

## City of Shellsburg Town Hall Meeting

88 total residents attended the meeting

The crucial element in any plan is ensuring that the wishes and hopes the residents hold for their community is represented in the content of the plan. If the plan does not accurately reflect the needs and desires of area residents, it will have little value.

Therefore, the City of Shellsburg held a town meeting to attract public input for the city's first comprehensive plan. The meeting was held on Thursday, October 26, 2017. There was tremendous attendance at the event with nearly 90 residents taking part.

The meeting was an interactive planning session with the residents taking part to begin to identify a future vision for the community. The session involved breaking into small groups identifying and prioritizing positive qualities that need to be maintained, as well as future concerns or challenges that need to be addressed. This exercise was held at the beginning of the planning process for two reasons:

- The critical elements for the future vision of the community are identified early in the process ensuring that appropriate problem identification occurs at the very beginning;
- Public participation is crucial for creating an effective and appropriate plan. By having a town meeting at the beginning of the process, every resident has an opportunity to direct the future vision for the planning area.

Each member of each small group individually identified his or her positive qualities and future challenges on a 3x5 note card. Then, within each group, all members listed those qualities and concerns on a large sheet of paper (many replies were similar between group members and were condensed into a single quality or concern). At that point, each participant awarded points to prioritize the composite small group list of qualities and concerns using a 3 point value system. Three points were given to their highest priority; 2 points to the second highest priority and 1 point for their third highest priority. Totals were then added up to establish an overall prioritized listing for each small group's qualities and concerns.

The following pages contain a composite of the town meeting results <sup>1</sup>. Following that is a list of each group's qualities and challenges.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is only a composite of each group's priorities. Many of the positive qualities and future concerns were condensed into an over-all quality or concern that was deemed equal. This was based on ECICOG staff's interpretation and, while reflective of the overall priorities, may or may not reflect the individual priorities of the citizens present.

The plan's appendix will contain the listing of each small group's identified qualities and concerns.

| <b>Overall Concerns and Challenges of the Town Meeting</b>                  | <b>Points</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Run down homes and buildings (property clean up)                            | 77            |
| Lack of community growth / land locked                                      | 54            |
| Lack of police department / presence  | 52            |
| Drugs / growing drug problem  | 52            |
| Keeping the school open   | 46            |
| Keeping downtown active / bringing in new businesses                        | 42            |
| Storm water / street maintenance / sidewalk issues / historic bridge repair | 41            |
| Fiscal responsibility   | 25            |
| Community center / rec center   | 18            |
| More activities for children / teens  | 18            |
| Housing options / rent own / seniors / young families / need a housing plan | 17            |
| Park improvement / water fountain / pavilion                                | 12            |
| Size / volunteers needed for EMS & FD                                       | 11            |
| Build community involvement / pride   | 10            |
| Community promotion   | 8             |
| Keeping small town feel while still growing                                 | 7             |
| Street lighting   | 7             |
| Following codes / transparency  | 6             |
| Open burning  | 5             |
| Employment opportunities  | 4             |
| More dining / entertainment options   | 4             |
| Lack of investor interest   | 3             |
| Lack of families moving in to stay  | 3             |
| Community festivals   | 2             |
| Mindset us vs. them   | 2             |
| Diversity   | 2             |
| Dog park  | 1             |
| Finishing projects (Pearl Street)   | 1             |
| Shuttle between school and community  | 1             |
| Modernizing the city government   |               |
| Making city government information easier to access                         |               |
| Forward innovativeness  |               |

| <b>Overall Positive Qualities of the Town Meeting</b>                     | <b>Points</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Downtown businesses (bank, grocery, bars, cars, beauty shop, candy store) | 130           |
| Local school  | 81            |
| Small town atmosphere (safe, friendly, quiet, low traffic)                | 69            |
| EMS & Fire Department   | 64            |
| Golf course   | 38            |
| Library   | 21            |
| Fiber optics, water/sewer improvements, capacity for growth               | 16            |
| Lower taxes   | 16            |
| Recreation – walking trails, park, prairie, walkable                      | 16            |
| Close to CR / Vinton  | 15            |
| Strong volunteers / civic organizations / SACG                            | 15            |
| Housing   | 9             |
| Beautification of Main / town   | 9             |
| Health clinic / Drs. office   | 8             |
| Benton County   | 6             |
| Shellsburg pride / town celebrations                                      | 6             |
| Kid's activities  | 4             |
| Gym with classes offered  | 4             |
| Churches  | 3             |
| Military support - Legion, Freedom Rock                                   | 3             |
| Care center   | 2             |
| Post office   |               |
| Food pantry   |               |
| 2 water supplies  |               |
| Air quality   |               |
| Cross section of people (age/education)                                   |               |
| Farmer's market   |               |

## Group #1

| <b>Positive Qualities</b>                          | <b>Points</b> |
|--|---------------|
| EMS & Fire Department                              | 27            |
| Busy, thriving downtown                            | 13            |
| Local grocery store                                | 12            |
| Local school                                       | 9             |
| Safe   | 8             |
| Small town living "charm"                          | 8             |
| Good variety of business – gas station/golf course | 6             |
| Friendly people                                    | 5             |
| Strong volunteers                                  | 5             |
| Benton County                                      | 5             |
| Close to CR  | 4             |
| Clean, local parks & trails                        | 4             |
| Drs. office  | 2             |
| Library  | 2             |
| Community group – SACG                             | 1             |
| Neighbors watch out for each other                 |               |
| Interest in city officials openings                |               |
| Care center  |               |
| Downtown improvements                              |               |

| <b>Concerns and Challenges</b>                   | <b>Points</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Run down homes and buildings (property clean up) | 21            |
| Drugs and growing drug problem                   | 19            |
| Housing and lack of growth (land locked?)        | 17            |
| No police force – speeding into town             | 16            |
| Keeping the school open                          | 16            |
| Size / volunteers needed for EMS & FD            | 8             |
| Lack of things for kids and families             | 8             |
| Road conditions                                  | 6             |
| Businesses that we don't already have            | 2             |
| Sidewalk quality                                 | 1             |
| Lack of families moving in to stay               | 1             |

## Group #2

| <b>Positive Qualities</b>   | <b>Points</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Local school  | 24            |
| Downtown businesses (bank, grocery, bars, cars, beauty shop, candy store) | 11            |
| Grocery store   | 10            |
| Fire department   | 7             |
| Golf course   | 6             |
| Small town atmosphere   | 5             |
| Library   | 3             |
| Lower taxes   | 3             |
| Recreation – walking trails, park, prairie                                | 3             |
| Gym in town and classes offered   | 3             |
| Friendly people   | 2             |
| First responders  | 2             |
| Volunteers and civic organizations  | 2             |
| Employers such as phone company   | 2             |
| 5 churches  | 1             |
| Location between CR & Vinton  |               |
| Pearl Street renovation   |               |
| Food pantry   |               |
| 2 water supplies  |               |
| Freedom Rock  |               |
| Post office   |               |
| Rock Ridge care center  |               |

| <b>Concerns and Challenges</b>                           | <b>Points</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Fiscal responsibility                                    | 19            |
| Run down properties                                      | 18            |
| Drugs  | 13            |
| Lack of police department                                | 8             |
| Plan for housing   | 7             |
| Street lighting  | 7             |
| Lack of new housing                                      | 4             |
| Making sure we keep our school                           | 4             |
| Lack of recreation for kids                              | 4             |
| Lack of investor interest                                | 3             |
| Outdated public facilities & recreation in public spaces | 3             |
| Need new ordinances (for run down properties)            | 1             |
| Lack of good paying jobs nearby                          | 1             |
| Enforcement of new ordinances for run down properties    | 1             |

### Group #3

| <b>Positive Qualities</b>  | <b>Points</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Businesses - elevator, drs. office, phone company, stores: grocery, gas station, candy | 35            |
| School   | 22            |
| Emergency services   | 15            |
| Golf course  | 14            |
| Quiet, safe town   | 12            |
| Housing  | 7             |
| Shellsburg pride   | 5             |
| Library  | 5             |
| Proximity to CR / Vinton   | 3             |
| Lower taxes  | 3             |
| Neighborhood   | 2             |
| Active civic groups  | 2             |
| Walking trail  | 1             |
| Air quality  |               |
| Benton County  |               |
| Friendly   |               |
| Small community values w/out big city laws   |               |
| Cross section of people (age/education)  |               |
| Municipalities   |               |
| Churches   |               |
| Farmer's market  |               |
| Park   |               |
| Fitness center   |               |
| Military support - Legion, Freedom Rock  |               |

| <b>Concerns and Challenges</b>                                       | <b>Points</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Keeping downtown active  | 15            |
| Residential growth   | 13            |
| Keeping the school   | 11            |
| Road maintenance   | 10            |
| Property clean-up  | 10            |
| Lack of police presence  | 8             |
| Keeping small town feel while still growing                          | 7             |
| Supporting local business and lack of business (pharmacy / hardware) | 7             |
| Open burning   | 5             |
| Land to be annexed   | 4             |
| Expanding emergency services / keeping current                       | 3             |
| Community festivals  | 2             |
| Mindset us vs. them  | 2             |
| Clean up downtown  | 2             |
| Younger families   | 2             |
| Dog park   | 1             |
| Community promotion  | 1             |
| Youth activities   |               |
| Sewer costs  |               |
| Personal pride   |               |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Sidewalks   |  |
| Modernizing the city government                     |  |
| Making city government information easier to access |  |

#### Group #4

| Positive Qualities   | Points |
|--|--------|
| Grocery store, bank, post office, library, gas station     | 27     |
| Kid's activities, community clubs, SACG, elementary school | 12     |
| Fiber optics, water/sewer, growth                          | 10     |
| Facilities (golf course)                                   | 10     |
| Low taxes  | 7      |
| Small town living – low traffic                            | 5      |
| Health clinic  | 5      |
| "Main Street"  | 4      |
| Walkable   | 3      |
| Friendly people  | 3      |
| Fire station   | 3      |
| First responders   | 2      |
| Quiet  | 2      |
| Many churches  | 1      |
| Phone company  | 1      |
| State park / lake  | 1      |
| Close to CR  | 1      |
| Drs. office  |        |
| Railroad / grain elevator                                  |        |
| Open space   |        |
| American Legion  |        |
| Nice parks   |        |
| Nature trail   |        |

| Concerns and Challenges                          | Points |
|--|--------|
| Curb appeal – unkempt properties                 | 18     |
| Manage growth / bringing in new business         | 12     |
| Keeping elementary school                        | 11     |
| Police department                                | 10     |
| Build community involvement / pride              | 9      |
| Rec center                                       | 8      |
| Nothing inviting as you enter town               | 7      |
| Finances   | 6      |
| Infrastructure (streets / sidewalks), drainage   | 6      |
| Image  | 6      |
| How to get community to support local businesses | 6      |
| Following codes / transparency                   | 5      |
| School opportunities                             | 4      |
| Community building                               | 3      |
| Diversity  | 2      |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Shuttle between school and community                               | 1 |
| Finishing projects (Pearl Street)                                  | 1 |
| Historic bridge repair   | 1 |
| Unorganized kid's activities (skateboard park, splash pad, courts) | 1 |
| Buildable lots for new development                                 |   |
| Marketable   |   |

### Group #5

| Positive Qualities  | Points |
|---|--------|
| School  | 22     |
| Safe community – small town feel, many active community groups, start families  | 16     |
| Locally owned businesses / golf course  | 16     |
| Library   | 11     |
| Local fire, rescue, health  | 8      |
| Beautification of Main / town   | 7      |
| Location close to larger cities   | 6      |
| Recently completed / upcoming infrastructure improvements, water/sewer, capable for growth / LOST funds dedicated to infrastructure | 6      |
| Comparatively lower taxes   | 3      |
| Town celebrations   |        |

| Concerns and Challenges                               | Points |
|---|--------|
| Drug issues / theft                                   | 20     |
| Lack of community growth / land locked                | 15     |
| Storm water / street maintenance / sidewalk issues    | 15     |
| Housing options / rent own / seniors / young families | 10     |
| Law enforcement presence                              | 10     |
| Park improvement / water fountain / pavilion          | 9      |
| Community center                                      | 7      |
| More dining / entertainment options                   | 4      |
| More activities for children / teens                  | 4      |
| Employment opportunities                              | 3      |
| Forward innovativeness                                |        |