



APPENDIX A

Planning Tactics (Issues Identification)

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Comprehensive Plan is the Planning Tactics effort, which is devoted to the summary of comments and concerns raised in the Tactics interviews conducted with Planning Commission members, City Council members, and City staff.

To be noted is that identification of each and every issue raised in the interview process was not attempted. Rather, issues presented herein represent a broad categorization of topics raised.

CITY PERCEPTIONS

Generally, there was a strong consensus on many topics, however, where opinions differ, both sides of the issue are presented. The following perceptions and issues represent topics which require specific attention throughout the comprehensive planning process. The following interview responses are numbered for ease of reference and are in no particular order of priority.

Opportunities and/or Strengths

Most of the interview/survey participants have a very positive image of the City of Shorewood, describing it as a community that offers desirable residential neighborhoods within a natural setting. The following opportunities and/or strengths were identified as contributing to Shorewood's quality of life and public image:

1. The most common interview response related to Shorewood's natural amenities. Specifically, the lakes, trees, and open space were referenced as highly desirable environmental features of the community.
2. Interviewees were highly complimentary of Shorewood's parks and highlighted such facilities as a positive aspect of the City.
3. Somewhat related to the City's environmental features, large residential lots (which commonly include significant vegetation) were often highlighted as a positive aspect of the City which contributes greatly to its desirable atmosphere.



Marina and Lakefront



City Park



4. Trails and sidewalks were identified as a desirable community feature, and particularly the recently constructed sidewalk along Smithtown Road.
5. Many interviewees consider the City’s proximity to Lake Minnetonka to be a community strength and stressed a need to protect its water quality.

6. Specially highlighted as a community strength is the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, which provides recreational opportunities for both pedestrians and bicyclists.



Large Single Family Home

7. A number of interviewees identified the City’s location within Minnetonka School District 276 as a desirable community feature.

8. Several interviewees highlighted the quality of residential housing in the City as a distinct community strength.

9. Many interviewees view the City of Shorewood as a financially strong community with high level services and a quality City staff.



Large Single Family Home

10. Many interviewees conveyed their belief that the City is occupied by “nice” people and that neighborhoods feel “closely knit.”

11. Interviewees also noted Shorewood’s proximity to the City of Excelsior as a positive community feature. Specifically, convenient access to Excelsior’s commercial services was referenced.



Single Family Home

12. Also highlighted as a positive City feature is that Shorewood is fully developed and thus, negative aspects

commonly associated with urban growth are not an issue.

13. On a broader scale, interviewees highlighted the City of Shorewood’s proximity to the Minneapolis and St. Paul Metropolitan Areas as a positive community feature.
14. The size (population) of the City was identified as a positive feature of the City which contributes to its “small town” feel.
15. Interviewees were generally complimentary of City government operations and delivery of services. Most were particularly satisfied with the accessibility of City staff.

Issues and /or Concerns

While interview respondents characterize the City of Shorewood as a desirable place to live, respondents also identified some community weaknesses. The following were viewed as issues and/or concerns:

1. In terms of weaknesses, most interview respondents cited water infrastructure as a common community concern. Specific concern relates to water supply infrastructure, although stormwater management was also identified as a community issue which needs to be addressed.
2. Traffic was also highlighted as a primary City concern. Specifically, highlighted was traffic congestion throughout the City but primarily at various Highway 7 access points. It was noted that such traffic congestion poses safety concerns for both motorists and pedestrians.
3. Incomplete trails were also cited as a community weakness. It was specifically noted by several interviewees that a lack of



Shorewood Water Tower



Commercial Strip Center

trail connections throughout the City forces pedestrians to use City streets as walkways which, in turn, creates safety concerns.



4. Several interviewees expressed concern over the City of Shorewood’s working relationships with neighboring Lake Minnetonka communities. Specifically highlighted was a concern over the cost / benefit of shared Police services.



Multiple Family Residential Property

5. A lack of commercial services in Shorewood was frequently identified as a community drawback.

6. A number of interviewees expressed a desire for more housing choices within the City. Specific concern was cited over a lack of multiple family housing options and a lack of single family residential homes which are “affordable” to young families. Also conveyed is a belief that most persons who work in Shorewood cannot afford to live in the City (as a result of housing costs).



Single Family Home

7. A few persons interviewed feel that the City presently lacks a community identity. Specifically noted was a lack of an identifiable physical feature which serves to distinguish the City of Shorewood from the City of Excelsior.



On-Street Parking

8. Many persons highlighted storm drainage as a significant community problem. Opinions were commonly expressed that curb and gutter along City streets may help address the issue.

9. Some interviewees expressed concern over the condition of Shorewood’s streets. An opinion was expressed that



City Baseball Field

the use of local streets by several different garbage haulers has contributed to the premature decay of City streets.

10. On-street parking was identified as a significant problem in the City. Interviewees feel the issue is primarily a result of the narrowness of local streets within the City and is compounded during the winter months when on-street parking opportunities are minimized due to snow storage needs.
11. While interviewees were generally complimentary of the City's efforts to preserve trees in the City, one respondent expressed a belief that greater preservation efforts are needed.
12. A few interviewees cited the City's haphazard municipal boundaries as a negative aspect of the City.
13. Many interviewees feel strongly that additional funding is needed for park improvements.
14. Several interviewees expressed concern over single family home teardowns and rebuilds and the potential loss of historic character which could result.



House Under Construction

Challenges

Interviewees were asked to identify what they perceive to be the biggest challenges facing the City of Shorewood in the next 20 years (the approximate term of the Comprehensive Plan Update). In this regard, the following views were expressed in order of popularity (the most popular response being listed first):

1. Upgrading of the City’s aging infrastructure including water supply, stormwater management, and streets.
2. Funding desired for City improvements including projects related to infrastructure, parks, and trails.
3. Providing additional multiple family housing choices in the City in a manner which will preserve Shorewood’s unique character.
4. Providing additional housing opportunities for seniors who wish to continue to reside in the City.
5. Examining alternatives and developing a creative plan for the future use of the Shorewood Community and Event Center.
6. Promoting commercial redevelopment in the City which responds to the needs of Shorewood residents and is consistent with the desired community character.
7. Managing and/or improving vehicular traffic in a safe and functionally efficient manner, which considers the needs of pedestrian and bicyclists.
8. Striving to improve relationships with nearby lake communities in regard to the handling of shared services.
9. Improving connections (vehicular and pedestrian) between the Cities of Shorewood and Excelsior.



City Hall and Community Center Sign



Single Family Home



10. Redeveloping the Smithtown Crossing commercial area in a manner which promotes the City's identity.
11. Establishing appropriate zoning regulations for development upon legal non-conforming lots and single family residential teardowns.

2040 Vision

Persons interviewed/surveyed were asked to convey their 2040 vision of the City. In this regard, the following "visions" were conveyed:

1. Most persons interviewed do not expect to see any significant physical changes to the City by 2040. In this regard, a continuance of the City's residential/recreational character is considered their "vision" of the City for the year 2040.
2. Several interviewees did, however, convey their "vision" of the City moving forward. In this regard, the following changes are envisioned:
 - a. Shorewood will become a more energy efficient City.
 - b. The City will seek and implement creative ideas for the City's public spaces.
 - c. Infrastructure systems within the City will be much improved and all properties will be connected to City water service.
 - d. A greater mix of housing choices, including places which are affordable to young families and available to seniors will be provided.
 - e. Better (improved) vehicular and pedestrian linkages between the Cities of Shorewood and Excelsior will be provided.
 - f. City parks will be upgraded to respond to the recreational needs of Shorewood residents.
 - g. Shorewood will be a more "pedestrian friendly" City.
 - h. The City's population will be more diverse.
 - i. Traffic patterns within the City will be functionally improved (for vehicle movements and pedestrian safety).

- j. The City will promote the establishment a facility which pays homage to Shorewood's history (i.e., a history center or a museum).

Immediate Needs

Persons interviewed were asked to identify projects they feel are an immediate need in the City and should be addressed in the near term (next five years). In this regard, the following projects were identified:

1. Improvement of the Highway 7 /Vine Hill Road intersection.
2. City investments in alternative energy systems.
3. Trail system expansion (improved connections).
4. Shorewood Community and Event Center improvement.
5. Build-out of the Minnetonka Country Club single family residential subdivision.
6. General street improvements/ upgrades (including, but not limited to, features for improved stormwater management).
7. City-wide water service.
8. Redevelopment of the Smithtown Crossing commercial area.
9. Expansion of the City’s Public Works building and/or relocation of impounded vehicle parking (to provide additional space for public works-related storage).
10. Park improvements (consistent with long term plans).
11. Improved maintenance of properties along the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail.



Country Club Subdivision



Public Works Building

Residential Land Uses

Persons interviewed were asked for their opinions related to existing and future residential uses in the City. In this regard, the following issues were identified:

1. Regarding the physical condition of the City’s existing housing stock, most interviewees feel that such housing stock is either “good” or “very good.”
2. Many interviewees expressed concern over a lack of residential housing choices in the City. In regard to planning for future residential uses, most interviewees feel it is important to consider a variety of housing options which cater to different age and income groups, but which would be consistent with the character of the City.
3. Several interviewees cited the two recently approved senior housing projects as being a benefit to the City (as such facilities provide an opportunity for long-time, elderly residents to stay in the community). A belief was also conveyed that a market for additional senior housing will likely exist in the future.
4. A number of interviewees expressed concern over the teardown of small, older housing and replacement with larger homes. It was suggested that appropriate zoning regulations should be in place to manage such activities and minimize potential adverse impacts.
5. Most interviewees do not feel there are significant property maintenance issues in the City. It was suggested, however, that the City undertake a pro-active approach related to code enforcement.



Single-Family Neighborhood



Single-Family Neighborhood

Commercial Land Uses

Interviewees expressed the following opinions regarding commercial land uses within the City:

1. Nearly all interviewees acknowledge there is a present lack of basic commercial services in the City, and that it is necessary to travel outside the City to obtain such services. Most interviewees do not, however, view this condition as a problem and cite the adjacent City of Excelsior as a convenient location for basic commercial goods.
2. Several interviewees expressed a belief that the redevelopment of the Smithtown Crossing area would be positive and would provide an opportunity for the City to establish a needed community identity.
3. One interviewee expressed an opinion that additional small office space is needed in the City.
4. A number of interviewees expressed an opinion that an assurance should be made that the physical appearance of new commercial development in the City should be of high quality (in terms of both design and finish materials).
5. A few interviewees suggested that the City should take steps necessary to ensure that new commercial buildings exhibit high quality finish materials and exhibit an architectural character which is consistent with an established vision for the community.



Existing Commercial Center



Transportation

Through the Tactics interviews, respondents offered several transportation-related comments. The following is a summary of comments and/or identified issues which were received:

1. The majority of interviewees indicated that roadway maintenance in the City is an issue. In this regard, it was suggested that funding for such efforts should be a community priority.

2. General concern was raised by interviewees regarding the ability of the City’s collector streets to accommodate existing and future traffic volumes. Of primary concern are volumes on County Road 19. Most respondents acknowledge that such excessive traffic volumes are difficult to address.



Motorcycle Traffic

3. Specific concern was cited over excessive traffic volumes which presently exist on Country Club Road, a designated minor collector street. In this regard, it was suggested that improvements are needed at the adjacent Smithtown Road/ County Road 19 intersection.

3. Most interviewees raised concern over congestion and unsafe intersections along Highway 7. To be noted is that unsafe conditions were referenced not only for vehicles but pedestrians and bicyclists as well.



Narrow Residential Street

4. Bicycle safety was highlighted by interviewees as a major problem. It was noted that roadways and crossings are not equipped to manage the present volume of bicycle traffic encountered in the City. It was specifically noted that bicycle connections between commercial areas are needed.

5. A difference of opinion was expressed by interviewees regarding the long-term need for mass transit in the City. Many interviewees believe that existing and future residential densities cannot justify such service and thus, mass transit is not considered feasible.



Others expect mass transit to be a community need in the future. One interviewee specifically suggested that mass transit opportunities would be better located in the adjacent City of Excelsior.

6. The City of Shorewood is characterized by narrow streets, many of which lack curb and gutter. Most interviewees consider the City's narrow streets to be a desirable community feature which contributes to the character of the City. Several Interviewees, however, expressed concern that many local streets create circulation problems and are in need of repair/improvement.
7. A number of interviewees feel that the use of local streets by multiple garbage haulers has contributed to the degradation of the City's local streets.
8. It was noted by one interviewee that a number of dirt (gravel) roads presently exist within the City. It was suggested that all City roads should be hard surfaced.
9. Without exception, all interviewees oppose a proposed closure of Pleasant Avenue in Tonka Bay. Interviewees believe that the City is presently lacking in street connections/linkages and that the closure of such street (to eliminate a City access to County Road 19) would be contrary to the City's transportation objectives.
10. One interviewee indicated that guardrails in certain areas of the City need to be replaced.
11. Also noted was a concern over vegetative "overgrowth" at certain street intersection limits vehicular visibility to oncoming traffic.
12. Several comments were received related to sidewalks and trails. These comments are summarized below:
 - a. Nearly all persons interviewed feel that sidewalks and trails in the City are a great community amenity.
 - b. Most interviewees feel the City's sidewalk and trail system is improving. The recently constructed sidewalk alongside Smithtown Road was highlighted as a significant system improvement.
 - c. While the system is perceived as improved, most interviewees believe that more sidewalk/trail connections are needed in the City. Of specific note was an expressed desire to provide sidewalk/trail connections to the City of Excelsior.



Existing Sidewalk

- d. Many interviewees feel that sidewalks and trails should be made a higher priority in the City. It was specifically indicated that walking paths (sidewalks and/or trails) are needed alongside City streets such that street surfaces are not utilized for pedestrian travel.
- e. Several interviewees feel additional funding should be provided to maintain existing sidewalks/trails in the City and to implement Shorewood's Trail Plan.
- f. Many interviewees consider pedestrian street crossings in the City to be unsafe. Interviewees suggested that additional attention be given to such crossings to ensure pedestrian safety. Specific safety concerns were cited along Strawberry Lane near the Minnewashta Elementary School, the Pleasant Avenue/County Road 19 intersection, and the Cathcart Drive/62nd Street intersection.
- g. Considering the volume of bicycle use in the City, an interviewee suggested that specific trails intended for use by bicyclists should be considered.
- h. One interviewee suggested that consideration be given to the construction of a pedestrian crossing of Highway 7.
- i. Also related to Highway 7, some concern was expressed related to traffic noise and impacts upon abutting neighborhoods. In this regard, it was suggested that the noise issue and the need for buffering be addressed at some future point.



Highway 7 Conditions

Community Facilities

Parks. As part of the interview process, the following comments and/or opinions were received which relate to parks:

1. Most persons interviewed consider Shorewood’s existing park system to be “good” or “excellent.”
2. Several interviewees feel that efforts should continue to be made to improve the City’s park system including a response to the changing recreational needs of residents and providing necessary financial investments.
3. It was suggested that the park system lacks a “vision” and that the City should be more “proactive” in the development of its parks.
4. Many interviewees made note of the fact that Shorewood’s parks are routinely used by residents of neighboring communities.
5. Several interviewees cited a City need to take a more pro-active approach (rather than reactive) to park development.
6. Through the interview process, the following park-related projects were highlighted as areas of need:
 - a. A storage building for park equipment.
 - b. A passive park.
 - c. General “facelifts” to several existing parks (park equipment upgrades).

- d. Recreational facilities which respond to community desires (i.e., a pickle ball court).



Badger Park

UtilitySystems. As part of the interview/survey process, the following comments and/or opinions were received which relate to the City’s utility systems:

- 1. Regarding the City’s existing utility systems, municipal water service and stormwater drainage were highlighted by nearly all interviewees as areas of concern. Most expressed their opinion that City water service should be provided to all residents in the City and that efforts need to be made to improve stormwater management.
- 2. Other utility-related comments included the following:
 - a. A desire to bury power lines to reduce the frequency of power loss in the City (as a result of storm events). Related to this comment was a concern over a common need for backup generators in the City.
 - b. A need for a new water treatment plant.
 - c. The City’s well houses are in need of upgrades.
 - d. Water pressure in the City is adequate but not great. It was suggested that the City consider water system improvements which will increase water pressure.
 - e. In regard to stormwater management, concern was cited over “rural” (ditch) systems which are currently in place. It was suggested that the City consider the hiring of a “stormwater specialist” to assist in addressing stormwater issues.

Municipal Buildings. As part of the interview process, the following comments and/or opinions were received which relate to the City’s municipal buildings:

1. In general, most interviewees believe the City’s municipal buildings are satisfactory. The City Hall, in particular, was highlighted as a source of community pride.
2. Most interviewees expressed interest in the future use of the Shorewood Community and Event Center. It was particularly noted that the facility needs rehabilitation. A few interviewees suggested that a study be conducted to determine the most feasible long-term use of the building.
3. A number of interviewees noted that the Public Works building needs to be expanded to accommodate equipment storage needs.



City Hall



City Park Building



Shorewood Community and Event Center

Environmental Issues

Interviewees offered several comments related to environmental issues. The following is a summary of comments and/or identified issues which were received:

1. While interviewees recognize that the waters of Lake Minnetonka are not under City jurisdiction, concerns over lake water quality were commonly identified. Specifically, concern was raised over invasive species and related lake impacts. Also, in regard to Lake Minnetonka, concerns were raised related to boat traffic (power boats) and lake refuse/garbage.



2. It was suggested by one interviewee that the City of Shorewood should strive to be a leader in environmental stewardship. Related to this comment was a desire by several interviewees to ensure that the City’s ordinances strive to protect Shorewood’s natural resources and promote alternative energy systems.
3. Several interviewees voiced concern over the private wells which exist in the City and the quality of the water extracted from such wells.
4. Drainage problems along the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail were highlighted as an environmental concern by several interviewees.
5. The quality of City water was raised as an environmental concern. Of specific issue is the “hardness” of the water and related sediment. In this regard, it was suggested that treatment (or additional treatment) of City water be considered.
6. Several interviewees suggested that greater funding for stormwater management efforts in the City needs to be provided.
7. It was also suggested that the City needs to continue to educate the general public on environmental issues.
8. It was indicated by one interviewee that a number of homes in the City were constructed upon hydrologic soil (prior to existing wetland regulations). Concern was raised regarding City responsibilities in the event of the structural failure of such homes.

Lake Access

Interviewees offered several comments related to lake access. A summary of received comments and/or identified issues is provided below:

1. Most interviewees believe existing lake access in the City (to Lake Minnetonka and Christmas Lake) is satisfactory.
2. A number of interviewees indicated that a future public access at the Howard’s Point Marina property would be desirable.
3. A minority opinion expressed a desire to eliminate the existing public access on Christmas Lake.
4. Concern was expressed over “public” versus “private” boat launches on Lake Minnetonka in that “private” launches are typically less strict in regard to zebra mussel inspections (than “public” launches).

5. Also noted is a desire for a larger public beach on Lake Minnetonka. In this regard, it was suggested that the City consider the acquisition of parcels adjacent to the existing public beach when opportunities arise.
6. Related to Lake Minnetonka access, a desire was expressed to provide a bike path connection to Crescent Beach.



Boat Dock



Christmas Lake Access Area

CONCLUSION

The preceding comments are intended to help establish the basic direction of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. In no order of priority, these comments identify a variety of community issues related to the following:

- Opportunities and/or Strengths
- Issues and/or Concerns
- Challenges
- 2040 Vision
- Immediate Needs
- Residential Land Uses
- Commercial Land Uses
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Environmental Issues
- Lake Access

The extent and scope of received comments speaks to the desirable features of Shorewood, while recognizing that many concerns/issues exist which should be addressed in the future. In this regard, there is an evident appreciation of the various issues which confront the City. Simultaneously, there appears to be an equal commitment to resolving those issues and preparing for an improved future.

To be stressed is that the provided views and opinions have not been prioritized nor do they include any positions or responses by appropriate professional staff. At this stage in the Plan Update process, only the directions desired by community representatives are a matter of concern. As may

be appropriate in future policy and plan discussions, professional staff recommendations and alternatives will be offered for consideration.

Ultimately, it will be the jurisdiction of City Officials to resolve the content and the direction of the Plan Update. In this regard, attempts will be made to build consensus on priority issues facing the City of Shorewood (as identified in the Tactics interviews) and the general direction of the Plan.