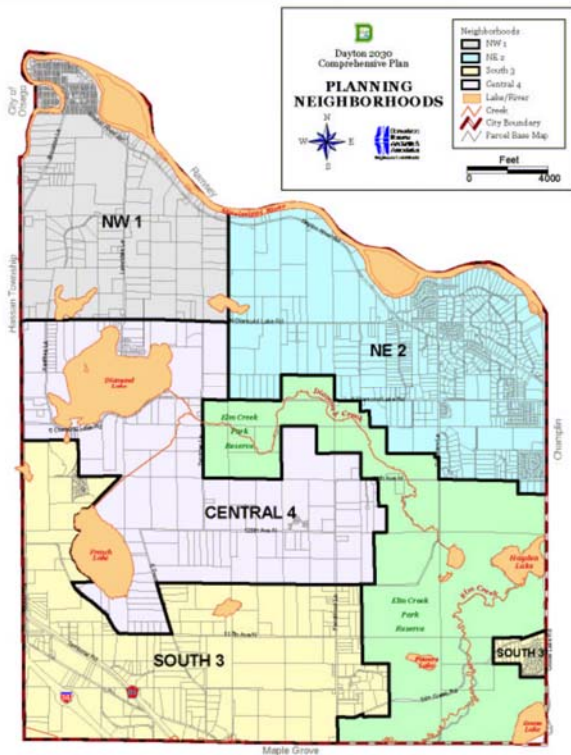


Community Meetings – SWOT Analysis

Early in the comprehensive plan process a number of community meetings were held in Dayton using a SWOT analysis technique. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Community members were asked to list issues they thought were important in the community and in their neighborhood, as general or specific as they wished, under the categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats. People discussed their ideas in small groups, then shared the lists of issues with the entire group, and the issues were written down on large sheets of paper which were then attached to the wall of the meeting room. Each person was given a set of colored dots with which they could “vote” for their top issues by placing a dot next to the issue on the large sheet.

The issues with the most dot “votes” are compiled below, with the number of dots noted, and summarized in the written description below that. This is not a scientific sampling, but is indicative of the priorities of those in attendance at the community meetings.



There were four neighborhood meetings – Northwest, Northeast, Central, and South, as indicated on the map above – plus a meeting of members of the business community, all held in May 2007.

Business Community:

Strengths:

- 9 – Future freeway access
- 5 – Cooperative / Collaborative City staff leaders
- 5 – Growth Potential
- 4 – Scenery / topography
- 4 – Honest and intelligent leadership

Weaknesses:

- 13 – Minimal infrastructure in place
- 9 – Lack of city services (snow removal)
- 8 – Cost of infrastructure to residents and businesses
- 3 – Concern about police and fire
- 2 – Minimal commercial and professional services

Opportunities:

- 9 – Brockton interchange
- 9 – Water and sewer improvements
- 5 – Blank Slate
- 4 – Dayton adjacent to great infrastructure
- 3 – Close proximity to future hospital

Threats:

- 10 – Poor planning
- 9 – Financial strain of high tax assessments
- 7 – Low income housing
- 6 – Increased crime
- 4 – City council/ leadership

Members of the Dayton business community are primarily interested in the infrastructure of the community. They see the potential for growth that could stem from the addition of an interchange at I-94 and Brockton. They note that the city has minimal infrastructure in place but has an opportunity to improve due to being a

“blank slate” with great systems (roads, sewer, water etc.) adjacent to the community. The business community believes that there is a lack of city services, snow removal given as an example. Improving infrastructure is a concern but the business community is worried about the cost of the infrastructure to the residents of Dayton and the financial strain of higher tax assessments if there is no large commercial-industrial tax base to offset these costs.

The business community sees city staff leaders (public and private) as cooperative, collaborative, honest and intelligent. They also understand the need for good planning in this period of growth. The general feel seems to be pro-growth but business community members feel threatened by the addition of low income housing to Dayton and a possible increase in crime.

South Neighborhood:

Strengths:

- 25 – Elm Creek Park
- 23 – Natural Beauty
- 16 – Close to city
- 15 – Access to major through fare
- 11 – Safe - low crime rates

Weaknesses:

- 34 – High taxes
- 26 – Lack of commercial tax base
- 16 – Traffic congestion
- 15 – Historically resistant to growth
- 11 – Not pedestrian friendly

Opportunities:

- 28 – Protect rivers, streams, wetlands with buffers as development occurs
- 20 – Brockton I-94 interchange
- 14 – Industrial/ commercial development away from residential
- 14 – Planned development for optimum growth
- 10 – Industrial development to increase tax base

Threats:

- 16 – Growth too slow – stalling
- 13 – High assessments
- 12 – Unplanned development
- 12 – Freeway through Dayton (river crossing)
- 9 – Fast uncontrolled growth

The south neighborhood views the natural setting of Dayton and Elm Creek Park as key assets to the community. Residents see the planning process as a great tool to protect rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands through the use of buffers around these features. They enjoy the fact that their area is a safe, quiet, rural community that is still close to the city and its amenities.

Residents in this area like the idea of planned growth and fear fast, uncontrolled or unplanned growth and its effects. Residents feel threatened by the fact that the growth is too slow and maybe stalling. They believe that an interchange at I-94 and Brockton is a good opportunity for the community. They believe that growth will increase the commercial-industrial tax base and hopefully lower residential taxes, which they currently believe are too high. Residents said the road system in the city (particularly east/west) is of low quality, incomplete in some areas and maybe a cause of the traffic congestion problem. They do not like the idea of a freeway running through Dayton or big box retail in their community. The neighborhood would like to see a more pedestrian/bike friendly town by connecting the trails and the addition of some sort of public transportation.

Central Neighborhood:

Strengths:

- 19 – Rural setting
- 12 – No river crossing

- 9 – Peaceful environment and beauty of the area
- 8 – close to everything but still rural
- 8 – No I-94 interchange

Weaknesses:

- 20 – No river crossing
- 16 – High taxes
- 14 – 40 acre minimum
- 13 – Out side forces pushing things not good for Dayton
- 9 – Not much business

Opportunities:

- 25 – Best of both worlds – rural and controlled growth

- 22 – Dayton a “hidden gem”, preserve it
- 15 – I-94 interchange
- 12 – River crossing
- 9 – Getting rid of junk yard

Threats:

- 21 – Mississippi river crossing
- 18 – Multi family housing
- 17 – Low income housing
- 11 – City regulating land use different then what owner wants
- 10 – I-94 interchange

The most prominent issues in the central neighborhood of Dayton were the possibilities of an I-94 interchange and Mississippi river crossing. The residents of this area were almost evenly split on this issue; with many people seeing it as both a threat and an opportunity, probably the biggest single issue at the meeting.

Residents like the peaceful rural setting of the area and its close proximity to “everything” while still maintaining the rural feel. They believe that they have an opportunity to have the best of both worlds; a rural community with controlled growth. Dayton was described in this meeting as a “hidden gem” and residents would like to keep it that way. They don’t like the idea of outside forces telling them what they can and can’t do with their land. Residents think that the taxes are too high and are not in favor of the 40 acre minimum. They are also not in favor of any low income or multi family “cheap” housing coming into their community.

North East Neighborhood:

Strengths:

- 19 – Large lots
- 18 – Country living
- 12 – Low crime
- 11 – Safe after dark
- 9 – Elm Creek park

Weaknesses:

- 24 – High taxes/low service
- 22- Properties not maintained
- 17 – Poorly maintained roads
- 13 – Lack of trail connections
- 12 – Traffic

Opportunities:

- 27 – Quiet/ semi rural
- 25 – Decide how land can develop
- 16 – Continuous low crime
- 14 – Brockton, TH610, North Star will eliminate need for river crossing
- 9 – Parks and river

Threats:

- 41 – High density housing
- 19 – Uncontrolled high dense housing
- 18 – Outside developer pressure (Zygi Wolfe Syndrome)
- 16 – Increase traffic on Dayton river road
- 15 – Increase crime/ high density housing

Residents of the northeast neighborhood feel very threatened by the possible addition of high density housing to their community. They do not like pressure from outside developers and enjoy their large lots, country living, and quiet, semi-rural lifestyle where they don’t worry about crime and feel safe after dark. They believe that their taxes are too high and the services in return are not adequate. Traffic congestion is a current nuisance and a future threat. Missing trail connections make for unsafe pedestrian routes from neighborhood to neighborhood. Residents feel roads are poorly maintained along with some of the properties in the area.

Citizens in the north east neighbor hood enjoy the parks in the city. Residents also like the idea that the community can decide how land will be developed. Residents view growth as inevitable but they don't want to get too big to fast or for Dayton to turn into a suburban clone. They believe that a Brockton interchange, TH 610, and the North Star light rail line may solve traffic problems associated with growth and will eliminate the need for a river crossing.

Historic Village:

Strengths:

- 30 – Rural atmosphere
- 21 – Rivers (Crow/Mississippi)
- 9 – Church
- 7 – Single family homes
- 5 – Population restricted

Weaknesses:

- 25 – Traffic
- 17 – “Eyesores”
- 14 – Allow improvements
- 13 – High Taxes
- 8 – Target “ill advised” development

Opportunities:

- 27 – Park/connecting trails
- 19 – Downtown streetscape
- 12 – Remain quiet (rivertown)
- 12 – Part of future planning
- 6 – I-94 interchange (access)

Threats:

- 24 – I-94 interchange (congestion)
- 21 – Over urbanization
- 17 – Forced development
- 16 – Mississippi river crossing
- 5 – Crime

Residents of the downtown neighborhood view the rural atmosphere and the river as strong points of their community. They would like to preserve the downtown streetscape and remain a quiet river town. Residents enjoy the fact that they are going to be involved in this planning process and they see the opportunity to plan for parks and make trail connections. An I-94 interchange and a river crossing are look down upon because of the possible congestion that could result. Residents already see rush hour traffic as a problem in the area. Citizens in this area do not want Dayton to become over urbanized by forced development.

Residents believe that the community has some “eyesores” and that the city should allow for improvements by the issuance on permits. They would like to maintain the low crime in the area and lower taxes.

Entire Community:

In all of the neighborhoods, residents viewed the rural setting as the key strength of the Dayton community. People really enjoy the parks, river and natural beauty that make Dayton a peaceful place to live, but are concerned about the pace, scale and character of future development. They like how their town is far enough away from big city problems but still close enough to take advantage of the amenities.

Among the neighborhoods, high taxes are viewed as a problem in the city. Traffic problems were also a common theme among the neighborhoods. Community members also noted that there is a lack of commercial activities in the town and the tax base associated with these activities.

Residents of Dayton like the fact that they are going to be considered in the planning process. It seems they see planning as a tool to maintain the rural feel of the area and also as a means to protect the natural features and parks of the community. The community is evenly split over the issue of an interchange at I-94 and Brockton, but a majority of the people attending the neighborhood meetings sees this as an opportunity for Dayton. However, a significant majority of the citizens feel that a Mississippi river crossing is a threat to the community and don't want a high volume road going through the town.

A significant number of the residents are concerned about multi family and high density housing, especially if it is low income, feeling it will have harmful effects on the community, including increased crime. The general feel is that residents want their community to maintain low density with large lot sizes. Dayton citizens are not fond of growth pressure from outside developers. They do not like the idea of unplanned or uncontrolled growth and the harmful effects that could result.

Issues have been grouped together from the various neighborhood meetings where there were common themes, although the wording may not have been the same in each meeting. The issues that received the most voting attention:

- Development – How and When
- Natural Environment/Rural Setting
- Housing Density
- Taxes and Services
- Brockton Interchange
- Mississippi River Crossing
- Crime
- Transportation/Traffic/Roads
- Sidewalk/ Trail Connections