents are not displaced as aging occurs.
- XI. Neighborhood Watch programs must be expanded, and redefined as technology evolves, so that Akron residents have a sense of security within their own homes.
- XII. The City of Akron’s extensive park system must reach beyond its current limits, and provide activities and space for all age ranges in all neighborhoods, including the continual updating and maintenance of playground apparatus at neighborhood schools.

It is the recommendation of this Neighborhood Organization Work Group that each neighborhood meet to determine the specific, neighborhood oriented goals that can be achieved within the twenty-five year framework. Small changes occur most effectively when residents band together to improve their own quality of life. The City of Akron should make every attempt to aid what we hope will be a ground swell of residents committed to improving, and retaining, what we know to be Akron.

WORKGROUP ON HOUSING – HOMEOWNERSHIP

Doug Kohl, Moderator
Nancy Cook, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Kathleen Barlow, Delores Jean Bell, Jerry Black, Marie Black, Art Blair, Sonya Bukus,
Ted Curtis, Beth Delagrange, Cece Fox, C. L. Franklin, Trenton Gill, Alice Lovett, Rick Merolla
and Jeannette Ruggiero

In very much a “chicken and egg” type of way, quality housing is a key component in the quality of life equation for any community. The following goals and priorities are important for maintaining a strong housing and homeownership base in the City of Akron into the future.

GOALS

Work to Maintain and Improve the Public School System

A favorite discussion topic of parents in many Akron neighborhoods when it comes to staying in Akron is the question of the continued quality of the public school system. The two issues – homeownership and public education – are inextricably linked. You cannot have success in one area without success in the other.

Schools are very important and linked to housing very closely. We must focus attention on quality schools to keep homeownership viable in the City of Akron.

Strong Downtown Development Will Be Key to Continued Success in Maintaining Homeownership in the City

Downtown is very important. A growing, improving downtown area, while not critical, is certainly important to attract new ownership to the city and prevent movement to suburbs and surrounding communities.

Saving Houses and Support the Neighborhood Feel

Do not mess with the beautiful housing in Akron. Give young people nice neighborhoods and refurbish homes. This will also take the pressure off of suburban areas where new homes are being built on clear-cut lots. If we create up to date and modern amenities in older, established neighborhoods, we can help to stem the tide of suburban sprawl.

STRATEGIES

One of the strengths of Akron is the variety of housing available. This variety is evident in both price and style of housing.

We need to assure a good supply of middle cost housing in order to keep and attract young families to Akron.

What can we do that is creative? Florida has Celebration, a new planned community that worked with schools, recreation, library, community services and construction to build a state of the art planned community. Can this be done in Akron?

Access to Financing

Access to Financing for all income levels of residents will be important to the future of the housing market. What other options are available for creative financing to promote refurbishing and renovating homes and neighborhoods? Could block grants be another possibility?

Assembling Parcels and Land Banking

Priority: We need to land bank parcels of property similar to what was done in the Lane School and Wooster Avenue areas of the city. This provides the opportunity to re-develop older neighborhoods and revitalize interest in older neighborhoods. Can we expand creative development and financing strategies that are being used in Akron to Ellet, Kenmore, and Firestone Park.

In addition, attention must be paid to expanding parkland or playground areas. The Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor runs through the heart of Akron and is an example of the important cultural and natural resource conservation that we need to keep in front of us and will improve that value and homeownership potential of the community. It embodies the notion of a lived-in landscape and encourages the active use of the canal and its environments.

Aging Population

The aging of America is one of the most misunderstood housing segments in the country. Too many developers and planners still look at older adult housing as assisted living, rather than homes designed for the active, older adults or empty nester. The community who can plan appropriately for this trend will have tremendous success.

Creative Use of Cluster Housing

We will need to take advantage of creative land use and take advantage of possible use of cluster housing, saving maintenance costs and utility costs.

The cluster approach to housing is an excellent way to blend older and younger housing.

Question: We have starter houses and high-end houses. What is in between? What are we doing between the \$50,000 and \$150,000 price range?

Technology in Housing

People like “new” features in houses. A challenge in the future will be how to preserve older housing and accommodate younger buyers interested in technology.

Younger people do not want to go into older houses with foundation problems. These older foundations tend to lead to soggy, stinky basements. We will need to help with this problem in the city.

Tax Breaks for Refurbishing Homes

We give tax breaks for “buying up” but no tax breaks for refurbishing and remodeling. An incentive of this type may cause many families to consider staying within the boundaries of the city rather than moving out of the city.

Downtown Housing and Homeownership

Encourage development of downtown housing. There are increasingly more cities that are having success with housing in downtown areas, many with condominiums.

Summary

Do not lose the sense of neighborhood. Eventually people will rebel against the “back deck/internet” society. By 2025 we may well gravitate back to nostalgia and return to “communities of choice by neighborhood” where people will the sense of community.

The following goals and priorities need to be kept in front of the leadership:

1. Access to financing.
2. Assembling parcels of land and land banking should be a priority.
3. Address the aging of America and the needs of this population.
4. Explore the cluster approach to housing.
5. Save older homes though incentives, creative financing, and tax breaks.
6. Take actions that encourage the neighborhood feel.
7. Schools will continue to be one of the most important factors in keeping and attracting homeownership.

Draft: June 10, 2000

WORKGROUP ON HOUSING – LANDLORD/TENANT

Tina Merlitti, Moderator
Robert Taylor, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Raymond L. Borom, Michael Brillhart, Ralph Christ, Orrin Von Koenig, Theresa Morelli
and Rose Strelbicki

The task of the Imagine.Akron Housing-Landlord/Tenant Workgroup was to examine the current relationships between Landlords and Tenants and the City of Akron, and make recommendations as to how we would like to see things in the year 2025. We discovered in our examination of the current climate in Akron's Landlord/Tenant relationships is that the problems seem to stem from a simple lack of communication. As we discussed the current difficulties with the organizations serving housing needs, it became clear that the information and services that seem to be lacking do exist, except that very few people know about them. It has been observed that many social service and governmental agencies provide a myriad of service to meet the community's needs but they do not have the resources to properly market their programs. For those who find themselves in need of guidance through this quagmire of agencies and forms there is little assistance to help them navigate through it.

In an effort to increase the flow of information the Landlord/Tenant Workgroup has developed two goals it is felt can be easily implemented now and hopefully perfected by the year 2025.

Landlord Registration Packet

In an effort to facilitate the flow of information between the City and local landlord a packet of helpful information should be provided upon registration of rental properties. Landlords are encouraged to share this information with their tenants. The packet should include the following:

- The City of Akron Department of Health Environmental Health Housing Code 150
- Fair Housing Contact Service Tenant-Landlord Handbook
- Housing Network brochure
- Permits Required
- Akron Action Guide

The resource for this packet would come from the Department of Health Marketing Budget and from fees collected through the Rental Unit Registration Program.

Advisory Board

In our early discussions, the Housing-Landlord/Tenant Workgroup felt the need to create an independent Advisory Board to act as an information resource for landlords and tenants. This Advisory Board would be an independent board made up of various groups in the Akron area with an interest in housing. The Advisory Board would act as a liaison between landlords and the City for disputes over alleged violations of the City's ordinances having to do with health codes, building codes, etc. This Board would be a resource for affordable legal service for both landlords and tenants and would provide information on available grants and loans from local, state and federal sources. This Advisory Board would provide "one stop shopping" for anyone who has housing needs. What we found was the Housing Network.

Although the Housing Network is currently reorganizing, it was noted that the Housing Network has many of the elements that were envisioned for the Advisory Board. The Housing Network is an independent member organization made up of various groups with housing interests. Their mission of education and support meets the Housing-Landlord/Tenant Workgroup's goal of "one stop shopping" for information and services. Through our research into the Housing Network we found that the Housing Network has the ability to act as a liaison between the City of Akron and landlords.

The Housing Network, however, seems to have some of the same communication problems that other governmental and social service agencies have, namely, lack of marketing. By supporting and marketing the Housing Network this will in effect be marketing all the groups and agencies that are Housing Network members. Interested parties would have only to go to the Housing Network to get contact information about Block Grants, Lead Paint, or Emergency Home Repair. We strongly encourage all City of Akron Departments that deal with housing issues to take a more active role in the Housing Network. The Housing Network has the ability to take a great burden off the City by acting as an independent mediator to work through complicated housing issues and provide the citizens of Akron with the assistance they seek. We are aware that the City sponsors the Housing Network Home Repair Workshops but we feel that further support is needed to enable the Housing Network to reach the people that need to be reached.

The additional resources the Housing Network would need to provide the above service should come from the fees collected from violations of the City's housing code. We propose that it would be very appropriate that a portion of the fines and fees collected from the enforcement of the Housing Code go to help those who want to work to make Akron's housing better.

MUNICIPAL PARKS & RECREATION

Sally York, Moderator
William Spalding, Resource Delegate

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David Bennett, Dennis Haesel, Greg Kalail, Diane Miller-Dawson, Mary C. Monsour,
Barbara J. Murphy, Ed.D. and Alison Seefeldt-Ekechuku

Goal

Provide safe, affordable and accessible parks and recreational facilities for all citizens of Akron through the development of a global community master plan, which addresses Akron's diversified population and maintains the strong city of neighborhoods concept.

Strategies

Construct four multi-use facilities for recreation and the arts including indoor gyms, soccer areas, aquatic (pools), theaters, roller skating, ice skating, and expansion of outdoor athletic fields, tennis courts, and skate boarding.

Expand Akron Beautiful and Let's Grow Akron into neighbor mini-park block groups for developing ownership into beautifying neighbor communities.

Research and review current activities and facilities in order to establish direction for accessing needs for future construction of facilities and participation opportunities.

Expand summer programs to spring and fall and include live theater and other arts.

Request that the City place greater priority in addressing their multi-culture population needs for facilities, parks, and other recreational opportunities.

Expand collaboration of groups, agencies, school system, and the City to develop public facilities for the Akron population.

Study other cities of Akron's size to learn how they receive funding for recreational and art facilities and programs.

Resources

YMCA/YWCA
School system
Private industry
CARES project
Metro Parks
Akron Beautiful
Let's Grow Akron Public Schools
Federal and state funding
Other cities
Private/agency funding

WORKGROUP ON POLICE SERVICES

Pam Williams, Moderator
George Romanoski, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

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Morrissette and Douglas J. Powley

The ideal goal of the Akron Police Department is to develop a department wide philosophy of community policing (COPS) where crime and the fear of crime are reduced and citizen trust is gained. This philosophy stresses prevention of crime, partnering with the community, problem solving and cooperating with other social services to improve the quality of life.

Important Issues:

1. *Communication:* There should be better communication between the department and citizens. This can be achieved through:
 - A. An interactive website that allows individuals access to who the officers are and what districts they work in, general laws and penalties, as well as a means to email the department about a problem or question they may have.
 - B. Various community surveys will enable the police to redirect their focus on ways to serve and protect the citizens of Akron. These surveys can include, but should not be limited to, citizen satisfaction surveys, fear of crime surveys and quality of service surveys.
 - C. Reverse 911 will enable the police department to notify citizens of a situation that is occurring in their neighborhoods.
 - D. Encouraging the formation of block clubs in good times, and bad, would create contact among neighbors. This contact would promote trust among the neighbors as well as with police.
2. *Education:* Officers and citizens need to receive training.
 - A. The COPS philosophy must start at the recruit level and be reinforced by mandatory annual training by every officer. The officers will learn how to refer individuals to the correct community service when it the need is warranted. Officers will also need to take courses on how to deal with crimes involving new technology.
 - B. Community resource centers could be set up in every district for citizens. These centers would have programs where employees from the police department, various city departments and social service agencies could speak to citizens on how to deal with problems. These centers would also allow citizens to learn from officers which calls to the police department will be answered by a cruiser and which calls will be referred to other City of Akron resources. This would empower the police department to shift from being call-driven to pro-active.

3. *Image*: The department needs to project a better image.
 - A. More visibility of police presence is very important. This can be obtained by having one-officer cruisers instead of two-officer cruisers. A step further would be to encourage officers to take cruisers home and use them off duty.
 - B. Cooperating with media through the use of a Public Information Officer shows that the department wants to serve and protect to their fullest potential is needed. Good stories about acts of bravery and kindness by officers go a long way.
 - C. Citizens Academies should be continually held. These are a good means of letting citizens get a small glimpse of the life of a police officer.
4. *Resource Sharing*: The department should partner with other City of Akron departments as well as police departments in other cities and the county. This cooperation would strengthen each department as well as save money.
 - A. Other City of Akron departments should encourage the use of their facilities and manpower. This cooperation enables the police department to refer problems that should not be police concerns.
 - B. Training and equipment costs should be shared. Since departments are required by the state to have the same training, money would be well spent by combining facilities that could be used by various departments.
 - C. Options need to be considered on how to handle the lack of jail space. Two ideas would be for police departments to share the cost of a jail or to look at privatization of jails.
5. *Youth*: There should be more opportunity for interaction between officers and youth at times other than those of crisis and confrontation.
 - A. Current Juvenile Diversion and Mentoring programs should be expanded. Perhaps a Youth Academy, similar to the Citizen's Academy, could be started.
 - B. Neighborhood Youth Forums, a Youth Hotline where people could call to report abuse, gang activity, etc. could be implemented. If the suggested Community Resource Centers become a reality there might be times that are available for "kids only" to come and talk to officers, ask questions, and report problems.
 - C. The Police in School program needs to be expanded to include more education at every level, not just security. There should be a component added to the school curriculum to address this issue.
 - D. Parents, also, need to be held more accountable for the actions of their children.

WORKGROUP ON COMMUNITY-BASED CORRECTIONS

Harriet Cutler, Moderator
John Boal, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Cee Christiana, George W. Clarke, Sandra Rossi, Dr. David Sam and Heather Stotlar

We met seven times this spring and visited the Community Drug Board, Oriana House Time Out Program and the Phoenix Program, whose clients are sent by the courts for intervention. The following are suggestions that the committee came up with:

1. Akron should participate in a county-wide re-socialization program for people leaving the criminal justice system, who have been out of touch with society.
2. Keep up on the utilization of technological advances of equipment. For example, presently a retina scanner would eliminate negative drug screens error and eliminate the need to inspect each sample by hand. Currently, drug screens are not accurate for marijuana, as it stays in the blood up to thirty days.
3. Design future correctional facilities with "moveable pods" that can change with changing needs of the population; sex, age or type of crime.
4. Correctional facilities should be built for treating women with their children simultaneously.
5. Because dysfunctional families are transgenerational, therapy programs must include the entire family.
6. All agencies such as schools, courts, police and social agencies should cooperate through a centralized computer networking system thus avoiding duplication and increasing effectiveness.
7. Agencies should be encouraged to develop innovations in cooperation with the funding agents.
8. Cultural interventionists, who understand different value systems as those based on male macho dominance for increasing Asian, Arabic, and Latin groups should be hired to develop up to date curriculum.
9. Build communication avenues between local, state and federal probation personnel.
10. Start early intervention of children's educational tracts and stop social promotions.
11. Allow personal talents or abilities to be utilized as an alternative means of community restitution.
12. Increased use of psychological testing all juvenile and adult offenders as a part of standardized intake procedures.
13. Create a competitive environment for open bidding on all corrections programs.

WORKGROUP ON FIRE/EMS

Billy Soule, Moderator
George Romanoski, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Jeffrey Dennis, Tony O'Leary and Pam Williams

It is the consensus of this Imagine.Akron:2025 workgroup that the Akron Fire/EMS departments are by far one of the most efficiently run city services in Akron.

With the highest regard and respect for this department, we here by make the following recommendations to assure its continued excellence into the year 2025:

Fire & Safety Education

To help prevent fire and to promote public safety an expanded public safety education program is needed. A program that would provide useful information to citizens on an on-going bases covering fire safety, EMS, police services, use of 9-1-1, etc.

The media, such as television, radio and the Internet would play a major role in delivering this educational campaign to the citizens of Akron.

Some workgroup members also feel that a safety inspection program is needed to make homeowners and other residents aware of potential fire and other safety hazards that might exist in their homes. This program could be implemented by the fire department or could be done by those hired by the city or ever perhaps by community volunteers.

Countywide Fire/EMS Department

As Akron is planning to build a new state-of-the-art training facility; a countywide department will assure that all firefighters in the region will have the highest level training available. This countywide fire and EMS would also guarantee all of the people in Summit County a more sophisticated and better-equipped department.

We strongly recommend that Akron's Fire/EMS services become a countywide service. Steps should be taken to explore its feasibility. It will minimize costs and will provide uniform service throughout the county. Technology will be shared within the system; communications and training are most important.

The cost for this countywide system would be shared proportionately with those communities who participate.

Ideally, we hope to move to a countywide fire department by the year 2025.

Fire Equipment, Med Units and Physical Plants

From discussions about equipment and physical plants, we understand that equipment will be heavily impacted by technology in the next 25 years. Therefore, we feel that there is a need for a minimum of a "ten year capital plan" and that a full assessment be made within the next five years of all stations and major equipment to assure that both are able to adequately serve Akron's neighborhoods through the year 2025. This would be in anticipation of Firehouses #2 and #12 being replaced and the upgrading of

Firehouse # 3. To better serve the city, 2 to 4 stations will need to either be replaced or have major renovations.

Fortunately, due to the projection that Akron will remain relatively the same population-wise and geographically, we will not have a need to build additional stations in the next 25 years.

Fire/EMS Staffing

With the marked increase in EMS calls and the likelihood that this trend will continue, given the aging population, what will be the most effective and efficient means to maintain highest quality of EMS services?

Also with the history of medical payments to private ambulance services and their inability to make a profit, will these companies exist in the year 2025? If they do not, the reliance on Akron's EMS department will demand a more reasonable staffing pattern.

Given the department's traditional staffing pattern of 24 hours on and 48 hours off we suggest that the department review future needs.

WORKGROUP ON MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Dan Sarvis, Moderator
Joe Asher, Robert Harris and Patricia Nuspi, Resource Delegates

Workgroup Members:

Pamela Decker, Stephen A. Dubetz, Linda S. Hayes, Lee Ann Hinkle, Linda Jones,
Mr. and Mrs. Kidwell, R. Karl Kircher, Christine McClintic, Mary Ann McGuckin,
Robert P. Morrison, Loretta Ostroski, Bertha Ray, Bob Reed, Evelyn Smith, Greg Spino
and Judy Wilfong

Mission Statement – Imagine Akron 2025, Municipal Services Committee, is committed to improve customer (citizen) satisfaction by providing cost effective, efficient, and environmentally sound public services.

1. Trash Pick-up and Recycling

Goal: Reduce waste going to landfills by 30% by 2025.

Action: Reduce waste and improve recycling program by:

1. Researching and incorporating the best aspects of successful programs from other cities.
2. Encouraging manufactures to implement less wasteful/excessive packaging through state and national organizations, such as National Conference of Mayors, or others.
3. Recyclable materials to be picked-up as often as trash (every week).
4. Educated/Coordinate public involvement in composting and alternatives to traditional waste disposal.
5. Expand Recycling program to include commercial and governmental entities, as well as schools and churches.

Result: Reduce volume of expensive landfill waste stream, using the savings to off-set the cost of increased recycling.

2. Street Repair

Goal: Extend/double the life of street surfaces by 2025.

Action:

1. Research European and other state-of-the-art roadway systems; implement the findings to improve Akron's main roads and those that require frequent maintenance.
2. Use thicker pavement courses for new and resurfaced roads.
3. Increases preventive maintc. of streets by increasing quantity of crack sealant applied as well as well s apply additional seal coats.

Result: To double the current life or roadway surfaces, using savings from reduced maintenance expenses to off-set the costs of improved surfaces.

3. Snow Removal

Goal: Improve snow removal on residential streets and in neighborhoods, and reduce salt by increasing use of alternative/organic De-Icers.

Action: City to continue to improve plowing of arterial/main streets, hills, and bridges. Hire-subcontracts with private local companies (small landscapers, etc.) to plow a small number of assigned streets within a neighborhood, or defined district. Complete plowing within each snowfall of 5 inches or greater.

Result: All streets in city plowed, when snow exceeds 5 inches.

4. Animal Control

Goal: Increase and promote pet owner responsibility to reduce number of stray animals roaming throughout the city.

Action:

1. City to own and operate its own animal shelter, with additional personnel to educate, institute and enforce mandatory pet licensing with proof of rabies vaccinations.
2. Increase, education, and expand affordable spay/neuter program to include legislation to require mandatory spay/neuter of adopted pets as well as trapping of stray cats and dogs.
3. Increase cooperation among vets, animal control agencies, and animal welfare organizations.

Result: Reduce number of euthanized dogs and cats throughout city and control spread of disease.

CABINET ON COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Scott Armstrong, Moderator
Mark Albrecht, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Sandy Auburn, Ph.D., Pamela Bonner, Malcolm Costa, Karen Edwards, Nan Gelhard, Mitch Gingrich, Mary L. Hensley, Ester Linton, Steve Maurer, Paulette L. McGregor, Gregg Mervis, Diane Miller-Dawson, Judy Nicely, Tim Ochsenhirt, David Ost, Angela Price, Therese B. Proenza, Gertrude Robinson, Gary Rosen, Raymone Scott, Stephanie A. S. Smith, Amy Nicholls Swanson, Mary Tompkins and William Walker

Vision Statement

In 2025 Akron will be globally recognized as a center of excellence for business, research, technology, manufacturing and information. Because of the quality and strength of its business environment, work force, residential neighborhoods, arts, culture, recreation, education and infrastructure, Akron will be a great place to live, work and play.

Goals and Strategies:

Goal: Akron will be a Center for Business

Strategies:

- Establish an entrepreneurial environment for new business creation.
- Create a climate that makes Akron the easiest place to conduct business.
- Develop local/state/regional programs to retain and attract business, and provide funding in support of those programs.
- Market Akron's advantages in order to attract corporate headquarters/decision-making centers.

Goal: Akron will be a Center for Research

Strategies:

- Strengthen the relationship between the region's universities and the business community through the development of industrial and corporate affiliate programs for technology transfer, professional education and certification, etc.
- Increase research and development in the business community through the cooperative efforts of government, universities and corporations.
- Develop city-university partnerships in order to facilitate technology networks, and information and distance learning services for the citizenry at-large, as well as private enterprises.

Goal: Akron will be a Center for Technology

Strategies:

- Further the relationships developed between the region's universities and the business community in order to foster and communicate the creation of new technologies and businesses.
- Building upon the relationships developed between the region's universities and the business community, focus upon converting local research into local business.
- Encourage cooperation between the region's universities, governments, institutional entities, trade associations, and the business community in order to advance technological innovation within existing businesses/industries.
- Dramatically increase efforts to develop, retain and attract a highly-skilled technology work force.

Goal: Akron will be a Center for Manufacturing

Strategies:

- Encourage businesses to adapt to changes in technology and customer demands.
- Promote the development of support businesses for new industries.
- Provide affordable manufacturing sites.

Goal: Akron will be a Center for Information

Strategies:

- Enhance the existing technology infrastructure.
- Aggressively develop and market Akron's communication network.
- Require that new construction and renovation be designed to accommodate future telecommunication needs.
- Develop a "virtual Akron" with links to corporate, service, government and educational information.

Resources:

- Strong cultural institutions
- Innovative and readily available financial resources
- "State-of-the-art" public and private education systems
- Successful local businesses and their leaders
- Quality essential services – fire, police, EMS, etc.
- Progressive laws and regulations
- Diverse entertainment and recreational amenities
- National recognized diversity awareness programs (i.e. Coming Together)
- Enhanced/expanded infrastructure – transportation system, utilities, communications, etc.
- Safe, affordable, diverse and aesthetically pleasing residential communities
- "First Class" health care

WORKGROUP ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Jane Thompson, Moderator
Mark Albrecht, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

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Thomas J. Labbe, Holli Mallak, Diane Thomas McCort, David Swartz and Daniel Thomas

Community Development

The goal of community development over the next 25 years should be to improve the quality of life for Akron's citizens, those who live in the northeast Ohio region and those who visit the area for entertainment, recreation or business purposes.

Key Issues

Downtown Living

A key component to maintaining a vital downtown area is to bring people to the central city area. The development of an attractive residential environment needs to be addressed by:

- The potential of residential units in the current innerbelt area should be explored.
- Overall attractiveness and appeal of the living environment needs to be included in any plan to ensure long-range viability.
- A high quality of public education needs to be available to attract families to live in the central city.
- Business development would need to be "family-oriented" in order for families to be interested in living downtown.
- Adequate green space for recreation as well as unstructured use needs to be included in any development.
- Adequate parking needs to be included in any development in order to attract people to conduct business, shop, take advantage of the entertainment opportunities, etc.
- Improving mass transportation to enable people to move easily from the central city outlying areas (Cleveland, Canton) for the purpose of business, entertainment, etc.
- "Gentrify" areas to encourage people who work downtown to live in close proximity to their job site.

Education

An educated workforce of productive and participating citizens will help ensure the future of Akron. This objective can be addressed by:

- Using technology to link schools into one system to access the best practices and exercise economies of scale.
- Develop a seamless system of public education that flows into the university/higher education and/or into the workforce.
- Develop education and /or training programs that emphasize the skills business and industry will need.
- Maintain and/or develop programs to train those for employment in the skilled trades.

Tourism and Recreation

Quality of life is highly integrated with the opportunities for recreation, entertainment, education and tourism. Akron can become a destination city by addressing the following items:

- Assure people are safe in the downtown area.
- Provide a diverse range of entertainment opportunities to attract people to downtown, especially for families.
- Expand and promote current museums and develop new venues that highlight those things that are uniquely Akron.
- More hotel space will be required as Akron becomes more than a day trip destination and to support large events.
- Larger convention center to attract larger shows.
- Construction of a large municipal arena to attract diverse and large events.
- Develop and promote current assets such as the Firestone Stadium (women's pro softball.)
- Plan for the infrastructure (water, sewage, trash disposal) to support increased development.
- Consider the need for increased opportunities for social interaction in the face of increasing technology and the potential for people to become isolated from each other.
- As the canal is completed, develop strategies to bring people to the downtown.
- Develop/maintain relationships with federal entities to continue the development of the canal corridor to insure its perpetuity.

International Business and Technology

Traditional methods of business development may no longer be viable in 25 years. To address quickly evolving technologies, communication and related issues, Akron must respond by:

- Develop buildings that are "user-friendly" to technology.
- Promote the "incubator" concept by providing units of small square footage to encourage start-up businesses.
- Continue/revise tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate and stay in the central city area and surrounding areas.
- Expand air transportation options to the immediate area in order to facilitate easy access to the area for business and entertainment.
- Consider expanding the capabilities of Akron to be an air cargo hub to further increase the ease of transportation of manufactured goods.

Transportation

Ease of moving from one place to another is an important aspect of daily life. To encourage people to frequent the central city for business or pleasure, Akron must:

- Develop an efficient and extensive mass transportation system from outside the city and beyond.
- Increase parking and strive for close-in spaces to encourage the development of service businesses.
- Provide smaller multiple person vehicles that could move people quickly and efficiently from outlying parking areas, thus freeing up space for those visiting the downtown for brief periods of time.
- The expansion and improvement of Fulton and Akron-Canton airports (along with mass transportation options) would encourage easier access to the city and region by business.
- Pedestrian-friendly roadways to encourage walking, bicycling.

Support Services

In order to make downtown living an attractive option, much attention needs to be paid to the services that enhance the livability of the central city. To accomplish this, Akron must:

- Provide incentives for small businesses that support the needs of daily living such as grocery shopping, dry cleaning, banking, recreation, etc.
- Develop housing options around a “mall-like” area that include support services.
- Emphasize individuality of commercial business as an alternative to homogenous mall shopping.

Green space/Attractiveness

The development of a central city that wants to encourage residential as well as business growth, needs to provide an attractive physical environment. To accomplish this, Akron must consider:

- Improve the overall appearance of the city by planting trees, burying utilities, eliminating eyesore buildings, etc.
- Maintain existing green areas, wetlands, and fields in their natural states.
- Continue and expand the potential of the Canal and Towpath to create and maintain recreational areas.
- Develop “active” activity areas for children and youth.

Diversity

As Akron continues to grow in the 21st century, it will be increasingly important to consider the impact of different cultures. The changing diversity may influence the need for:

- Consideration of voting practices (large number of non-U.S. citizens accessing public services) and issues that diverse citizens may or may not support.
- Evaluation of the impact that a diverse cultures’ attitude toward philanthropic support may have on the dollars available for capital projects, arts, education, etc.
- An increase of international business will bring more diverse and highly educated people to the area and consideration/integration of their cultural norms may impact the needs for education, cultural opportunities, etc.

WORKGROUP ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Steve Kasarnish, Diane Johnson, Doreen Kuster and Howard Lawson

The Development of our Workforce for 2025

The primary goals of “workforce development” are to prepare and maintain a viable and versatile workforce by providing the skills and training that are in demand by our local employers, and to insure positive growth in the local economy by retaining jobs for the people of this community. In order to accomplish this, opportunities for employment must be available to all residents, through the collaboration of our educational systems, business and industrial apprenticeship programs and community resources.

Realizing that the ongoing improvement of the educational, technical and interpersonal skills of our residents is the lifeblood of our economic security, the Workforce Development Committee submits their projections for the workforce in this community in the year 2025.

The Impact of Life-long Learning

- A) This community actively fosters collaborative learning opportunities between local educational institutions up through the post-secondary level. Simultaneously, employers continue to develop in-house training programs while continuing to make out-sourced training available for the upgrading of workers’ skills.
- B) Dual expectations on the part of employers and employees promote the philosophy of life-long learning. Companies will continue to invest in training, and employees act on their responsibility to participate in the furthering of their own job skills as a condition of continued employment and/or advancement.
- C) Standing committees consisting of members from the private and public sectors in business, labor and education, have been formed to provide opportunities to all residents for gainful employment in both highly skilled, and minimally skilled fields of employment.
- D) Education has become more adaptable to the logistical needs of workers. This has been accomplished by offering on-site, and online college courses with certification programs recognizing a broad variety of expertise.
- E) Mentoring programs in the workplace, along with private and community-based vocational opportunities are accessible to the workforce and general community.
- F) Cross-training, i.e. learning new jobs and learning new ways to perform the same jobs through different processes, is a standard feature in many technical and manufacturing environments.

The Impact of Valuing Diversity in the Workforce

In the year 2025 we've learned to celebrate the diversity of our community and we unanimously embrace the concept that ALL work is honorable and there is dignity in all legitimate employment. We have come to accept the fact that every son or daughter is not going to college, and therefore, a crucial system change has taken place in the way we influence peoples' perceptions about their own occupations. Where skilled trades were for a period of time underemphasized, we now legitimize the value of vocational training so that we can (*almost*) guarantee the success of all students –young or old.

The Strategic Role of Education in Developing Our Workforce

In 2025, parents and children understand that “going to college” is not a career but only a means to achieving certain career objectives. Through effective collaborative efforts, we have provided students and parents with other ways to define “success” other than the attainment of a four-year college degree. As a result, students who do enter college have a better focus on their end objective, thus reducing the number of persons who drop out not having completed a degree.

- A) Beginning in elementary school, the standards and necessary academic proficiencies have been revised and enhanced, assuring that the fundamentals of learning – reading, computation, problem-solving and communication skills, are in place for every student in our community so that continued learning is always achievable.
- B) At the middle school and secondary levels, academic standards continue to be emphasized. Also incorporated is the idea of providing earlier exposure to career information for professional, technical and skilled occupations, so that all youth, especially those who may in any way be “at risk”, from a socioeconomic or academic standpoint, may preview career options long before having to make actual career decisions.

Impact of Collaboration Between Higher Education and Industry

- A) At the university level, workforce development has been identified as an institutional initiative undertaken by all state universities in the Northeast Ohio region. Workforce development has become a self-assigned and highly visible priority among the universities. A single office has been established and dedicated exclusively for the regional coordination of services and activities, which promote the educational and training needs of the workforce
- B) Universities have developed partnering links with community organizations, employers, libraries, trade councils, government offices and high schools. The role of the university has become strategic in encouraging continuous communications among these groups so that the ever changing needs of the marketplace can be addressed promptly.
- C) Universities have developed workforce education and training programs, which meet the needs of employees and employers. A synthesis now exists which enables universities and industry experts to jointly develop curriculum, which meets the company's needs while providing equivalent academic accreditation through certificates, Associate degrees and even advanced degrees.

- D) Because diversity is a transparent feature of every workforce development initiative in our community, the universities too, have assumed an increased level of accountability by expanding efforts to search out and include groups which have traditionally been underserved (e.g. the disabled).

The Impact of Technology on the Development of our Workforce

In this region, we have experienced the fact that “new” jobs may not be coming forth, but rather, new processes and new skills are necessary to work in the same field. The technology is always changing. The constant upgrading of skills is critical as is the flexibility of the workers to adapt to these changes.

- A) Productivity will continue to increase as companies automate. This trend translates into fewer low skill jobs in manufacturing yet we are experiencing a higher demand for machinists, engineers and technologists to design and run highly automated manufacturing facilities.
- B) Highly complex computer technology is becoming easier to operate. As a result employers’ demands for highly skilled workers may slow down as technology makes operations simpler. Nevertheless, computer skills will continue to emerge as a core requirement in most industries.
- C) It is certain that technological advances will be missed if our local workforce does not access adequate training in the specific task related uses of new technology.

The Impact of Globalization on Our Local Workforce

We learned years ago with the relocation of the rubber industry which had sustained this community for so long, that we could not afford to isolate ourselves in terms of our products or the production of them. Our ability create and recreate jobs and recruit the best talent to come, live, and work in our community, has been the strength of our economic success in 2025.

- A) The global marketplace has made changes in social, cultural and economic opportunities as the world has become more interdependent. Our increased standard of living can be directly attributed to the technological literacy of our workforce.
- B) E-commerce and e-businesses have harnessed the Internet to foster virtual work environments. Projects designed overseas, are perhaps being “tweaked” in Arizona, and actually produced here in Akron. The ability of our workforce to think “mobile and global” in its outlook on doing business, has served our community well and kept this region competitive in terms of quality and production.

The Impact of the Interpersonal Skills of Our Workforce

Quality is without question the key. Throughout this report the focus has not been on what type of jobs may exist in 2025 but rather, the preparedness of the people in this community. Technology will change and products will evolve, but the one constant and most important dimension in sustaining our local economy is the development of our human resources. While employers are seeking people with skills, we must also address the personal attributes of the individual worker.

- A) In 2025 the “work ethic” has been imported into every dimension of personal development, from grade school through the secondary levels. It has not been taken for granted that these personal skills were necessarily conveyed at home. It was reluctantly conceded early in this century that some forty percent of working age people are not seeking employment.
- B) Interpersonal skills are basic, invaluable qualities, which stabilize the workforce and the community. Such characteristics include:
- Respect (for one’s self, for others and for authority)
 - Self-discipline
 - Teamwork
 - Responsibility and initiative
 - Adaptability
 - Diversity
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Leadership
 - Creativity
 - Communication and listening skills
 - Ethical decision-making

Such skills have been imperceptibly woven into the formal curriculum at all levels. Employers in 2025 not only look for skilled personnel who “show up”, but also persons who exhibit the above listed character attributes which strengthen the foundation for a successful, working community.

WORKGROUP ON JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Gigi Woodruff, Moderator
Dave Moore, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Virginia Bowman, Donald L. Carpenter, Roger Glenhorn, Rick Merolla and Luis M. Proenza

Background

JEDDs (Joint Economic Development Districts) were created by the Ohio General Assembly for Summit County at the request of the Mayor of Akron. The Mayor developed the idea in order to expand development opportunities and tax revenues for the City and at the same time maintain autonomous township boundaries and quality of life.

A Joint Economic Development District is formed as follows: A Township determines what areas within its boundaries will be part of the JEDD. The Township then enters into an agreement with the City of Akron whereby the city provides water and sewer service to the JEDD area. A JEDD Board is set up for each district to maintain the JEDD structure. The Board then imposes a 2% personal and corporate income tax in the area covered by the JEDD in accordance with the City of Akron Tax Code. The Township maintains all property tax and no municipal boundaries are adjusted. The agreement lasts for 99 years with optional renewal provisions. There are currently 4 JEDD agreements which have been entered into since 1994.

JEDDs have proven to promote regular cooperation and economic growth while maintaining City and township autonomy, individuality, character, and quality of life. The JEDDs have also, as an alternative to annexation, permitted regional revenue sharing and decision making.

Recommendations

The Workgroup on Joint Economic Development Districts believes that the development of additional JEDDs and cooperation among the City and area Townships for regional development is desirable and beneficial to the City of Akron as well as the participating Townships. Therefore, the Work group makes the following recommendations for the City of Akron over the next twenty-five years.

Goal # 1

In order to generate economic development in areas surrounding Akron for the mutual benefit of all concerned, the City of Akron should continue to look for potential areas for JEDD development and explore tax sharing agreements with other municipalities in order to coordinate regional development.

Goal #2

In order to provide for a sharing of ideas and concerns among all the JEDD areas, the City of Akron should host an annual meeting of all JEDD Boards. Part of the discussions should center around regional cooperation for growth as well as development of creative ways to disburse the tax proceeds.

industrial growth and the city's future

5. **Entertainment**—Create exciting entertainment options in downtown Akron that appeals to all ages, and to local citizens and visitors. Create new venues that complement the existing ones.
 - A. Create exciting entertainment options and attractions including such things as a multi-purpose arena, an aquarium, botanical gardens, a natatorium, a canal water park, a city zoo, an aviary, a rain forest, IMAX theatre, Inventure playground, technology center for creativity and innovation, central European-style marketplace in Cascade Plaza.
 - B. Provide special year round programming that enhances the entertainment venues and complements the revitalization of the CBD.
 1. Create a publicly owned indoor program entertainment space that could host year-round activities.
 2. Increase program use of Canal Park Stadium.
 - C. Introduce ethnic and internationally themed restaurants into downtown independently or as part of a multi-purpose entertainment complex.
6. **Education**—Continue to reinforce the University of Akron's presence in the CBD and encourage more partnerships with the university with other organizations and government to promote the city's physical, cultural, social and business environment.
 - A. Foster greater communications and increased partnerships between the University of Akron, the City of Akron, Downtown Akron Partnership, and other businesses, organizations and institutions.
 1. Support the University's continued investment in the CBD and strengthen its presence.
 2. Form an educational partnership with the University of Akron to promote lifelong learning and make the CBD the center for that effort.
 3. Involve the University of Akron in providing learning experiences for students to develop skills and to provide valuable services to City of Akron events and programs.
 4. Partner with the University of Akron to create a workforce development program that would supply qualified workers to growing businesses.
 - B. Explore involvement of other educational institutions in the CBD.
7. **Housing**—Increase the diversity of housing available in the CBD and promote the City of Akron as a desirable place to live.
 - A. Attract market-rate housing with-in the CBD.
 1. Introduce support services and retail operations that support those who live in the city.
 2. Integrate the housing with other developments, including housing along the Heritage and Canal Corridor.

NOTES:

1. The Workgroup discussed but did not define the boundaries of the CBD for the purposes of this report, but recognizes the constraints imposed on the development of the CBD.

2. Our presentation would be better served by a pictorial design of the ideas presented, but time did not permit this. Refer to the cities of San Antonio, TX, Knoxville, TN, and Memphis, TN for similar illustrations of what is presented here.

WORKGROUP ON NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Frank Joseph Horn, Moderator
Charles A. Heimbaugh, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Mark Marple, Daniel J. Vaeth, Todd Wade and Lee Wagoner

Neighborhood Business District

A concentration of small, independent businesses that draw from the residential community, which surrounds them.

Charge: Imagine what Akron's Neighborhood Business Districts *should* be like by the year 2025 if it is to remain a world-class city and retain the confidence of its citizens.

Changes that are *going* to take place and which are out of our control.

Change has the potential to invigorate and strengthen the future of NBD's.

- **FUEL COSTS** Increasing fuel costs will encourage people to consider travel distance, strengthening local sources of goods, services, and entertainment.
- **E-COMMERCE** Strengthens the potential for small business and NBD's as live/work communities that improve the quality of work life in telecommuting age. Dining and meeting locations, localized space for employees and employment to facilitate start-up businesses and help them grow, E-commerce infrastructure, and shipping/delivery facilities are opportunities for Neighborhood Business Centers.
- **URBAN SPRAWL** New developments have a more homogenous character than traditional neighborhoods. Existing NBD's offer a rich variety of history, design, social and economic blends that create unique personalities of place.

Changes we would *like* to see over which we have some control.

- **ADVOCACY & PROMOTION**

NBD's require awareness of the opportunities available to business owners. The City of Akron is best qualified to ensure that financial and other opportunities are well known to business owners and entrepreneurs. Discussion highlighted specific suggestions to promote healthy NBD's:

Centralized Information - City of Akron WEBSITE providing:

- 1.) Links
- 2.) Listings of neighborhood businesses
- 3.) Listings of available real estate in NBD's
This effort should be designed to MOTIVATE PRIVATE INTERESTS to keep information current and City costs low.

- **RESOURCE CENTER**

Business owners within the city's NBD's may lack formal training or education in business skills that are mutually beneficial to the entire district. Additional resources can stimulate individual growth

and the district's overall vibrancy. An educated and organized group of businesses is the NBD's best chance for success.

- Education
 - Training Programs
 - Merchants' Associations
 - Advisory / Leadership Specialists
 - Financial Assistance
 - Collective governance/authority (SID's, CDC's, enforce standards & participation)
 - Resource Pool - make it easier for business growth
- **SAFETY**
The group notes that, by definition, NBD's *rely* on the surrounding residential areas – generally consisting of families - for their support. The *perception* of safety is vital to attract and retain this customer base.
- Well-lit public spaces
 - Visible law enforcement
 - Clean surroundings easily supervised by parents and safety forces
- **QUALITY**
NBD's are seldom in a position to compete with large, national chains on the basis of price alone. Quality, service, and reputation are vital to the NBD's success. Discussion identified the need for:
- High Quality – good reason to go there
 - Unique merchandise / entertainment
 - Clean, safe appearance
 - Distinct personality / image
 - Goods and services that have real value
 - Variety / compatible mix
 - Pedestrian-friendly
 - Other tangible/recognizable benefit to patronage

Essential *values* of our community that make Akron *different*.

NEIGHBORHOODS Akron remains a “City of Neighborhoods”, evoking personal identification with the various small communities that make it up (i.e. North Hill, Ellet, Highland Square, Firestone Park, Goodyear Heights, etc.)

OHIO & ERIE CANAL The Canal provides an icon of the City's history and traditions. It offers a unique symbol of Akron.

INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS: *what do families need?*

Security and Safety

Convenience

Cleanliness

Appearance / Quality

Pedestrian-friendly

(safe for kids and seniors – i.e. crossing Market Street unsafe for kids going to school at the Elms)

(festival site to promote community spirit)

Unique, Homegrown
MIX of retail / food / entertainment
to use it some time.

Requires the right LOOK.

Everybody has

What do we do to

- **Encourage Entrepreneurs and Ideas?**

- **Attract & Recruit Anchors?**

What are they?

Who are they?

How do we attract more? (what are the 'carrots'?)

- **Take advantage of Change?**

Changing tastes?

Healthy food / living?

- **Preserve Business Climate?**

Bus transfers right in front of businesses can deter customers and create an "unsafe" impression.

Absentee landlords?

Objectives and Strategies:

Workgroup members related experience with NBD's in other cities, and in particular, the New Brunswick, N.J. (Rutgers) CDC.

SUCCESS KEYS:

Shopping within the area – Businesses buy from other businesses in the NBD. Businesses cooperate with one another through common hours, reciprocal discounts, promotions, peer pressure, and the like.

Staff – Creative, energetic, (went door-to-door understanding and engaging each business member) staff provided leadership and manpower to formulate and implement success plans. Staff leadership identified needs and spearheaded solutions.

Image / Appearance – Improvements were made to individual establishments and the NBD area to unify appearance and create a vibrant, high-quality image prior to promotional efforts. Improved appearance and high quality image helped the NBD's attract/recruit desirable businesses and tenants, creating an energetic commercial mix.

Sow each N.B.D. with "anchors".

ANCHORS draw / attract people to an area. They can be small (i.e. ice cream stands) or large. Anchors embody the following qualities:

- high quality
- strong reputation
- unique
- everybody has to use it sometime
- willing to take/make time for it (leisure activities or recreation)

Areas MUST PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT INVITES LONGER STAYS in order to benefit from the presence of an Anchor.

EXAMPLES of “ANCHORS”:

Restaurants
Churches
Day Care
Dry Cleaners
Ballpark / Sports
All-weather playgrounds for kids
Bakeries / Wedding Cakes
Ice Cream
Food / Groceries
Arts & Crafts

Demonstrate vitality through regular, visible change.

The group observed that NBD’s require movement and visible success at frequent intervals. Discussion highlighted specific suggestions to realize this goal:

- Start with small but highly visible projects (realistic goals)
- Emphasize Beautification Projects
- Incorporate items of lasting value – i.e. blossoming trees (can also become a special event)
- Frequent projects – no long lapses between (**5 years MAXIMUM**).
- Must have “A NAME” associated with each effort, preferably a significant stakeholder in the NBD.
 1. Engages Personal Commitment
 2. Creates Buy-in and fosters Pride
 3. Promotes Recognition / Awareness
- Make it easy to be successful
- Make it personal
- Must have ACCOUNTABILITY

Focus resources and facilitate success.

During discussion with NBD business representatives, the group identified steps to answer the question of how to focus NBD groups and keep them focussed.

-
- Find the needs of the District and its businesses by asking individuals within the District.
- Engage the support of those who stand to benefit directly.
- Support ideas and participants with contacts and resources.
- Identify irritants/frustrations – these become the issues to focus on.
- Ensure the presence of traffic stoppers or destinations

- Make the area look and feel SAFE.
 1. Cleanliness
 2. Lighting
 3. Open, inviting storefronts.

Organize and combine efforts.

Law allows landowners within an area to assess themselves for common benefit. Assessments can be used for Soft Costs, which include:

- Promotions
- Enhanced Security
- Enhanced Street Cleaning and Beautification

Formal organization (CDC's, SID's, or other vehicles) offers great value to an NBD with the opportunity to retain staff, unify marketing/promotion, and provide a sustained, focused effort toward realizing improvements. Skilled personnel can formulate compatible mix, recruit appropriate businesses, enforce standards, organize promotional events, and maintain the perception of vitality through visible change. Many NBD's may be too small to underwrite their own organizational structure. A city-wide resource center, supported by member NBD's, may offer a sustainable vehicle to provide these vital services.

Foster supportive regulatory controls.

Zoning laws, building codes, and other regulatory controls have the potential to invigorate or restrict the success of Neighborhood Business Districts. As a result, governmental agencies are silent partners with NBD's, and can significantly affect their vitality.

Zoning regulations can:

- Maintain district character
- Protect proportion of business to supporting residential population
- Facilitate district parking solutions

Zoning regulations should not:

- Dilute District Identity by allowing sprawl
- Preclude development in opportune areas
- Relax standards that keep NBD's successful

Building Codes can:

- Facilitate adaptive use of existing structures
- Accommodate innovation and creativity

Building Codes should not:

- Impose costly requirements

Summary Characteristics of Successful N.B.D.'s:

CONVENIENT (MUST BE COOPERATIVE & COLLECTIVE)

- ✓ *Open when PEOPLE/customers want open*
- ✓ Parking

REASON TO GO THERE

- ✓ Destination / Anchor
- ✓ Spending has other tangible / recognizable benefit

GOOD ENOUGH TO TRAVEL FOR

- ✓ High quality

REASON TO GO THERE

- ✓ Destination / Anchor
- ✓ Spending has other tangible / recognizable benefit

SPECIALTY NEEDS

- ✓ Shoe repair
- ✓ Luggage repair
- ✓ Dry Cleaners

ENTERTAINING

UNIQUE

FLEXIBLE REGULATIONS

LOOKS SAFE FOR FAMILIES

APPEARANCE

- ✓ Continuity of appearance
- ✓ Consistent marketing and image
- ✓ Personality

CROSS-REFERRALS / COOPERATION

- ✓ Patronage has greater community benefit
- ✓ Patronage has personal financial benefit

WORKGROUP ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Howard Walton, Moderator
James McClure, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Mary Baumgardener, Robert L. Bunnell, Jennifer Civilariullo, Mark Civilariullo, David Crandell, James Golub and Norman J. Kotz

I. The infrastructure was defined by our workgroup as:

- A. Roads and Bridges
- B. Water – Sewer
- C. Trash – Landfills
- D. Electric – Gas – Steam (Public Utilities)
- E. Communications – Telecommunications

II. Summary of existing conditions/problems/needs

A. Roads and Bridges

- 1. One need only drive around the City of Akron to experience the existing problems and/or the conditions of our roads.
- 2. Lack of permanent plan for resurfacing and maintenance.
- 3. Need for permanent task force to assure money and resources available to facilitate scheduled maintenance and resurfacing.
- 4. Need for development of new technologies.
- 5. Need to assure dependable and predictable annual funding.

B. Water and Sewer

- 1. Need for long term vision and planning, over quick fixes.
- 2. Need for modernization of current plants and equipment and automations.
- 3. Need for conservation.
- 4. Need for additional reservoir(s).
- 5. Need to coordinate regulatory requirements with funding.

C. Trash – Landfill

- 1. Need to protect environment.
- 2. Promote new technologies.

D. Electric – Gas – Steam

- 1. Need for competition between (among) utilities.
- 2. Need for conservation.
- 3. Need for local watchdog.
- 4. Need to explore long term viability of steam to downtown area.
- 5. Need for alternative supplies for energy.

E. Communications – Telecommunications

1. Need for master plan for modernization of downtown and enterprise areas.
2. Need for regulation and standardization of requirements for fiber optics and digital lines.
3. Need for city department to assist in planning and cooperation with private industry to provide technology.
4. Need for user-friendly city for business and industry.

III. Goals, Generally

- A. The City of Akron must provide the highest standard of living possible to its citizens and future generations.
- B. The City of Akron must provide an environment in which the people live safely and compatibly with industry and business.
- C. The city must recognize that its infrastructure is generally outdated and must be modernized.
- D. The city must make prudent investments in its infrastructure NOW, so that future generations are not overly burdened with debt and/or a crumbling infrastructure.
- E. The City of Akron needs industry to use and support its infrastructure.

IV. Strategies

- A. The elected officials of our city and region must become knowledgeable about the extent and seriousness of the immediate and long term needs of the city and region with regard to the infrastructure.
- B. The leadership in our communities must assist in the education of the populous to facilitate the understanding of the immediacy of the need for action.
- C. Recognizing that the City of Akron cannot do it alone, the political entities (cities, counties, townships) in our region must act together to seek state and federal money to assist in the modernization and preservation of our infrastructure, roads, and waterways.
- D. The City of Akron must provide permanent methods of funding not dependent on changing political winds or administration.
- E. The City of Akron should encourage the use of outside experts to review public expenditures and long term planning.
- F. We must explore the feasibility of increasing user rates for capital investments.
- G. We must explore changes in the City Charter with regard to operating and capital budget and for permanent types of funding/taxes.

V. Resources

- A. Assessments for maintenance and improvements of streets.
- B. Funding from surrounding communities, Summit County, and the State of Ohio.
- C. Licensing of building trades and service technicians.
- D. Utilize our natural gas supply.
- E. Methane gas produced at Hardy Road Landfill.
- F. Utilize Gorge Dam for a new city-owned power station.
- G. Investigate feasibility of acquisition of Perry Nuclear Plant water intake system.

WORKGROUP ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Dale Gibbons, Moderator
Bill Murphy, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Kirt Conrad, Kevin Cook, Vickie Earle, Ralph Filaseta, Michael Sermersheim and Margaret L. Wilson

The following are the recommendations of the Imagine Akron Regional Transportation Workgroup:

OVERALL VISION

The existing transportation system should be preserved, maintained, enhanced and function in a fully integrated manner. This can be done through resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, operational and ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) improvements in the development of regional transportation plans and programs. We should reduce our dependence on the automobile and promote alternative modes of transportation, including transit, bikeways and pedestrian walkways. Also, the aging of the population and the welfare reforms that are being instituted make it imperative that alternative forms of transportation are provided to meet the needs of low-income persons and the elderly.

IMPORTANT ISSUES:

- 1) ***Safety and Maintenance of Transportation Systems:*** The highest transportation priority should be to take care of the existing transportation infrastructure.
 - A) Maintain and preserve the transportation systems. Examples are patching potholes, sealing cracks in streets and inspecting structures
 - B) Replace and rehabilitate failed elements of the transportation system Examples include paving streets, sidewalks, and repairing bridges
 - C) Maintain and preserve public transportation facilities in region
 - D) Continue to invest in maintenance and improvements that provide safety for all transportation modes

- 2) ***Access Management:*** Implement access management policies to minimize the adverse transportation impacts of land use changes and to prevent the growth or creation of congestion. Access management is the process of providing and managing access to land development while preserving the flow of all modes of traffic in terms of safety, capacity, speed and the prevention of congestion. This can be achieved by the following:
 - A) Revise various governmental regulations such as Subdivision and Zoning Regulations to institute more requirements for access management (Summit County Subdivision Regulations*, City of Akron Subdivision and Zoning Regulations)

* Summit County is in the process of revising their Subdivision Regulations

 - B) Emphasize better planning especially in commercial developments for access management in order to reduce problems of traffic congestion
 - C) Better coordination between adjacent jurisdictions when planning road connections for new developments, in order for a more efficient road network

- 3) ***Transit:*** We should promote transit to reduce our dependence on the automobile and to provide an alternative form of transportation.
 - A) Need to encourage use of current transit system by providing incentives to increase ridership

- B) Make transit convenient, understandable and easy to use, and provide more informational signs
 - C) METRO should provide their regional bus routes map/ schedules on their web site so people can access the information more easily
 - D) Improve transit speed and reliability
 - E) Promote the development of a commuter rail system, where it is cost effective
- 4) ***Bicycling:*** Actively welcome and accommodate bicyclists on city and suburban streets.
- A) Provide street space for bicyclists
 - B) Encourage installation of safe and convenient bicycle parking
 - C) Provide bicycle racks on buses
 - D) Expand the region's bicycle network in order to encourage people to bike
- 5) ***Pedestrian Access:*** Actively welcome and accommodate pedestrians on sidewalks and street crossings.
- A) Make street crossings safer and easier
 - B) Upgrade crossings to improve pedestrian safety and convenience
 - C) Adjust signal timing to support walking
 - D) Require sidewalks and safe pedestrian connections when new roads are being designed to minimize pedestrian/ vehicle conflicts
 - E) There should be more emphasis on providing sidewalks in new commercial developments and also on providing sidewalk connections to transit stops
 - F) Ensure security by proper design and lighting
 - G) Revise Subdivision Regulations to require more installation of sidewalks in new developments (Summit County and City of Akron regulations)
- 6) ***Accessibility:*** Improve accessibility for people with mobility problems.
- A) Install curb cuts and curb ramps
 - B) Install sidewalks along arterial streets
 - C) Implement innovative pedestrian crossings such as auditory crosswalk signals
 - D) Maintain and possibly expand specialized paratransit services and programs depending on results of local planning and needs assessment studies
- 7) ***Special Needs Populations:*** Strive to improve the transportation opportunities of specialized consumers, such as the elderly, disabled and working poor.
- A) Due to the aging of the population, more resources will be needed for METRO SCAT type services to keep up with the current level of service
 - B) Expand transportation services for welfare clients who are trying to get to jobs and off welfare rolls
- 8) ***Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS):*** Support the development of Intelligent Transportation Systems, (ITS) which uses computer technologies to improve efficiency. The AMATS "Intelligent Transportation Systems" Plan is the regional blueprint for using technologies to actively manage our transportation system and in doing so improves safety and efficiency. This includes:
- A) Freeway and Incident Management which identifies and cleans-up bottlenecks quickly
 - B) Regional Traveler Information which provides travel options and advanced warnings
 - C) Advanced Traffic Signals which improve coordination of traffic signals and reduces delay, especially across jurisdictions
 - D) Public Transportation – by knowing the exact location of buses, planners can more efficiently schedule buses which improves flexibility and convenience

- 9) **Transportation Demand Management:** Provide support for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs that include incentives to encourage the use of transportation alternatives and discourages driving alone. TDM programs are designed to reduce the number of automobile trips or switch the time of trip to less congested periods of the day.
- A) Support vanpool and carpool programs
 - B) Promote telecommuting, and flexible work hours
- 10) **Environmental Impacts:** Work to reduce the environmental impacts of our transportation system.
- A) Seek to reduce the noise impacts of freeway and arterial traffic through the use of more aesthetically pleasing methods
 - B) There should be improved landscaping and more street trees planted along roadway corridors
 - C) Whenever possible, scenic roadway views should be preserved
 - D) Transportation facilities and land use should be coordinated to encourage more compact development
 - E) Encourage the development of more fuel efficient vehicles
 - F) Encourage the development of alternative fuels
 - G) Promote transportation alternatives, such as transit, pedestrian walkways, and bikeways to reduce vehicle miles and improve environmental quality
- 11) **Commercial Transportation:** Preserve and improve commercial transportation mobility and access.
- A) Minimize conflicts between rail facilities and other transportation modes
 - B) Preserve existing rail rights-of-way and freight service where possible
 - C) Upgrade highway capacities appropriate to handle existing regional freight transportation needs
 - D) Use and encourage ITS technologies (Intelligent Transportation Systems) to provide for the safer and more efficient movement of goods and services, through Fleet and Freight Management Subsystems and HAZMAT Management tracking
 - E) Encourage the use of rail and intermodal goods movement
- 12) **Multi-Modal Transportation System:** Encourage the development of a balanced, integrated multi-modal transportation system which includes various modal options, such as highways, mass transit, bikeways, rail and air facilities.
- A) Encourage the development of intermodal transportation facilities
 - B) Key railroad lines, airports and intermodal facilities should be considered critical transportation links
 - C) Transportation planning needs to be coordinated among modes
- 13) **Capital Improvement Programs:** Incorporate pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements into capital improvement and maintenance projects.
- A) Evaluate and incorporate pedestrian, bicycling and transit improvements whenever possible
 - B) Evaluate training and information programs for City staff, review boards and developers about how pedestrian, bicycle and transit projects can fit into roadway improvements and new design work

Background Report Information

Problems Identified

Resistance to using anything but the car
 Pollution of air/pollution of water
 Waste of resources due to overuse of cars
 Social stigma to person who doesn't use a car

Traffic congestion in certain areas and certain times
Lack of flexibility for special (disabled) population outside of city
Poor access of roadways
Lack of forethought in commercial developments with regard to access
Not good pedestrian connections in new commercial development
Piecemeal development
Lack of coordination between adjacent jurisdictions

Group General Transportation Priorities

Highest priority to lowest:

- 1) Maintenance and operation of streets and bridges in as safe and efficient manner as possible
- 2) Public transit improvements that make transit more reliable and faster
- 3) Bicycle facilities that make bicycling safer and more attractive
- 4) Pedestrian improvements that make walking safer and more attractive
- 5) Use of technology to reduce delays on freeways and inform travelers (ITS)
- 6) Programs that provide incentives for using transportation alternatives, such as carpooling and telecommuting
- 7) Commuter rail
- 8) Improvements that move freight by truck and railroad

** (It should be noted that #2,3, and 4 were nearly tied, while #1 had over twice as many points of support as did #2.) This priority list was based on a survey question that asked for the discussion group to rank the above items.

Footnote: While there is an informal correlation of the Group General Transportation Priorities listed directly above with the Issue Areas identified on pages 1-4 of this Report, this Report does not contain a Group consensus for a formalized ranking of the 13 Issue Areas.

The following section highlights the group answers to open-ended questions on the internal group survey form.

What are the three biggest problems with transportation in the Akron area?

Congested areas
Lack of alternatives to auto travel
No sidewalks
Many of the ramps are out dated
Many areas have bad pedestrian access
Heavily auto dependent
Congestion on highways at peak times, some places at all times
Need to make hubs for truck and train transport
Bus information regarding routes to downtown and transfers
Poorly planned residential development
Congestion at selected intersections
Congestion on freeways at peak hours

What are the three most promising means to improve transportation in the Akron area?

Metro
Bicycle traffic
Pedestrian walkways
Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
Commuter Rail
Operational Improvements (Ramp reconfiguration)
New plan for neighborhood bus use and connections
Improving Route 8 and ITS for highways
Talk of rail travel to Cleveland
ITS
Freeway construction
Intersection improvements

Other Comments:

Just a general comment, our area is very biased toward vehicular travel. Little thought is given to other modes or the impact. Need to think about the impact of transportation investments before they are made.

More thought given to Senior travel by bus in own neighborhood to visit stores and offices. Might encourage these things be grouped together in planned retail and offices.

WORKGROUP ON RESEARCH: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Randy Cole, Moderator
Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Dennis P. Brinton, Starlett Knight, Tim Ochsenhirt and Al Ploens

There was a consensus that the Akron area needs to develop a "Think Tank" or similar research capability with two foci, to Coordinate and stimulate research in support of local economic development, and research to provide a foundation for long term public policy development.

Some of the benefits of such an organization would be:

- Create a climate conducive to retaining jobs and people in the area.
- Create a climate where the Akron area would be viewed nationwide and worldwide as a place to be for certain types of research and development. This would include polymers, but would not necessarily be limited to just polymers.
- Coordinate and promote the research which is already taking place in this area, especially in terms of creating economically viable spin-offs from the research.
- Provide a foundation for the development of better public policy, particularly in the areas of transportation, land use and development issues, education, and public services.

Some of the ways identified to create such an organization include:

Need to analyze how other think tanks got their start, i.e. what organizations helped set them up, what types of funding, what kind of governing structure, who were key movers and shakers.

University of Akron would likely be a key player, but should not dominate such an organization; *Business community should have a strong presence. ARDB should be involved.*

Should involve local political leaders, especially if public policy will be a part of a think tank's research concerns.

Need to identify what infrastructure supports a think tank. i.e., people, facilities, communications, organizational linkages, publicity etc.

Might consider using industrial incubator model, with modifications could be turned into thinking incubator. Provide the means to carry out the thinking task. Create an environment where creative people could be set up to do their work, have needs met, have facilities needed to research key topics.

Might use the Internet and web as a means of tying together existing research organizations to promote and publish a catalog of current research. Might consider impact of new E-Business models on how a 21st century think tank should function.

Thinking should be up to 25 years in future, but should try to find ways of implementing practical spin-offs in less time

The research needs identified by other Imagine Akron 2025 committees should be compiled and assessed.

Other supporting documentation:

Tim Ochsenhirt presented the results of a search of a Web site that listed research organizations. There were approximately 85 organizations on this list worldwide, with about 60 in the United States. Accompanying this list was a description with contact information, Key staff names, History and scope of the organization, Areas of research, Geographic focus, Recent research findings, funding sources and publications. It was concluded that this list was not exhaustive; there are many more research organizations.

Starlett Knight presented a bulletin from the University of Akron, which listed and described their Research Centers and Institutes, a list of University of Akron research proposals submitted for funding over the last year. She is awaiting receipt of information from Vanderbilt University on a research organization, which has been active in the Nashville Metro area. This will be forwarded when it arrives.

Dennis Brinton presented a list of local research organizations compiled from the yellow pages and general knowledge. This was placed in an Access database, to which the information about University of Akron and other research organizations will be added.

WORKGROUP ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

David Lieberth, Moderator
Tom Long, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Michelle Byrd, Ken Dague, John Frank, Miller Horns, Dr. George Knepper, Ron Kopp, Katharyne Marcus, Frances McGovern, Jody Miller, John Miller, Paula Moran, Dan Rice, Mark Schweitzer, Mark Smith, Judge W. F. Spicer, Jane Startzman-Vanier and Virginia Ballard Wojno-Forney

Historic Preservation is a continuum of choices affecting the Akron landscape and its buildings. This continuum, from least intrusive to most intrusive includes:

Demolition of an inappropriate structure or the removal of incompatible landscaping can enhance a site to be preserved;

Maintenance of features that are historically, architecturally, or culturally significant.

Rehabilitation of a structure to a state of utility through repair or alteration while preserving its distinctive features;

Adaptive re-use permits a building once designed for a particular purpose to achieve a contemporary use while retaining historic or character-defining features; and,

Restoration returns a structure to its historic character and is faithful to preserving the structure "as built."

The advocacy of Historic Preservation means showing respect for the community's heritage. Akron is a community built in stages over 18 decades. Each era of history has left behind design elements unique to its time. When it is possible to maintain the character of a landscape, a building, or a neighborhood district - - by removing a structure; maintaining a structure; rehabilitating, re-using, or restoring a structure - - there is a continuity with the past that is of value to people who live here and would visit here.

The Workgroup on Historic Preservation believes that Akron would benefit from establishing the following goals in its future:

I Homeowners, neighborhood groups, government, builders and developers would recognize that the "ethic" of preservation will be imbedded into the process of making all planning decisions.

When we develop land and build structures, preservation adds economic value.

The cost of adhering to a set of standards is reasonable considering that good design elements add economic value to the larger community.

Minimum standards established by the City, relating to aesthetics, appropriateness, and architectural compatibility, would be enforced in conditional zoning and the issuance of building permits. In a historic district, changes in structures would be permitted to occur only when such changes are consistent with the preservation goals of the neighborhood that has established an historic district, unless health or safety concerns require an exception.

The city would identify a city employee to serve as a liaison between the city and developers in enforcing preservation standards.

Preservation policies would be established with the widest-possible participation of the Akron community.

II The city would create incentives for preserving individual properties and historic districts

There are methods of encouraging preservation that can be institutionalized.

Conditional Zoning can be a tool to implement preservation standards. Application for conditional uses is an opportunity to inform developers and residents about the value-added benefits of preservation.

The Building Code can be enforced in such a way as to accommodate historic structures.

The City can use the opportunity of making grants for publicly-assisted building projects to accommodate preservation goals, e.g. the construction of sidewalks, driveway aprons, curbs, streetlights, landscaping, paving, and facades.

The city would utilize a low-interest loan fund for improvements to encourage preservation. Builders, developers, and property-owners would acquire funds guaranteed by the city, so long as minimal standards are met that will serve to enhance desirable design elements.

The city would amend the procedure whereby landowners petition for public improvements so that the process might also become a tool for preservation. Preservation goals can occasionally be met, by permitting a neighborhood improvement to be paid for by tax assessments spread out over time.

The city would make the relocation of utilities to underground routes a preference when developing new projects.

The city and community would identify one single district that can be preserved appropriate to the period it represents. The preservation would be executed with the greatest degree of skill and attention to preservation standards, as a demonstration of the value added in terms of economic development and tourism.

III Akron will initiate new programs of education to inform the community of the value of preservation.

The city would make a commitment to update the 1978 Akron Landmark survey, with particular attention being paid to buildings constructed since 1950.

The city would sponsor publications to show homeowners how to make repairs and improvements that are consistent with the design standards to be adopted by the City.

A program of education would emphasize the unique neighborhood history of Akron and how architecture and landscape define the character of an area.

Schools would use elementary and secondary history classes to teach neighborhood and community history using hands-on experience for students wherever possible.

In conjunction with the Akron-Summit County Library, the community would create a special collection of preservation materials and resources which in part would emphasize the diversity of Akron neighborhoods and the importance of each area's cultural heritage.

Events, publications, and exhibits would call attention to Akron's historic buildings and neighborhoods, thereby stimulating tourism and economic development. This would include pedestrian tours of neighborhoods, a community-supported "preservation week", a publication informing residents and visitors of historic sites, and more.

A uniform system of signage would designate landmark sites, recognize achievements in preserving Akron's heritage, and identify significant buildings, which no longer exist.

IV The Community of cultural, educational, neighborhood, business, and governmental organizations would join with Preservation interest groups in a collaboration that would permit an ongoing Preservation dialogue.

Individual organizations, which have preservation as all or part of their mission, need to have a forum that will offer periodic opportunities of collaboration. Such a "summit meeting" of groups would include:

- The City of Akron
- Summit County Government and Engineer
- Metroparks Serving Summit County
- Design and Architectural organizations such as AIA and landscape architects.
- The Summit County Historical Society
- Progress Through Preservation
- Cascade Locks Park Association
- Ohio-Erie Canal Corridor Coalition
- Regional historical societies
- Municipalities in Summit County
- Akron-Summit County Public Library
- Schools
- The Akron Art Museum
- The University of Akron
- The Akron Regional Development Board
- Boards of Trade
- The Homebuilders Association
- The Board of Realtors
- Block Clubs
- The Garden Club
- Akron Convention and Visitors Bureau

This consortium would have a continuing conversation about preservation issues and support public awareness and education efforts.

Neighborhoods would be encouraged to "take ownership" of their unique heritage, and see it represented through preservation projects.

WORKGROUP ON LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY

Jane Bond, Moderator
Tom Tatum, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Lisa Hanna and Mike Wendelken

LEISURE

Goal

Leisure and recreation should be affordable, accessible and with sufficient variety to appeal to different interests, ages, capabilities and limitations. Leisure opportunities should promote relaxation, exploration, learning, physical and mental health and enjoyment of life.

Strategies and Resources

1. Use neighborhood identity to identify and develop leisure sites and recreational activities that would be in the immediate vicinity of each resident.
2. The entire city would be identified and organized by well-defined neighborhoods. Local place names such as Wallhaven, Maple Valley, and Goodyear Heights would be designated for every area of the city. Each neighborhood would have its area marked by an identifying symbol or banner on street signs, flags or markers. Each neighborhood would conduct an annual event such as a street fair, ice cream festival, art show, or concert.
3. Within each neighborhood a survey of existing leisure sites and activities would be conducted. Each neighborhood would identify the types of activities that would serve its unmet needs. A diverse selection of leisure activities would be available within each neighborhood. Certain facilities would be located within every neighborhood. For example, every neighborhood would have a park with a playground, a community hall, a walking/jogging path, and a public garden.
4. An inventory should be conducted to identify all existing facilities, which could serve multipurpose uses as leisure or recreational sites.
5. Capital improvement funds should be allocated for developing specific leisure sites in each neighborhood according to the needs identified by the neighborhood. A team of community organizers must be developed to work with residents to organize neighborhood leadership. Priorities and decision making must occur at the neighborhood level and not be imposed by city officials.
6. The Parks and Recreation Department should serve as a resource for each neighborhood organization. E-mail and faxes should be used for regular communication within neighborhoods for planning and implementing activities.

HOSPITALITY

Goal

Visitors to Akron should have a welcoming, positive experience. The "Spirit of Akron" would be the warmth and sincerity of residents in greeting and assisting visitors.

Strategies and Resources

1. Encourage an attitude of pride in our community that we enjoy sharing with visitors. Enthusiasm about our community should be communicated through our leadership.
2. Use distinctive, prominent signage to identify sites of interest to visitors and have routes clearly designated for easy access.
3. Create pocket-size brochures that identify by interest area local resources. For example, a brochure that lists all the historic homes that are open to the public, all the art galleries and shops, all the sports teams and fields, all the theaters, etc. Place the brochures at each hotel and visitor site.
4. Create driving tours of Akron.
5. Develop a website designed for visitors with sites of interest, activities, schedules and fees.
6. Provide the hospitality industry with coordination through the city government and the Akron Regional Development Board.
7. Cleanliness of city streets, sidewalks and public areas should be maintained on a regularly scheduled basis. Vacant commercial or residential property should be subject to forfeiture and sale if no viable economic activity occurs for a period of time. Blight is destructive to the community around it and creates a negative economic and social environment for visitors and residents alike.

WORKGROUP ON ENTERTAINMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Michael Kolk, Moderator
Nancy Csonka, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Leah Anglin, Dan Dahl, Rick Ewing, Susan Hamo, Mitchell Kahan, Pat Munka, Mike Owen,
Jeff Rosenberg and David Samuelson

As downtown Akron has evolved from a retail center to an entertainment destination, it is important to focus on forging a consolidated emphasis on viewing all of downtown as an entertainment destination, not merely creating individual entertainment focused locations.

Important Issues:

Accessibility - Downtown needs to be easy to get to and around in one you are there.

- *Parking - A key aspect of enticing people downtown will be ample parking, not only near important venues, but scattered throughout to encourage pedestrian traffic.*
- *Inner belt Renovation - The Mayor's proposal to replace the inner belt with developable land and road access has merit. The new thruway should be a divided boulevard style providing an attractive gateway to downtown, as well as functional means to enter and leave the city.*
- *Within Downtown - We will need to provide a way to move people from venue to venue allowing them to park in one place for the evening and then move from one end of town to another without having to drive from place to place. This would include expanded trolley service and private taxi service as well.*
- *Signage - Downtown signs need to be visible and many throughout downtown and should identify important places, restrooms, etc.*

Marketing - We need to let people know why they should think of Downtown Akron for entertainment.

- *Regional Positioning - We are in a unique position to attract people to downtown Akron from both the Canton and Cleveland areas. By 2004, Akron will have 21.6% more people living within a 50-mile area than anywhere else in Northern Ohio.*
- *Perceptions - We will need to focus on creating a perception of downtown as a safe, clean place to attend events.*
- *A downtown marketing campaign should focus on these issues and be communicated to all downtown stakeholders.*

Crime & Grime - Improved cleanliness and crime rates are needed for success.

- *Panhandlers - City Council must pass legislation making it more difficult for panhandlers in the downtown area. Many of the visitors we hope to attract to downtown are uncomfortable with this situation and may choose not to come.*
- *Street appearance - Making the streets as attractive as possible will help entice people to walk around downtown discovering all of downtown's offerings hopefully allowing smaller businesses to benefit from the crowds attending the larger events. Included in this is moving the existing bus stops off main street and improving the appearance of the principle byway.*

- *Clean-Up Crews - Additional crews should be added to attend to the non-routine maintenance issues such as sidewalk gum removal and brick maintenance as well as sanitization in areas like bus stops and alleys.*
- *Beat Patrols - This would help provide people coming downtown with not only a feeling of security, but also a smaller-town feel as officers walk the streets which gives more of a personal touch than officers riding in cruisers or on bicycles.*
- *Restrooms - Ample public restroom availability will be a necessary feature of bringing large amounts of people to the downtown-area. Additionally, consideration could be given to legislating a requirement for certain business to provide public restroom availability.*
- *Security Cameras - These should be visibly mounted in less traveled areas and monitored.*
- *Lighting - Additional decorative lighting should be added to spruce up downtown.*
- *Artwork - Various sculptures, statues, etc. should be added to make public areas more interesting*
- *Crime - Perception vs. reality. Educate people on the low crime rate downtown Akron has achieved.*

Physical Needs -Improvements needed to round out downtown as an entertainment destination.

- *Coffee shops & hangout places - People will need a place to stop and relax for a beverage.*
- *Theatre - Small theatres (250 - 500 capacity) for film (and large theatres 800 - 1000 capacity) for other events too small for the Civic or EJ Thomas are needed as venues.*
- *Canal focus - The canal makes Akron unique and should be a prominent part of the entertainment focus of Akron. Make the canal corridor a major thoroughway for people to get around the downtown area. Efforts should be made to collaborate with the Heritage Corridor Project.*
- *Take inventory of Downtown Akron's current entertainment assets to better understand what we have and what we need to create a complete entertainment destination.*

WORKGROUP ON ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS

Ellen Otto, Moderator
Rita Young, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Deb Berentz, Elaine Downing, Raymond Dunkle, David R. Huskins, Mary Ann Jackson, Mitchell Kahan, Carl Kieffer, Elinore Korow, John MacDonald, Megan MacDonald, Linda MacDonald, Jo Ann Oelschlager, Debbie Prinz, Virginia Robinson, Jeff Sperry and Betty Taylor

The Imagine Akron 2025 team, charged with developing a view of Akron Arts, Culture and Museums (A/C&M) circa 2025, met on three occasions – April 13, May 2, and May 7, 2000. Meetings were held in the Directors’ Room at the Akron Art Museum. The A/C&M “*Imagine Team*” was diversified (age, race, sex) and included a man and a woman in the 25-35 range who could be expected to play significant roles in Akron’s cultural life in 25 years. Other members were all arts supporters, but represented a breadth of the arts through personal interests, cultural development, and leadership roles they have served in Akron’s cultural, arts and museum environment.

VISION -

FOR AKRON’S ART, CULTURE & MUSEUMS:

“Enrich Today through art and culture. . . as we grow toward Tomorrow. . . while reflecting on our Yesterdays”

MISSION –

FOR AKRON’S ART, CULTURE & MUSEUMS:

To encourage cultural appreciation and artistic expression for enrichment of Akron area residents and visitors alike. . . through accessible programming, exhibits, and venues for learning . . . while celebrating Akron’s rich cultural heritage.

GOALS –

FOR AKRON ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS:

- 1.) To create a cultural environment that celebrates diversity and is a reflection of human creativity as expressed through artistic forms.
- 2.) To provide a strong cultural core that balances and nourishes the individual and accentuates the Quality of Life in Akron.
- 3.) To employ the arts to help address social issues
- 4.) To celebrate and learn from our “yesterdays” by preserving Akron’s heritage as we optimize “today” and plan for “tomorrow”.

THE PROCESS:

The approach utilized for developing a vision for Arts, Culture & Museums for Akron in the year 2025 included:

- Group Brainstorming,
- Development of Factors expected to impact A/C&M in Akron by 2025,
- Fact gathering and Benchmarking,
- Assessment and Refining, and finally. . .
- Prioritization of initiatives.

Fact gathering included:

Demographics - Joann Oelschlager, Ellen Otto and Betty Taylor, and Mitchell Kahan
 Mark Williamson re: City Web Site Plans - Ray, Meghan
 Toledo Arts - Betty Taylor
 Tourism Statistics - Mary Ann Jackson
 Public Art - Ray Dunkle, Meghan MacDonald, Mitchell Kahan, and Betty Taylor
 Akron Public Schools Arts programs - Dr. John MacDonald
 Umbrella Incubator - Betty Taylor

**RECOMMENDED KEY INITIATIVES
 FOR ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS - CIRCA 2025:**

- 1.) **Establish a Summit County VISUAL ARTS CENTER to serve as an energizing focus for Performing, Creating, Displaying, and Selling visual arts. This facility would also serve as an incubator - an environment to nurture and encourage artists. The Torpedo Factory in Toledo, Ohio can provide a template for further considering such a facility.**
- 2.) **Re-emphasize ARTS EDUCATION in our schools through adjunct experiences and programs to acquaint children, young people, as well as citizens of all ages with art history, art mediums, and our Akron art heritage. Early, consistent, and continuing exposure to the arts can augment the shrinking arts orientation received today at home and in school.**
- 3.) **Establish a SUMMIT COUNTY HISTORICAL FACILITY . . . but with an exciting, contemporary name . . . that *archives and celebrates* our area's origins - ice age, prehistoric, and Native American artifacts, colonial development, water influence, and major business impacts (farm machinery, cereal, clay products, matches, publishing, aerospace . . . and, of course, rubber). This facility could house Goodyear's "World of Rubber" exhibit, as well as other collections pertaining to local history that has led Akron to its current stature as a *Polymer Center* for the new Millennium. The resurrection of the canal and emphasis on water power that drove much of Akron's development can be focused in this facility. It would be important to incorporate interactive attractions (perhaps an aquarium or animated water experience) to**

RECOMMENDED KEY INITIATIVES *CONT'D*

attract citizens and visitors in sufficient numbers. In addition to linkages with schools and general interest of area residents, Akron is a popular destination and hosts thousands of visitors annually. These groups, often in Motor Coaches who include City Tours on their itineraries, would greatly benefit from this facility as a framework for other Summit County attractions, i.e. Stan Hywet Hall, The Civic Theatre, E.J. Thomas, Hower House, Aeros, The University of Akron, the Cuyahoga Valley, Hale Farm, Quaker Hilton, etc...

- 4.) A new 800-1200 SEAT THEATRE is needed for smaller scaled performances. Such a theatre should offer excellent acoustics, universally good sight lines, suitable stage and wing sizing, millennium technology, and the elegant sophistication to provide a showcase for a range of cultural and artistic performances.
- 5.) PUBLIC NEIGHBORHOOD ART is an exciting component in many cities. Sculpture, art kiosks, small galleries, and even special outdoor musical performances add charm and character to cityscapes. Our renovated downtown area would be greatly enhanced with an infusion of art. The downtown areas bordering the canal, Cascade Locks Park, sidewalks, Cascade, as well as neighborhood, parks, and byways offer wonderful opportunities for art. Public Art displays reinforce the cultural commitment and texture of a city.
- 6.) PACKAGING AKRON ARTS for an "internal" market is equally important as for the "external" tourism market. Individual arts organizations need to be strong, but when viewed singularly, they cannot create the impact a collaborative, well framed and marketed cultural message can provide.
Collaborating on the creation of an Arts, Culture & Museums web site with accessibility from strategically positioned electronic kiosks would be a wonderful opportunity for collegial gain.
- 7.) LEVERAGE ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS FOR AKRON TOURISM MARKET.
Few people realize, unless they are directly involved with tourism, that:
 - TOURISM represents 20% of the US economy
 - Ohio ranks #6 nationally in tourism
 - Akron ranks #3 in the State
- 8.) The C.A.R.E.S. (Culture, Arts, Recreation, Education and Sports) initiative is, to our thinking, the single most critical effort for ensuring and expanding the broad cultural life of the Akron area. Although this issue will be on the ballot in Fall 2000, its impact will be well into the new Millennium.

COMPELLING REASONS FOR CULTURAL EMPHASIS:

There are many reasons for Akron's leadership to focus on Arts, Culture and Museum components when visualizing the City 25 years from now. In addition to education, entertainment, and spiritual growth derived from A/C&M, a strong cultural environment supports tourism and economic development, while building critical mass for restaurants and downtown attractions.

It is clear that an enhanced cultural environment is an important factor when measuring Quality of Life in a region. It is also an important factor from an Economic Development perspective. Firms evaluating the region for business relocation or expansion are positively influenced by a robust arts component. Jobs will require even higher technology orientation in the next 25 years. Educated people typically appreciate a rich cultural environment. If we expect to attract *and retain* well-educated citizens capable of building the technology-based industries desired for the Akron Area, a balanced community, including the arts is essential.

Today Akron Area citizens have much to appreciate right here without leaving the boundaries of Akron. Unfortunately, those who have not lived elsewhere often lack a measuring stick. If we can continue making strides while drawing attention to our interesting yesterdays . . . our rich cultural

heritage, the natural beauty of our land, the patrons and community leaders who have left a legacy that many communities long for. . . If we can more fully develop a robust cultural environment, matched by other acknowledged initiatives, perhaps we can retain our young people and help them realize the desirability of remaining in the Akron area as they raise their families and provide the leadership necessary to make Akron grow.

**FACTORS PROJECTED TO IMPACT
AKRON ARTS, CULTURE & MUSEUMS CIRCA 2025**

• Changing Demographics

Population Mix	Age
Education	Economics
Ethnicity	Business and Industrial Base
Sprawl	Downtown as Focus

Statistics from ARDB, from The University of Akron, and from the State of Ohio suggest that Summit

Northern County will have some slight growth during the years ahead; much of that growth is targeted for

Summit County. No large growth or attrition is projected and the composition of the population will not vary as radically as some areas of the country. We can expect a larger percentage of African-Americans and a slight increase in the Asian population due to our focus on technology. Too the Akron population will be aging; today's baby-boomers will be seniors ranging from 60 – 80 years old. Birth rates are projected to be relatively flat, i.e. 2015 vs. 1990, so the young adult population for SUMMIT COUNTY is expected to remain at about the same levels as today.

• Computer/Internet

Virtual Reality in 2025

• Funding

The success of the C.A.R.E.S project will be a major factor in securing the future of its constituents

The arts organizations can supplement, but not totally provide, necessary funding.

Per Mitchell Kahan – anticipate some improvement in arts et al funding based on the enormous transfer of wealth and interest in supporting private education and cultural entities. This support is coming from foundations (which are growing) and from individuals – smaller grass roots giving.

• Marketing and Packaging

Collaborative marketing and packaging will be essential for higher visibility of the arts in the Akron area. Some initiatives that should be considered include the following:

- Dynamic quarterly Calendar-Arts Alliance *to be updated daily and to include cancellations*
- Newsletter to educators
- Akron Visitors' Book
- Akron "Recruiting" Book for those considering or who have relocated here.
- Publicity about "Akron Revitalized" . . . Quality of Life
- Web site for Akron with stronger Arts, Culture, and Museum section
- The Akron Arts Alliance is developing a web site, but that must be linked with the City site.

- Also need to know what the Beacon Journal has planned electronically and how the Arts can link.
- Linkages should be established electronically with Real Estate firms and a method found to inform and educate new residents about the Arts availability in Akron.
- ARDB should have access to this information as an enhancement to a Quality of Life message when recruiting new firms and executives to Akron.
- Electronic Arts information at Kiosks in major hotels and thoroughfares (Easily updated and readily available).

• **Competition**

- Sports
- Computer/Couch Potato Syndrome
- Increased Work Loads
- Fitness
- Family

• **Programming**

- Kids Arts Experiences
- Balancing need to education and entertain
- Opportunities for continuous arts exposure, i.e. show movies such as Amadeus, teach dancing, attend ballet or ASO rehearsal or have “back stage” experience.

• **Performance/Exhibit Facilities Needs**

- Attractive, appropriate, accessible facilities
- Parking near arts activities
- Critical Mass of arts activities
- Creating Vibrancy!!
- Public Transportation
- Visitor’s Center – Arts Info. . . Things To Do
(At this time only know of the Brecksville Visitor’s Center)
- Schematic of Arts Locations
- Gateways to the City – Downtown Kiosks and in “outskirts” i.e. Montrose, Green, and neighborhoods

• **Tourism = 20% of economy in US ... Ohio #6 . . . Akron #3 in State**

- According to Summit County Convention Bureau statistics. . . Ohio travelers spent \$14.3 billion during 1998. Their spending directly supported 389,394 jobs with a payroll of \$4.3 billion. Visitors contributed \$1.04 billion of direct taxes to Ohio’s coffers.
As the baby boomers age, retire, and have both the time and resources for leisure, the potential impact to tourism will be considerable. Akron has many treasures, but we now have the opportunity to optimize the whole through better collaboration, planning, and marketing.
- Educate Hotel Desk Clerks and Convention Center Staff.
Utilize Electronic Kiosk describing Arts, Culture and Museum entertainment opportunities
(paper brochures and fliers too difficult to keep updated and stocked.)

• **Collaboration Efforts:**

- Cost saving opportunities
- Joint marketing -- Collaborative efforts
- Electronic Advertising

- **Early Arts Exposure and Orientation:**

- Highlight introduction of Arts to children
- De-emphasized arts in schools
- 1st and 2nd generation European families influence decreasing in numbers
- Backstage/warm-ups instead of just viewing Nutcracker performance.
Hands on! See nuts and bolts.
 - Teach physical prowess required for dance
- Squelch stigma attached to some arts
- Develop Arts Kiosks

- **Create Strong Early and Continuing Education Model**

- Help young people (men and women) appreciate the joy and creativity accessible through arts, (such as athleticism in dance. Create linkages with athletic departments.)
- Change perception of various arts from elitist, expensive, non-athletic, etc.
- Introduce "At-Risk-Youth" in Arts – dance, music, art

DREAMS AND DESIRES FOR AKRON 2025

ARTS, CULTURE AND MUSEUMS

- **Arts Positioning and Philosophy in Akron**

- Emphasize Arts as a centerpiece for Quality of Life in Akron Area
- Stronger architectural standards (architectural and signage plan)
- Emphasize Arts as major element in downtown redevelopment plan
- Develop Public art (such as sculptures) throughout community ... especially downtown
- Attract wider audiences, (age, ethnicity, economics)
- Make arts opportunities accessible for all Akron neighborhoods
- Create Model for Arts Initial and continuing Education
- Create Arts Matrix Plan encompassing all levels of Art, i.e.
(from encouraging amateur artists to Fine Arts)

- **Public Art**

- (**Ray Dunkle, Meghan MacDonald, Mitchell Kahan, and Betty Taylor will continue to explore this and link with Keep Akron Beautiful to optimize existing structures and "learning". Betty Taylor has info re: Toledo's Public Art initiative.*)

- **Create Arts "County-Wide Umbrella Group" for Local Artists**

- Could the structure parallel Akron Arts Alliance?
Each group or artist retains own identity but deriving benefits from the umbrella organization.
- (*Betty Taylor and Dr. Mark Auburn will continue to champion this*)
-

- **New Entities**

- **Cultural and Natural History Museum**
(Containing such information as: Cuyahoga Watershed, Portage Lakes, Native Americans, Portage,

Early residents and industries – Clay Products, Farm Machinery, Transportation, Tires, Lighter Than Air, peoples, cultures, early animal life, mineral deposits, etc...)
Perhaps built near Cascade Locks Park or at another canal site.

• **Venues**

- Performance Hall (800-1200 seating)
- Amphitheater Overlooking Akron
- Gallery for local artists – perhaps located on contiguous property to the Art Museum.
- Jazz and film venues
- Encourage Street Art and Street Musicians as in Europe --Cascade at lunchtime or outside the stadium prior to Aeros games ...(*Get a Permit and Perform*)

• **Community Arts Incubator**

Torpedo Bldg. in Alexandria, Va. where artists work and sell their art
Richmond - Tobacco Center

• **Arts Information**

- Frame Akron's Unique Cultural Identity ... its differentiators ... and then communicate it
- Create formalized Arts Media Plan
- Information on Internet
- Information Center or Kiosks (reference San Antonio)
- Visitors Information Center
- Arts Bulletin Board

MAJOR ARTS/CULTURE & MUSEUMS

As of TODAY (2000)

Akron U. Archives	CLPA
Civic Theater	Greater Akron HOF
Inventors' Hall of Fame	Indian Cultural Center
Akron Art Museum	Weathervane Theater
Akron Symphony	Blossom Music Center
Ohio Ballet	Porthouse Theater
Stan Hywet	P. T. P.
Keep Akron Beautiful	Illusion Factory
Hower House	Magic Theater
Hale Farm	Akron University
Summit County Historical Society	BSA (disabled)
Summit County Hall of Fame	Private Art Galleries
Rubber Hall of Fame	Cuyahoga Valley Art Center
Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet	Black Cultural Center (U of A)
Children's Ballet Theater	Gospel/Symphony
Tuesday Musical	Coming Together
ETC All-American Show Choir	Akron Zoo
Summit Choral	Canal Corridor
Akron Lyrical Theater	Children's Concert Society
Akron Youth Symphony/Chorus	Cuy.Valley Paleo/Geo/Archeo Aspects
Miller South/Firestone	Apollo's Fire

Artists' Societies:

- Arts Rubber City
- Women's Art League
- Akron Soc (??) Artist
- Ohio Clay Guild

Churches Art Series - Performing Artists

EVENTS:

Art Shows (ex: Boston Mills)
June-teenth (Mason Park)
Kwanzaa-related events
Downtown at Dusk
Summer Concerts - City Parks
Out in Akron
First Night
Hardesty Park Art Show
City Fair
Stan Hywet's Shakespeare
Madrigal Dinners
Ohio Mart

International Institute

Lockkeeper's House

University Park Association

Softball HOF

Lighter Than Air Museum

FESTIVALS:

African American
Greek
Italian
Octoberfest
German-American

WORKGROUP ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

Joan Lauck, Moderator

Ralph Thompson, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Patrick Gsellman, Ardith Keck, Cindy Petkac, Lynn Schott, Martin Sokolich, Cindy Stefanik,
Sharon Stuver, Skip Summerville and Craig Thompson

Goal: To improve and maintain our quality of life by preserving, developing and fully utilizing our open space, urban space and water resources.

Strategies: Develop a Master Plan outlining current facilities and their use and planned growth of outdoor recreation.

Maintain all current zoning and land use laws to ensure that open space does not become compromised.

Develop a strategy to obtain external funding (both from federal and state sources).

Generate funds from non-residents (user fees or donation for a patch).

Stay apprised of Summit C.A.R.E.S. activities.

Develop public/private partnerships (ex: Athletic fields adjacent to Route 8; property owned by FirstEnergy and developed by the City of Akron).

Maintain & improve quality air and water standards.

Ensure public health and safety is maintained and improved at all facilities.

Ensure facilities address needs of underutilized youth segment and the growing elderly segment of the population.

Goal: Actively promote and educate local, regional and national audiences of the available facilities and programs.

Strategies: Develop city-sponsored activities including educational programs, organized seasonal programs (tennis, basketball, cross country skiing) and key fund raising event.

Create contest to involve children.

Create citywide outdoor recreation guide.

Utilize website to promote facilities and activities. Link with other key websites (i.e. metroparks).

Utilize public access channel to promote facilities and activities.

Conduct market usage study.

Partner with ARDB and Board of Realtors to promote parks to new businesses and new residents.

Actively partner with national park and national heritage river corridor.

Goal: Develop connectivity (access, connection & transportation) to various regional facilities in order to provide access to all.

Strategies: Promote green ways and bike paths on all existing and future roads.

Develop foot paths and/or bike paths within neighborhoods.

Consider location of future foot/bike paths when planning new infrastructures.

Encourage metropolitan approach to all recreational planning; including funding.

Develop locally appropriate solutions to address transportation issues (i.e. bike racks on buses).

Resources needed to accomplish goals:

Develop a commission to focus on one or more of the above goals. The commission would consist of a representative(s) from each of the following: Metroparks, National park, City of Akron – Parks & Recreation, Planning & Engineering Departments, citizen, business community, city council.

Develop a position within the city that would serve as chairman of the above commission. In addition, this person would have authority to drive commission decisions with other city departments.

First objective for the commission would be to develop the Master Plan.

WORKGROUP ON VISITOR DEVELOPMENT: AKRON AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Betty Davis, Moderator
Leah Anglin, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Donald G. Amsberg, Juliann Riley, Elsie K. Simmerman, Sandra R. Smith and Timothy J. Walsh

VISION

In order to effectively promote Akron as a tourist destination, several components of visitor development must be expanded and coordinated. The City must provide visitors with a variety of interesting experiences that draw upon Akron's many assets. These experiences should then be creatively marketed to a widespread audience. The best way to achieve these goals is to create a centralized organization which is responsible for important visitor development activities.

GOAL #1: **Create an Office of Tourism**

Strategies:

1. Establish a Centralized Clearinghouse for Tourism
 - Today, visitor development needs are not being met by any single organization.
 - This organization would be responsible for coordinating and expanding marketing activities, special events, and visitor services.
 - Coordinate activities with the City and other tourism-related organizations.
 - The Office of Tourism could be structured as a City Department or as an organization like a Private Industry Council or Downtown Akron Partnership.

GOAL #2: **Market Akron as a Tourist Destination Regionally, Nationally, and Internationally**

Strategies:

1. Utilize Office of Tourism
2. Educate Akron Residents
 - Imbue sense of civic pride.
 - Create *civil ambassadors* or citizens who spread the good word about Akron.
 - Develop local knowledge of assets and history of the Akron area.
3. Promote Akron in the National and International Marketplace
 - Create an image of Akron that can be identified with on a global scale (e.g., Polymer Valley).
 - Highlight the evolution of Akron from being the shortest distance between two rivers, to being the high point on a canal, to being the "Rubber Capital", to becoming a part of the new "Polymer Valley".
 - Dispel beliefs that Akron is a dirty, "rust belt", industrial city.
4. Reinvent Akron's Image
 - Promote evolution of Akron from "Rubber Capital" to the new "Polymer Valley".

- Dispel beliefs that Akron is a “dirty” industrial city
5. Utilize the Internet as a Major Tool for Marketing Activities
 - Establish “one-stop” website that provides access to all available information about Akron.
 - Create virtual tours of Akron and use other cutting-edge technology to capture visitor interest.
 6. Establish cooperative relationships with similar organizations, other national and international tourism offices and associations.

GOAL #3: Centralize, Expand, and Coordinate Promotional Information and Special Events in Akron

Strategies:

1. Utilize Office of Tourism
2. Generate Attractive Written Promotional Materials
 - Provide overview of Akron, its history, and attractions.
3. Develop New Special Events
 - Theme-weekends for families
e.g., Native American/ Frontier Days
 - Seasonal/Holiday celebrations
 - Allow tours through business facilities
e.g., Akron Industrial Incubator, Goodyear, Advanced Elastomer Systems, Canal Place, Canal Park, and the Airdock.
4. Distribute Information to Tour Bus Companies and Other Travel Groups and AAA and AARP.

GOAL #4: Focus Tourist Development on Akron’s History and Natural Resources

Strategies:

1. Promote the Preservation, Restoration, and Utilization of the Area’s Natural Resources and Local Parks in an Effort to Attract Visitors
 - The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
 - The Ohio & Erie Canal, the Cascade Locks and the Towpath Trail
 - The Metro Parks and the Signal Tree
2. Draw upon Akron’s History
 - Role in evolution of U.S.
 - Rubber revolution
 - Innovations in polymers
3. Establish an *Akron Historical Museum*
 - Display artifacts of Akron history
 - Provides an anchor for tourism

Resources for Implementing Goals and Strategies:

- Private sector businesses
- Public sector/ government
- Historical organizations/ societies
- Educational institutions
- Internet/World Wide Web
- Media/ Newspaper
- Non-profit sector
- Citizens
- Area Museums
- Park Systems

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WORKGROUP ON DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT/COMMUNITY

Malcolm J. Costa, Moderator

Workgroup Members:

Sharon Butler-McCray, Ruth Miller, Donna Pulling and Pam Williams

Vision: Effective governance requires optimum input from citizens at all levels; diversified economic circumstances; gender, cultural, religious, racial mix, reflecting the community.

GOAL: Empowerment of People in the Community

- Strategies:
1. Design forums (e.g., town meetings) establishing direct citizen decision making (including electronic means of participating)
 2. Solicit feedback from people involved
 3. Set up support mechanism to staff process (technical assistance, continuity)

GOAL: Educate Children in citizen Participation as the Future

- Strategies:
1. Build mechanism into educational system, starting early (preschool)
 2. Create enthusiasm by teachers
 3. Develop accountability standards
 4. Create a desire for youth to become interested in citizen participation
 5. Encourage school systems to formalize citizen participation in curriculum
 6. Inculcate citizen participation into strategic planning of public schools
 7. Conduct youth development programs

GOAL: Engage Citizens with Decision Makers

- Strategies:
1. Reinforce identity and roles of key decision makers
 2. Design ways to enhance feedback to those who participate
 3. Increase citizen participation accountability for decision makers

GOAL: Involve the Business Community in Citizen Participation Programs

- Strategies:
1. Organize business to participate in school/community programs (e.g., Youth Motivational Task Force, Les Weyler's (The Limited, Inc.)

WORKGROUP ON COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND COHESIVENESS- MARKETING

Steven Brand, Moderator
Dr. George E. Prough, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Charles Bond, Ed Dieringer, Joyce Fairfax, Mary Ann Jackson, Richard King and Connie Pacanovsky

The Marketing Committee was charged with the task of creating community identity via marketing in Akron in the year 2025. Most marketing professionals will market a product or service that already exists. In lieu of having a pre-determined vision for Akron in 2025, we have created our own and then developed a number of strategies to market that vision. We hope that this complements the work and vision of other groups.

Building on Trends

In creating a vision for Akron, one must look at the present environment and the trends that suggest where the World in general and Akron specifically are heading. When thinking about the future of Akron and its ability to be marketed, it is essential to build on our strengths and determine what makes Akron specifically viable for a dynamic and successful future. The following presents areas our committee felt were trends that when embraced and nurtured could allow Akron to stand out amongst its regional neighbors and national equals. For the Akron area to thrive, it must have characteristics unique and attractive. We don't want to be a smaller version of another city. We must build on our strengths and enhance the best of what Akron represents.

- The major asset of Akron as a metropolitan area is the **quality of life**. Features that display this quality of life include:
 - Highly accessible cultural and leisure activities -- tickets to events at a reasonable price -- enough for any one person to do and see in one year
 - Close to a variety of sports and recreational activities
 - National Recreation Area (hiking and biking), Lake Erie (and other lakes), skiing, great golfing, etc.
 - Accessible to a number of higher profile cities within a day's drive or 1-2 hour flight
 - Relatively low crime rate
 - Affordable housing at all levels compared to other cities
- **Entertainment and leisure businesses** are growing and will continue to grow in downtown -- lots of available space at reasonable prices
- Akron continually has challenges attracting and then keeping major Fortune 500 corporations to and in the area -- this process of marketing is costly and, if overly successful, could have a negative impact on the quality of life
- By 2025, the **senior citizen population** will be the healthiest, wealthiest, most active, and most educated this country has ever seen
- As large corporations in larger cities run out of physical space to expand their home offices, and as the population desires a better quality of life than larger cities can provide, employees will telecommute more from home or in **telecommuting centers** near their homes
- The **polymer industry** is expanding in this country and needs qualified graduates and polymer gurus to spark more innovation and business development. The University of Akron and Kent State are presently academic hubs in polymer research

The Plans

The following sections suggest three specific directions that build on the previously mentioned trends and strengths of Akron. They can be realized simultaneously with the proper resources and attention. One can imagine a city where the entertainment and leisure options are over abundant and accessible, where those who desire to work for Fortune 500 companies use the Akron community as their home base, and where the Polymer genius that is generated from both Kent State and University of Akron is inspired and supported to build a strong economy in growing Polymer industry giants right here in the Polymer Corridor. Polymer start-ups in the Akron area could be the next dot-com revolution in the US.

I. Establish Akron as the Telecommuting Capital of the Midwest

Technology today allows even high level executives the ability to work remotely from their homes connected to their corporate headquarters. With such a strong quality of life quotient, highly educated population and strong family ties, Akron provides a viable pool of executives at all levels for any large corporation.

- Build telecommuting office communities in downtown buildings and in suburban areas of Akron to support those who telecommute to Chicago, New York, Boston and DC -- hire Akron people to work in companies in other cities and live in Akron.
 - These telecommuting centers will include
 - High speed internet access and full seamless teleconferencing capabilities
 - Shared support services for those who work out of buildings as well as their homes
 - food
 - administrative support
 - meeting rooms
 - mail and shipping services
 - etc.
- Negotiate with Akron/Canton airport and airlines to offer special one-two day fares for those who commute.
- Make sure that local infrastructure supports the strategic growth of the population to keep quality of life strong and dynamic

Marketing Strategies

- If presented properly and with the proper infrastructure, residents in Akron can apply for jobs with **prospective employers** in targeted cities like **Chicago and New York** -- Live in Akron -- work in Akron -- work for Chicago/New York Fortune 500 companies -- Have a team of business and government leaders go from corporation to corporation in each city to sell concept.
 - We are educated
 - We can work more since the commute is less
 - The cost of living is lower - so you can offer lower salaries
 - Easy internet, teleconferencing and travel access at a moments notice
 - easy travel to and from airport
 - Employee base is happier because of quality of life issues
- Sell to **regional population** the benefits of working for a large corporation in larger city
- Sell to **developers** the idea that building telecommuting centers will be successful in Akron -
- provide incentives to entry

2. Continue to Build and Expand Entertainment, Cultural and Recreation Features of Community

Akron has been very successful in building and maintaining a strong set of leisure and cultural options for its community. With fewer crowds, less commuting time and easy access, the population can participate in more activities and entertainment than in other cities. With an educated and physically active older population, retired Akronites are looking for more things to do day-to-day. With the proper investment, entrepreneurial support and marketing, Akron can become a fuller more dynamic option for everyone when considering what to do in their leisure time.

- Create an alternative to more crowded Cleveland attractions
- Create The Akron Leisure Enterprise Development Group (a professional association)-- offerings include
 - a self-funding venture capital fund to support the creation of new leisure and cultural businesses- for-profit and not-for-profit
 - create the fund with public dollars and grants-- all interest and loan payments go back into the fund for use by other appropriate businesses
 - available for new businesses or projects related to expansion of services in existing businesses
 - focus on the redevelopment of Main Street as a dynamic center of fun and entertainment
 - co-marketing efforts amongst members of Development Group
 - consulting for those entering the leisure time business
 - help to raise money for major projects
 - enclose Canal Park for 12 month usage (fantasy baseball and other sports)
 - new arena downtown
 - new downtown bike depot and support center- to support cyclists to enjoy the downtown area when riding from Cleveland or Canton on the new bike path that will be complete in the next decade
 - make Akron the only place that offers daily blimp rides for the general public -- what a great draw -- leverage the assets of the city and its corporate powerhouse -- Goodyear -- Open the Airdock to visitors everyday. . .-- how about opening up the Goodyear test track as a weekend attraction when not being used by Goodyear.
 - create an on-line dynamic multi-media Akron concierge service -- tell me what you like and we'll set up things to do
 - Try to find the "Soapbox Derby" of the 21st Century. Akron could use something new that would spark the interest of kids internationally.
- Target audiences east, west and south to come to Akron for extensive leisure offerings -- *vacation in Akron, you won't believe how much is there.*
- Support full range (cross-gender and cross-ethnic) options for increasing quality of life experiences -- make it a family entertainment center during the day and young professional center in the evening
- Increased activity in this area will also increase availability of hourly jobs for those without college educations -- increase service industry jobs -- provide jobs for retired individuals looking for some extra income
- Add a few hotels -- especially a 4 star hotel -- to support visitation from region for overnight entertainment excursions -- upgrade the level of hotel experience in Akron from functional to

experiential -- build capacity to support more national and statewide conventions at the convention center

- Organize a one year Akron Cultural Center Celebration -- Jewels of Akron-- a First Night that lasts all year and throughout the area -- show local and regional population the resources that exist within arms length -- first year is a launch -- then sustain excitement continually
- Leverage the volunteer pool that Akron has to support celebration and all new leisure venues -- this supports entertainment business and provides great volunteer opportunities for senior citizens
- Establish leisure/entertainment/cultural training programs with certificates in high schools around Akron -- focus on guest services, tourism, food preparation, etc. -- take kids off the streets and provide them great front line jobs in this new exciting industry -- this could be done in special after school programs to funnel the energy of this great resource -- prepare them for the real world of careers.
- Work with all cultural, entertainment and recreation centers to establish strong senior programs that increase their quality of life and utilize the facilities when families are working and at school.

Marketing Strategies

- Bring together **all cultural, entertainment and recreational entities** in the area to plan this one year celebration of life in Akron
- Bring in **all local and regional media** to publish and present weekly ideas to explore in Akron -- "Seize the Day -- Akron One Week at a Time"
- Create a **leisure info organization** where anyone can call to find out cool things to do --- 1-800-Akron4u
 - provide web site so that **area residents** and **outside visitors** can put in their interests, the make-up of their group and get recommendations for things to do
 - in 25 years the internet will be so powerful that virtual visits must be incorporated to support everyone's decision making on where to go
 - this will give those who are skeptical about vacation days in Akron virtual experiences that would spark their interest
 - promote vacations in Akron to local and regional visitors within a few states from Ohio
- Tie all cultural organizations with a "branding" approach that markets, informs and lets Akron stand out and the greatest kept entertainment secret in the region and state.
- Work very closely with 1-800-Buckeye

3. Build the Polymer Valley (Akron, Kent and surrounding areas) into a dynamic center for new businesses in Polymers

New Material For the New Age

Use Stanford University and Silicon Valley as a model for building a dynamic and thriving polymer industry built on the research that is being done at U of A and Kent State. Look at what needs to be in place to support the excitement and energy of any area that supports risk taking and entrepreneurial excitement.

- Build local infrastructure to support turning the successful academic polymer research being done at University of Akron and Kent State into viable new business ventures
 - add strong entrepreneurial education into Polymer program at U of A
 - bring together students doing research with strong business students

- inspire risk taking by providing incubators and venture capital that will support taking the ideas of graduates, professors and students and turning them into vibrant businesses
- encourage professors to work closely with businesses to build a better environment for start-ups and breakthrough innovations in the world of polymers
- create a similar atmosphere in polymers that Silicon Valley has for technology and dot-com's.
- create a network of new venture incubators that inspires collaboration between patent attorneys, marketeers and polymer gurus

Marketing Strategies

- have ARDB support these ventures and sell products and research from these new businesses around the world
- sell this concept to venture capitalists
- work with larger polymer companies to move their R&D centers to Akron area
- think of a better phrase than Polymer Valley
- work with universities to comb through existing unused, but viable research results and help sell via licensing or product development firms

Conclusion

These three recommendations provide some initial thinking on how to better package the strengths of Akron into a future that is exciting, feasible and inspiring. One of the concerns from the committee is that our community doesn't understand its own value and has a hard time selling Akron as a strong city. This plan is the beginning of a strategic direction that will allow the community to celebrate its successes, its strengths and feel good about their decision to live a full life in Akron.

Early in the century, when Goodyear was opening a plant in Los Angeles. The LA Times printed a headline something like, "Maybe LA could be the Akron of the West Coast someday".

Well, Akron can be the Orlando, Silicon Valley and the most sought after New York suburb to live in if we are strategic, passionate, and open minded about our thinking and actions.

WORKGROUP ON COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND COHESIVENESS: MEDIA

Ardith Keck, Moderator
Dr. Jon Hawes, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:

Keli Smith Ball, Christopher Bame, Joyce Basile, Louis Berroteran, Pamela Foster,
William Glaeser, Jeff Heintz, Joe O'Neill and Bob Zajac

The Workgroup examined various media in Akron as they look today and asked the question: What will the media look like in 2025? We invited representatives from the City of Akron administration, from local print media and from television communications. The group felt that it is important for Akron to keep and maintain its own local identity. "Akron should be a hub of information and not a spoke."

The media provide a watchdog function, which is important in any community. It is difficult to ascertain what media will exist in 2025, but we decided that print media will most likely still be in paper form, but, with accessibility to the internet for news, newspapers will concentrate more on local than national or international events.

Readers in 2025 will be very literate in using the Internet to access information. They will want formats they are comfortable with. We will probably get our TV news via computers, which will serve multiple functions. The appearance of the television set will change dramatically and probably have all forms and shapes, including handheld broadband devices, which project an image onto any flat surface. There is almost no likelihood of another commercial Akron television station. It is just too expensive. By 2025 lines of communication will blur and cross-ownership rules will be relaxed. Rapid changes in technology and in lifestyle will be a factor in how the media is used and what forms the media will take.

The GOALS of Akron for the year 2025 in order to retain the confidence of its citizens should be:

1. To have an informed community.
2. To have comprehensive, responsible coverage of the local community by and for the local community.

The STRATEGIES to achieve the above goals are:

1. The City of Akron needs to provide information in some form.

Resources:

- a. Continue wiring the city with fiber optic cable to allow for expansion.
- b. Explore ways to broadcast City government (City Council, Press Conferences, hearings) and other City events.
- c. Perhaps a City-owned community access channel.
- d. Explore financial incentives to local media to enable diversity in programming.

2. Create an environment which supports local media and media choices.

Resources:

- a. Internet will provide more voices, but they may be less professional.

- b. The City needs to "get in on the act."
- c. Bring together groups to do an analysis of all resources for facilitating the coverage of the local community.

3. Create opportunities to voice Akron opinions.

Resources:

- a. Continue communication among people via town meetings, debates, etc.
- b. Provide information about issues across all media (print, broadcast, internet, plus new technologies which may develop).
- c. Explore the ways the City can act as a facilitator and provide resources to the community to expand media coverage.
- d. Explore purchasing and operating a local cable access channel station such as WCTV in Wadsworth.
- e. Allow the opportunity for real debate on issues.

WORKGROUP ON REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Laura Casenhiser, Moderator
Jerry Egan, Resource Delegate

Workgroup Members:
Zach B. Brandon and Randy Cole

Vision: The continued successful development of the City of Akron and the metropolitan region will require increased working relationships and partnerships at the regional level. Some distinctions among the different municipal entities in the region will lessen as development spreads outward and there are less observable differences among communities.

Akron's regional partners can be our immediate neighbors, Summit County, nearby counties, or northeast Ohio.

Regional partners are need based or legislatively mandated.

Goal 1: Delivery of essential services will come from the most effective level of organization.

Strategy: Utilize Akron's capacity to provide essential services to neighbors or consider metropolitan service delivery

Resources: Akron's capacity to deliver sewer and water services, EMS and fire protection and safety services can be expanded on a fee basis.

Goal 2: Increased revenue sharing will occur among appropriate partners.

Strategy: Share in the revenue from increased development that is the result of cooperative measures.

Resources: Joint Economic Development type of agreements
Collection of tax

Goal 3: There will be cooperative purchase of service and material to benefit from economies of scale.

Strategy: Regional partnerships can purchase basic utilities (gas, electric, phone) in cost effective manner for citizens or use by municipal entities.

Goal 4: Solving of common or shared problems in creative and cooperative ways will be established.

Strategy: When problem solving, consider utilizing resources, experience or abilities of other governmental units rather than always seeking to address issues alone.

Resources: The Akron/Summit County metropolitan region should turn its attention to the Canton/Stark County region as a cooperative growth area.

The transportation linkage of Interstate 77 and the Akron Canton Airport, the regional planning association of NEFCO, the Foreign Trade Zone and the associations from NEOTED provide the basis for greater partnership.

**SUMMARIES
CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES**

Those who attended the Citizen Assemblies were asked to share their ideas with Imagine.Akron about what they like/dislike about Akron and what they would like to see in the future. The following responses were given:

1. Citizen Assembly held on April 6, 1999:

Audience issues:

- See greater diversity in downtown Akron.
- Find positive ways to involve young people in leadership.
- Get a local TV station in Akron.
- Find a way to tell the story of Akron to citizens of Akron.
- Akron can be a tourist area.
- Better coordination among churches providing services to those in need.
- City should do a better job of monitoring use of single-family homes.
- Citizen participation in boards involved in police monitoring.
- Find ways for role of police to be better clarified.
- More collaborative effort between police force and citizens.
- All work groups should make special effort to look at limitations put in force by aging.
- City deliver appropriate services so aging population can remain in homes.
- More integrated traffic system in line with becoming a tourist destination.
- Give homeowners improved access to interstate.
- Modernize City services—make more convenient.
- City have more active role in preserving historical structures.
- City to promote Akron as a place to call home.
- City assist owners of older homes to maintain them as single homes.
- Continued progress with Akron sharing tax base with other communities.
- Promote Akron as a livable place for middle-class people.
- Find ways for City to work with NEOUCOM—e.g., in field of research.
- City encourage aging population to join the volunteer forces.
- City encourage homeowners to extend lawn and sidewalk care out to devil-strip.
- Encourage people to be more pedestrian-friendly.
- See more Akron news on TV.
- Improved enforcement of housing and road upkeep.
- City needs to look accurately on its impact in the Northeast Ohio region and look at itself in a more favorable light.
- Have a policy of self-determination for neighborhood units.
- Make sure City employees are open to new ideas when working with Imagine.Akron.
- Encourage developers to integrate new developments with existing neighborhoods.
- Find ways to integrate renters into the special identity of the neighborhood.
- Investing in young people now—e.g. education.
- Find ways to get young people involved in planning for City's future.
- Integrate the arts more into daily life.
- Coordinate communication and transportation efforts so more people can be involved with planning process.
- Coordinate planning activities from others areas of the City with Imagine.Akron.

Increased police presence in certain areas and help with businesses.
Get prepared for more diverse population.
Focus on job-retraining with advent of re-building of schools and libraries.
Find new positive ways to deal with rental population.
Encourage use of downtown for cultural purposes and use as a community center of activity.
Focus on visual aspect of City.
City encourage retail center including an individual artist retail center.
City services (water, sewer, zoning) focus on making neighborhoods more livable.

Survey responses:

Services and activities of older adults.
Need a local TV station.
Something needs to be done about the stray animal population--too many are put to death needlessly! A no-cost or low-cost spay/neuter program should be implemented.
Hope to make our City a cleaner place. Better street--less monies spent on Downtown. Don't put all our eggs in one place. Downtown is important but there are many things we need to care about.
Important to work with housing providers--instead of treating all landlords like the enemy. A few poor rental owners should not effect the treatment of all the "quality" housing providers. There should be an advisory panel to hear and assist with any problems concerning legislation, tenant-landlord issues etc. The same housing code enforcement should be applied to homeowners as is to landlords.
The City should work closer with small business owners and business communities (within Akron) surrounding the downtown area.
Advocate for working within City departments for small business and commercial property owners.
We need our TV station back.
We need more sandlot fields for non-organized sports for children.
Take businesses out of the residential area (N. Howard & Dalton).
I would like to see police substations in all areas of the City.
Also, we want to keep our zoning one family units--not rental units.
We are more than willing to help the police with crime watch. However, we could help much more with surveillance cameras and similar equipment.
Stop the carving up of our large beautiful houses into squalid apartments (North Hill/Howard Street)
A linkage between downtown Akron/local government is needed with the neighborhoods--perhaps focused with the churches and/or community center.
Perhaps Leadership Akron Alumni can play a facilitation role
Computer technology--more business to cater to this technology, i.e., Laser Quest.
Improve downtown--keep all of Main Street alive after 5:30 p.m.
Build diversity downtown.
Have a bigger working relationship with the coming together project.
Help build up schools.
Develop a TV station.
Dream what will be in existence in 2025 and determine what the people will be like and guess what needs to be done to accommodate the community.
The Art Museum's plans are for enlargement.
Mall in downtown Akron
Parks taken care of in inner city.

Build a center for living and business for all ages of people
 Schools good education.
 Building strong neighborhoods is critical.
 Shopping (retail) is not attractive--easier to shop in Cleveland. Even chain stores have less exciting merchandise than Cleveland stores of same name. Maybe an outlet mall "building" in downtown
 Creating a safe, multi-cultural interaction for all of Akron and less segregation
 A skate park for skaters. The police won't let us skate almost anywhere. Open up a park downtown for skating.
 Also more youth clubs and activities to keep youth out of trouble
 Akron TV station is needed.
 Property owners should be encouraged to keep sidewalks and curbsides clean of trash.
 Need thoughts from young because they are the future.
 Promote the North end performing arts/cultural center--move the civic
 Put an open-air auction/farmers market like Hartville, Cleveland's westside market, Paris les halles in downtown that is held weekly. The parking is there to be filled on Saturdays or give free bus tickets to go there with metro.
 Allow the citizens to offer input and assist in the decision-making process.
 Don't give up on the City or its people, jobs, history
 Education in K - 12 is key. Our City will not prosper without producing the best educated students. Without education our City is in trouble.
 Why are "bad cops" allowed to retire when they've done something wrong--and then the City has to continue paying them--when they've **BROKEN THE LAW**.
 How can you expect regular citizens to abide by the law when our own Policemen don't!?!

2. Citizen Assembly held on May 20, 1999:

Audience issues:

How can unions meet a changing society.
 How can unions attract young people to the trades.
 Focus on entire downtown area as a cultural district.
 Take advantage of historical resources.
 Coalitions between parks and recreations areas.
 City officials should find a way to restrict heavy load transportation on residential streets.
 Make rules regarding heavy load transportation clear to truck drivers.
 Make public education a priority for not only school board but for all residents of Akron.
 Broader and shared use of community centers and school facilities.
 Preservation of Masonic Temple and Airdock.
 Find ways City can provide homeowners with incentives to improve their properties.
 Make people more aware as to how information can be shared with law enforcement without feeling threatened.
 More attention on multiple-learning skills in schools and how to recognize skills in young people.
 Need attractions that keep people in the City longer and that draw people into the City.
 Preservation of Old No. 1 Fire Station.
 Look at ways to refurbish the Rubber Bowl and airport area.

Akron needs to develop a way so that election returns are reported on television immediately.
 How to develop an identity for the downtown area—a new name for “downtown?”
 How to develop area around High and Broadway and E. Market streets.
 How to take concept of shared resources and apply it to businesses.
 Improve public transportation between Akron and Canton and consider a “Park and Ride” program.
 Develop a rail system from Akron to Cleveland.
 Assure there is a place for the bicycle in developing street plans in the future.
 Find ways for City to provide development of smaller structures in downtown area.
 Increase the variety of activities downtown.
 Develop available downtown parking.
 Encourage high-quality housing downtown.
 Develop a “walking community” throughout downtown.
 Package what we have in Akron so visitors will know what Akron has to offer.

Survey responses:

What are the city’s strong points (cultures) on which the city can build its future.
 More money spent for recreation and community centers.
 It’s a nice place to live. I live across the street on the canal. It’s a nice location.
 Why is a street like Castle Blvd paved before a street which has been in horrendous condition for three years like Winhurst (between Essex & Litchfield)?
 Need a TV station and more parking downtown.
 Need Akron’s own TV station and downtown cultural center.
 I’d like to see a tax credit given to residents who use money to fix up and improve their residences. This incentive might make it more attractive to maintain their property and keep neighborhoods more viable. As my neighborhood ages, I am concerned what kind of neighborhood my street will become . . . (A North Dan Street resident).
 I believe a splashy, but well presented, ad campaign noting all of Akron’s showpieces, should be distributed to areas where people can see what we are--then maybe tourists will come!
 I would like Akron to become attractive for home life and recreational activities to bring in quality business. Also promote the growth of the University of Akron.
 We need new upscale housing in Akron. We should discourage new housing in 40 foot lots. *** We need new school buildings.***
 More programs for physical fitness, the elderly, and development of buildings & programs for the single mothers and homeless. Also productive uses of O’Neils & Polsky’s buildings downtown. For example, have a nutritional-physical exercise assessment center in O’Neils or Polsky’s to assess body type (tailored to different body shapes).

3. Municipal Services Citizen Assembly held on November 2, 1999:

Survey responses:

1. Would like City office for people with disabilities established.
2. Akron water tastes awful on the westside.
3. Please make Haven of Rest responsible for keeping its guests out of Grace Park--maybe they can have their own park on their own property--courtyard, whatever. Make them responsible for their guests who are pan-handling all over downtown; keep other vagrants and loiterers out.

4. Need a senior snow removal program.
 5. Would like to see neighborhood improvements be equally distributed throughout the City.
 6. Emphasize recycling.
 7. Keep up services in all parts of the City--trash pick-up, street cleaning, police protection.
 8. Animal control laws should be tougher concerning vicious dogs. Some are still running freely.
 9. People should be fined if they do not remove trash cans from the curb after pick-up and place them out of sight, not in front of the house.
 10. Signs on each side of town reminding people to Keep Akron Beautiful--Akron is a beautiful city and we like to keep it this way.
4. Downtown Akron Citizen Assembly held on November 4, 1999:

Survey responses:

An enclosed Rain Forest.

Downtown needs a central loop for transportation--the Mary Means Plan, for example. Spread downtown out--don't limit it to one street--thus get people walking and parking in various areas or taking public transit. Look at Portland, OR. Simon Perkins Statue looks out of place by the Business Administration Bldg--the bldg is too new style architecture for the old statue. Put statue back in Grace Park where it belongs.

Akron Airdock Building--National Historic Register--tourist attraction.

Need to pay as we go. Vision is great if we can pay for it. Need to retire debt before anymore grand ideas put into play.

I would like to see Akron's youth get more involved in Imagine.Akron. Maybe hold different meetings throughout Akron Public Schools.

Downtown Akron is developing in the right way--keep up the good work.

Housing and amenities that would support this so that one can easily work, live, buy (food at least) and enjoy (safely) evening activities . . . hopefully the City will develop the area around the Civic Theater as a park which continues the walking/bike trails for recreation.

Green space--lots of cultural events/institutions--just like other big cities.

Connect to the canal corridor on the north side.

We have a great future, a great Mayor and a great City that will only get better

A park in the downtown area would be nice.

Reasonably priced retail/department store; hotel rooms--events; restore/renovate old buildings--have tours of old buildings with history.

Expand downtown area.

Need more housing downtown--also an art gallery for local artists.

The City needs to examine how to make older buildings useable for living spaces and stop tearing down our heritage.

Would like to see the museum in the old portage hotel site.

The Civic should stay where it is

Canal opened up as a park.

Preserve the old buildings.

Invest in the arts.

Something needs to be done for the homeless and sick downtown.

Question: What Akron needs most is . . .

Major retail.

Theaters and movies, sports arena, year-round evening draws.
 More stores.
 Theater, retail.
 Living space, shopping for such residents.
 Retail outlets, sports arena, new downtown office towers.
 A special parking lot for the disabled closer to the mainstream of things.
 Retail--local, small businesses, keep the corporate chains to a minimum.
 Residential units.
 Viable tenants in blighted storefronts; spruce up abandoned facades (uncover architectural details).
 Nice shopping area with free close parking.
 More retail shops.
 The canal towpath completed.
 Clean, safe environment for living spaces.
 A plan to follow and an exciting large-scale project or transformation to get Akronites excited.
 Fill in all the vacant lots and parking lots along Main Street with great buildings, arts venues and activities and urban parks.
 People, events to bring and keep people downtown and coming back.
 Make north end (Luigis/coffeehouses) more accessible.
 Due to the parking crunch, think about free shuttle service in downtown area from outlying parking.
 Amphitheater instead of innerbelt for special presentations--canal days, international festival, art shows, something like Borders books.
 Main Street development.
 Places and spaces to live = residents.
 Attention to/appreciation for art and culture.

5. Children/Elderly/Disabled Citizen Assembly held on November 9, 1999:

Audience issues:

Accessible schools.
 Accessible businesses.
 Establish office of disability affairs in City.
 Awareness program once a year.
 Accessible recreation including parking.
 End of waivers against disabilities.
 Public transport for all county locations.
 100% access to public transportation for everyone.
 Affordable, quality childcare for all income levels, including "working poor."
 Issues forum in Akron on long term care policy so people can stay in Akron in their own homes.
 New housing construction requiring easy ingress and egress.
 Accessibility considerations should account for hearing/vision disabilities as well as physical disabilities.
 More local training for ancillary positions in health care.
 City should encourage individuals to train for ancillary positions and salaries should be raised.
 "Akron model" should be extended to coordinate more community resources.
 Offer intervention services to children at risk as early as possible, even before birth.
 Meaningful programming for adolescents from 17 - 22 who do not attend college or who have idle time.

Provide further services to prevent unwanted pregnancy.
 Expand range of affordable housing—City encourage early home ownership.
 Expansion of volunteer services in areas of mentoring mothers and in tutoring
 Provision of safe, clean housing and good neighborhoods.
 Establish conflict resolution programs to problem solve without violence.
 Coordination with other county agencies and organizations to reach the largest number of people.
 Establish a resource person with the City who can coordinate needed services and close up gaps in services.
 Meeting of all groups providing services to seniors to coordinate all services.
 Better mental health services to aid inclusion of mentally disabled into community.
 Review of existing programs to insure funding is being made for appropriate services.
 Developers should utilize alternate modes of transportation (bike, foot) to strengthen community bonds—City leaders should encourage or provide incentives for such development.

Survey responses:

1. Reduce control and encourage collaboration of services and programs.
2. Get tax breaks for elderly and assistance to maintain their physical property.
3. Maybe a project of beautification, planting, decorating activities for kids, disabled, senior citizens.
4. Maybe a civic project, getting people of all ages involved in their city/neighborhood.
5. Care givers of the elderly should have a complete check into their background from the top to the bottom.

Question: How do you think services to children in Akron should be improved?

6. Give them more after school programs.
7. More Head Start.
8. Do NOT return children to abusive parents.
9. Teach practical living skills in schools.
10. Encourage parental involvement.
11. For parents to take charge.
12. Need more things to do--supervised recreational centers and playgrounds after school.
13. Need more affordable after school alternatives--parents can't work when they have no one to care for their children.
14. Mainstreaming of children with disabilities with others.
15. Priority of family choice.
16. Continued coordination of services the money available should follow the child not institutions. Recognize, support and encourage additional coordination.
17. Structured programs to develop morals.
18. Safe facilities for recreation such as skate boarding--BMX riding--swimming at affordable prices.
19. People kids can talk to.
20. So far the services are great, but if you could get the parents to interact more in their children's life the job of these services would be more productive.

Question: How do you think services to the elderly in Akron should be improved?

21. More housing and transportation.
22. Need to provide affordable housing that's not AMHA and that's not labeled low-income.

23. Need a great snow/ice removal program.
24. Need great night lighting and street marking programs.
25. Attractions generated by interest.
26. More day treatment for older adults.
27. Upgrade time and encourage interaction with children.
28. Safe, affordable, accessible, no more tiny, "closet" type apartments--Just because we're old don't mean we are dried up or dead.
29. A record should be kept of everyone over 65 and a letter should be mailed to them twice a year or a questionnaire about any assistance they may need.

Question: How do you think services to the disabled in Akron should be improved?

30. Encourage further use of handicap access in all buildings, including driveways, sidewalks, and parking lots,
 31. SCAT to include Fairlawn area medical facilities, etc.
 32. Need to remove homeless, mentally ill from downtown Akron streets and house them on self-sufficient "farms" or in other housing.
 33. Accessible handicap single use housing should be encouraged.
 34. Businesses should be, but are not, compliant with the ADA.
 35. Enforcement of all handicapped parking.
 36. An office for "Disability Affairs" should be established answering to Mayor-- Mayor's Cabinet.
 37. Curb cuts shall continue to be cut with no exception and maintained in good order.
 38. A once-a-year awareness program should be responsibility.
 39. Usage of City parks shall remain priority.
 40. Provide grants to make housing accessible and retain the owners (vs nursing homes).
 41. Make buildings, parks, etc. accessible.
 42. One clearing-house for competent information.
 43. Getting business to make entrance more accessible.
6. Housing Citizen Assembly held on November 11, 1999:

Audience issues:

- Replacement of single family housing.
- More housing downtown.
- Rehab or demolition of older houses and creation of new neighborhoods.
- Innovations in public housing.*
- Need to deal with possibility of less housing for lower income working families.
- In building new neighborhoods, need to have a certain percentage of housing available for lower income families.
- Utilize new urbanism in creating neighborhoods--nearby work places, retail establishments, front porches.
- Incorporate recreation opportunities in new communities.
- Create income diversity in neighborhoods.
- City should require a certain level of quality in housing.
- City should continue the housing inspection program on rental properties.
- Should the city require houses to be brought up to code prior to sale?
- City should encourage developers to rehab old houses.
- Improve communication between developers and investors and City--expectations and requirements.*
- City should nurture organizations to attract money from foundations and other non-profit sources to build housing which private sector may not find profitable.

Survey responses:

I would like for the legal community to set up a central office and donate one day a month to each community giving legal advice about wills, housing, etc.
Most of the older houses in the City can and should be rehabilitated.
Need quicker turn-around time between complaints and orders to repair.
Long-term plans for inner city housing need to be made.
I would not build anymore concentrated low-income apartments--there's a stigma if you live there. Rather I would give vouchers that would enable tenants to live anywhere in the City, scattered throughout, preferably in "single family" housing (even singles). The landlord does not have to know about the vouchers/subsidy.
I'm concerned about the quality and availability of ownership housing for the elderly in 2025--should be one-story, high density, with disability access and features.
Preserve beautiful old homes.
Help house the homeless.
Try and head off problems before they become problems--work with the people.
Housing needs to diverse! Mix up race, income and age. Get the "slumlords" out of Akron.
Focus on areas other than West Hill/West Akron.

7. Safety Citizen Assembly held on November 16, 1999:

Audience issues:

Community oriented policing programs to deal with problems prior to an emergency.
Improved technology for immediate access to information in an emergency.
Police needs to stay current with new drug usage.
Computers in police vehicles to allow "paperless" reports and printers to allow immediate printing of citations.
Technical advances will require additional education of police officers.
New technology will provide better control and management of data.
Fire prevention by having an impact on building construction, e.g., requiring more sprinklers.
Develop programs for home inspection and providing advice to prevent fires.
Need an increased police presence in high crime neighborhoods.
Need an effective way to manage individuals who may be homeless or have a mental illness who frequent certain neighborhoods.
Need to find ways to improve short-term incarceration.

With technical advances, need a plan to implement technology and precautions to secure it.
Police officers should be well-disciplined and use restraint when dealing with violent individuals.
Need to ensure that 911 dispatch centers can locate callers using cell phones or other wireless communications.
Need safeguards to deal with electrical failures or computer crashes in emergency dispatch centers.
Expand the number of officers on bikes.

Survey responses:

1. More speed traps.
2. Young drivers do not pay any attention to stop signs--or neighborhoods where kids are out playing they go 50 mph going no where with loud music blasting.
3. Encourage neighborhood groups and street parties to encourage neighborhood cohesiveness.
4. If the City doesn't reclaim and clean up neighborhoods it's lost--as much attention needs to be paid to the neighborhoods around the central city as downtown and the outer city, i.e. Fairlawn, seem to get.

Question: What suggestions do you have for improvement of police services in Akron?

1. More care should be out between the hours of 11pm and 4am--activities are really active during this time.
2. Substations strategically placed in neighborhoods--particularly those marked as high crime.
3. More bike or foot patrols.
4. Need constitutional loitering law.
5. Need a city workhouse.
6. Need to crack down hard on derelicts.
7. Get guns out of homes to protect our children..
8. Need better dispatchers.

Question: What suggestions do you have for improvement of emergency services (such as ambulance service) in Akron?

1. Calls anywhere in the City should be responded to in record time--services are very slow in some neighborhoods.
2. Enhance 911 with training, personnel, and equipment to avoid 5 minute holds and cut-offs.
3. These services have been excellent when my family has needed them.
4. This could be improved as some cases I have heard of were not handled quickly. I have always received quick action when I have called for an ambulance.
5. Don't understand use of private and city ambulance services, perhaps a simpler method.
8. Historic Preservation Citizen Assembly held on November 11, 1999:

Audience issues:

In the future, we will be reliant on collaborations in area of historic preservation.
Preservation of old Akron steam plant.
Sculpture garden in area of foundations of old mills.
Reinstall floating towpath as walkway over water.
Development of south end of the original Portage Path.
Canal should be a priority.
Preserve old pump house in Kenmore.
Preserve character of neighborhoods surrounding canal.
City should keep in mind desire to preserve historical neighborhoods when reviewing zoning regulations.
Restore performance stage in Perkins Park area.
Restore old buildings downtown and ensure new construction is compatible with the old buildings.

There should be a sensitivity to the neighborhood when planning housing restoration.

Weave together the old and the new when developing new projects in neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods should utilize its historic assets.

City should provide incentives, such as tax breaks, for restoring old houses.

Collaboration among organizations operating Hower House, Stan Hyett, and Perkins Mansion to bring in tourists.

Find ways to preserve old churches.

Preserve Goodyear Hall and bank building at E. Market and Goodyear Blvd.

Preserve Warner Publishing Building, Northern Building, Westley Temple, Leggett School, North High School, Goodyear Airdock, Spicer School, Church of Our Savior, St. Vincent's, House of Prayer, Guggenheim Airship Museum, Highland Theater.

Update Landmark Survey.

Preserve neighborhood business districts.

Restore street with 1920's houses.

9. Media Citizen Assembly held on November 11, 1999:

Audience issues:

How do we communicate within the community without the benefit of a television station.

There is a need in Akron for local news competition.

Business community should be encouraged to support a TV station.

In the long run, lines between TV, newspaper, radio will blur and federal cross-ownership rules will be relaxed.

In the future, how can we guarantee access to means of communications by all members of the community.

How can we avoid fragmentation and disseminate information to allow us to be informed citizens.

Need to encourage more involvement by media to provide localized coverage.

Akron needs another newspaper.

Lack of a TV station inhibits the ability to publicize Akron on a local basis.

Akron community needs in-depth, analytical coverage of local events with local control and access.

There may be a role for City government to provide access to the internet for all citizens.

Akron needs to find a way to regain its "voice" muffled by the loss of the local TV station.

There should be more media programs designed to reach Akron's teenagers and younger adults.

A Student Citizen Assembly was held on May 12, 2000 at Inventure Place in Akron. Sixty-five Akron area high school students attended the Assembly. A survey was distributed to the students and the following responses were given to these questions:

Question: What do you like the best about Akron?

- It is small.
- The area is nice and there are nice people.
- Art museum, Aeros stadium and the events that get people of all ages downtown.
- It's a generally safe place to live--not much violence.
- The education system is well rounded for all students and provides an easier way to learn.
- The many activities and special events that are held in the City.
- That there are many buildings that have many stories behind them.
- I love the old architecture of many of the buildings.
- It's a well-known city, but not too big to still feel like a close-knit community.
- Friendly atmosphere with lots of potential opportunities for persons of all ages.
- The small town, close knit community feeling.
- Small town with good high schools.
- Cityscape--a lot has been done to make the City look great and to set it aside from the rest.
- Size and diversity. I love Inventure Place and the zoo.
- The convenient location of shopping centers and other types of businesses.
- I like the small city. You get to know more people.
- I like the different activities that I can participate in, like Inventure Place.
- The improvements that are being done to Akron in the past few years and the years to come.
- Downtown, how it's crowded like a big city.
- The old buildings in downtown Akron and the LGA sites.
- I like the diversity that Akron has.
- Different entertainment features such as Canal Park, Inventure Place, EJ Thomas.
- Akron is a small quiet city.
- You can feel safe, the people are nice.
- The overall environment, how you can feel safe, low crime rate, people.
- Downtown.
- The size.
- Location.
- Canal Park, all the different things Akron has to offer.
- No tornadoes.
- People.
- Small town.
- The people.
- Not too big, not too small.

- Not a lot of crime.
- The everyday learning experiences.
- Akron is not too big and not too small.
- My community.
- Events are regular (music, movies, baseball games).
- The youth programs that give young people the chance to voice their opinions.
- The size.
- The people.
- Akron Aeros.
- The way that it is starting to come back downtown.
- Firestone Park.
- Downtown.
- The size of the city. It is small enough to where the community leaders are able to get on a more personal level.
- It's a nice size city.
- Everything is convenient to get to because Akron is somewhat little.
- The opportunities that people give young people that is trying to do the right thing.

Question: What do you like the least about Akron?

- There are some places that really look bad. If those places were fixed, Akron would be better.
- The violence. It's too cold in the winter.
- The low level of flexibility in public transportation.
- The empty buildings that stand as an eye sore.
- Downtown Akron needs to undergo some work in order for me to call it "downtown."
- There are certain parts of the City that could use some clean up.
- That there is no entertainment for younger generation.
- The fact that there are very few sources of entertainment for the younger generations.
- The way downtown looks (old buildings) and that there's not a lot to do down there.
- How people do not come downtown anymore.
- The lack of downtown business for entertainment opportunities.
- Poor condition of roads and buildings, constant repairs being made downtown seems dead at times.
- Not enough youth programs (i.e., little league, camps).
- Skateboarders have nowhere to go and the school systems core math program is intolerable.
- Downtown.
- Not enough activities for younger people.

- I don't think there are enough recreational parks that are being preserved. In the future I would want a place where I can take my family and know we are safe.
- The way all the neighborhoods are getting trashy and run down more and more year after year.
- The poor quality of schools/school systems.
- There's not enough activities for teenagers, and our school funding.
- There are not enough funds for schools (equal funds).
- That the schools are not up to par with other cities.
- Not enough to do for kids and teenagers.
- Downtown is dirty.
- The condition of the schools.
- There is nothing for teens to do.
- Downtown isn't well kept.
- Not enough things to do.
- People who litter.
- Nowhere to go really.
- Need more things to do.
- The condition of basketball courts and playing fields.
- I don't like the state of our downtown or the westside residential area.
- How empty it is.
- Differences in rich and poor.
- School system.
- The condition of the school system.
- School systems and authority of police officers.
- Funding for the schools.
- Schools, small population.
- Downtown/lack of things for teens to do/conditions of schools.
- I don't think there are enough places for teen-oriented hang-outs.
- There are not enough teen-oriented activities.
- Akron is constantly becoming greater. There is not much to dislike.
- Not enough places to hang out.
- I hate the fact that our downtown is little and barely has anything. Also we have very few places to go to have fun, entertainmentwise.

Question: What is one thing that you think would make Akron better?

- I would like Akron to be more interesting and somewhere you love to go. I think adding more entertainment and sites to Akron would make it better.
- Less pollution and guns.
- More opportunities for the youth and adults to better themselves.
- I would renovate the buildings and make them into small boutiques to give people a reason to go downtown.
- Pollution clean up.

- People who care and are willing to plan for Akron's future.
- Further the Keep Akron Beautiful program.
- I think that if buildings were finished more quickly and with better construction, Akron would be better.
- Community activities for kids and teens during the summer, like sports or volunteer groups.
- A more versatile downtown commerce area to promote people moving back into downtown.
- More programs like Coming Together and revitalization catalysts like Canal Park.
- More positive role models to inspire youth and students in the Akron area; more young kids could be recognized for doing good things instead of always being criticized for doing wrong.
- Free parking--help revitalize downtown business.
- Better funded park systems and new parks like skate parks.
- More entertainment like theaters or comedy clubs.
- The expansion of downtown Akron.
- More organized programs that teens can be involved in.
- Places where teens can get together and they don't have to worry about being endangered--guns, violence.
- If all the main streets were like strips filled with things to do at night so people will go out more and closely together.
- Invest more in school systems.
- Better education.
- Better police force and public services.
- A cleaner environment downtown.
- If downtown was renovated and improved. Also if people were more involved in the community.
- Better parks and things to do for people our age.
- Recreational parks.
- More community activities and organizations, people get more involved.
- More recreation, things to do.
- More things to do.
- Theme Park.
- Put things in abandoned buildings.
- Better downtown.
- More business.
- More communication among people, young and old alike.
- I think that more attractions would make Akron better.
- Clean up downtown.
- More open minded ideas about the welfare of our education.
- Better education for public schools.
- Better education more; functions for people like amusement parks.
- Get more money into the school systems and better teachers.

- Better services for the public.
- More fun places.
- Better schools.
- More recreational places and parks.
- More places where teens could come together; more parks and recreation.
- I would try to put better activities and help with some of the houses being run down.
- My main concern is the abandoned homes in residential areas. If the City took care of that, Akron would be a little better. Abandoned homes seem to attract drug dealers and they also just make neighborhoods look junky.



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