

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

As noted in Chapter One, the first step in the process of developing the Town of Waubeek Land Use Plan was to identify a vision of a plan and then establish problems, concerns and opportunities about land use development that could be addressed in the plan. A preliminary list of issues was created, and these issues were discussed and modified during the preliminary planning stage. Additional issues were also identified and added at various times in the planning process. An opinion survey was distributed during the process to determine how residents and/or property owners felt about the issues identified by the commission.

This chapter discusses the following: a vision of a plan; the exercise that was conducted to identify issues; the preliminary list of issues formulated during the exercise; the public opinion survey prepared by the commission; a discussion about the survey results; and a summary of the planning issues and the survey results associated with those issues.

Vision

Below is a vision statement that has been developed by the Planning Commission based on comments submitted by the public.

Town of Waubeek
Vision Statement
May 14, 2007

The vision of the planning commission is to plan for compatible future growth while maintaining the esthetics and quality of life we have come to expect in the Town of Waubeek.

Our goal is to prepare for continued industrial, commercial and residential growth while keeping in mind the preservation of our historical heritage and preservation of our natural resources such as farmland, woodlands, wetlands and ground water.

For this vision to be successful it will require the active participation of all residents of the Town of Waubeek.

Planning Issues

Planning Concern Items

After some preliminary discussion about the purpose of a land use plan and the process for developing one, the Town of Waubeek Planning Commission took part in an “issues identification” process. The intent of the process was to identify concerns or issues that should be addressed while developing the plan.

The commission went through several meetings during which issues were identified that could be addressed while developing the land use plan. At subsequent meetings, all of the issues were reviewed and clarified, and some additional concerns were raised. The concerns were then expressed as statements and organized into several categories. The group reviewed the statements and accepted them as preliminary planning issues for the Town of Waubeek Land Use Plan.

General Planning Issues

Following are the preliminary issues identified as key concerns by the Town of Waubeek Planning Commission. These issues helped to guide the development of the plan:

- Septic systems and nitrates
- Irrigation and increase in nitrates
- Low end residential & trailer parks
- Water/soil issues
- Preservation of farm land
- Preservation of woodlands, wetlands and ground water
- Economic development, commercial / industrial
- Public awareness and participation
- Housing

Public Input Survey

After identifying key issues for the planning project, and after assembling and studying information relevant to the land use plan, a survey was prepared and sent to citizens in the Town of Waubeek to provide them with an opportunity to express their opinions on the nine land use elements as described in Chapter 1.

The questions in the survey were grouped into seven categories similar to the groupings of issues laid out in the Smart Growth Initiative. The survey included categories of statistics, land use & development policies, housing, quality of life, farmland / natural resource protection, village and government services and public comment and input. Each section was selected to group specific questions into appropriate categories.

The first category on statistics asked questions about the residential makeup and characteristics of the population of the Town of Waubeek.

The second category of questions in the land use and development policies section centered on the type of land uses that were supported.

The third category of questions explored the needs for various housing types in the township.

The fourth category of questions explored the quality of life experiences by the Town of Waubeek residents.

The protection of farmland and natural resources were explored by the fifth category of questions in the public survey.

Adequacy of village and government services was covered by questions in the sixth category.

Additional public comment or topics of discussion were requested in the seventh category. A copy of the public input survey is included in Appendix A.

Survey Results

Residents living in the Town of Waubeek responded to the Survey at above average levels with 114 surveys returned out of 214 sent out. This represents a 53% response rate.

Around 86% of the respondents to the Survey rated quality of life as good or excellent. 81% of the respondents expected that the quality of life will improve or stay the same.

More than 70% of the respondents thought that the Town of Waubeek should adopt a comprehensive land use plan. Only 12% thought that the Town of Waubeek should not adopt a comprehensive land use plan.

The major concerns identified by respondents that will adversely affect the quality of life in the Town of Waubeek in the future were:

- increasing property taxes
- ground water quality

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the current condition of roads, the quality of emergency services and the quality of law enforcement services.

The majority of respondents support the continued development of land in the Town of Waubeek in most categories, except the following:

- trailer home parks
- non-metallic mining
- adult entertainment establishments

A copy of the survey results is included in Appendix B.

SWOT Assessment

A SWOT analysis was completed by the Planning Commission through a brainstorming session during one of the meetings. SWOT stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat. A SWOT assessment is required to determine the characteristics that need to be addressed in the Town of Waubeek's Comprehensive Plan. The SWOT exercise is to get the Planning Commission to think about where we were in the past, where we are presently, where we are going, and how do we get there as a community. The following are definitions of terms in SWOT:

Strengths: Characteristics that make a community stand out when compared to other communities. A strength can be a physical aspect, a community program, or an environmental condition.

Weakness: Characteristic that the residents feel needs to be improved.

Opportunities: Anything that could jeopardize the future positive aspects of a community.

Strengths:

- Excellent quality of life
- Good transportation system
- Adequate emergency and public services
- Controlled past development
- Excellent recreational opportunities

Weaknesses:

- Groundwater quality
- Landfill proximity
- Lack of updated zoning map

Opportunities:

- Land suitable and zoned for continued development
- Future recreational development
- Preservation of natural resources
- Preserving a rural atmosphere

Threats:

- Ground water quality
- Ground water quantities
- Loss of rural atmosphere