Summary of Input from Community Workshops - April 3-4, 2013
(All events were held at the Town/Craft Center)

Summary of Engagement:

- Small Group Listening Sessions, April 3-4 - Consultants met with 20+ community members through small group sessions to discuss key issues, assets, and liabilities within the community.
- Community Workshop, April 4, 6:30-8 pm – 21 community members participated in a workshop to generate a list **community values** which will be used to inform the overall **vision** and **guiding principles** of the comprehensive plan.
- For a detailed description and summary of the Community Values exercise from the workshop, please see the “Workshop Activity: Community value statements” on the [Documents and Reports page](#).

Summary of Key Themes and Issues:

- **Housing**
  - Desire for better quality of housing (better heating/cooling, energy efficiency, relative affordability)
  - Maintenance of rental properties is an issue (some landlords are better than others)
    - Not just a rental issue- owner housing has maintenance issues as well
    - Run-down homes/properties hurt community image
  - Desire for diversity of housing types and lot sizes (e.g. larger lots)
  - Foreclosures – People are renting them, but not maintaining adequately
  - Need marketing of housing options (access to information)
  - City has done a good job of removing some houses in tough shape
  - Appearance of trailer park as you enter the town from the RRVT trail
  - Give residents ability to report issues

- **Recreation**
  - McCreary Center
    - Outgrowing the space/doesn’t meet needs of all users
    - Splash pad doesn’t work on Sundays
    - Splash pad is for little kids- need water feature/park for older kids/adults
    - Duplication of sand volleyball courts
    - Rivalry between older and younger users
  - Soccer - Current Issues
    - Large population of children and adults involved (500+)
    - Town fields are in bad shape
    - Could bring lots of people into town
    - Losing kids/adults to Waukee and Des Moines
    - All recreational, no select
    - Fields are packed; competition for space
  - Soccer - Facility Needs
    - Centralized facilities; accessible location
    - Amenities (concessions, vendors, food trucks)
    - Bathrooms/shelters
- Storage for equipment
- Irrigated fields/ proper drainage
- Look at synthetic turf
- 2-3 adult fields, 6-8 youth fields
- Indoor facilities in the long-term
- Do not need to be lighted—could work up to it
- Bleachers
- Phased plan; space to grow into
- Funding is a barrier (concessions as fundraising opportunity?)
  - Desire for outdoor water park/outdoor pool
  - Skate Park – built one, but already out of date (changing trends)
  - Look at sustainable park design
    - Adaptable to changing trends (e.g. fast, hard surface soccer)
  - Trail has improved biking/jogging/running opportunities, however, can be difficult to safely reach the trail in some areas.
  - Outdoor recreation could be a tourist draw
    - Bike trail
    - Connect to High Trestle Trail
  - Indoor sports facilities (Softball and baseball; multi-use)

- **Downtown**
  - Concern over vacancies/loss of businesses
  - Desire for places to live, shop, and work
  - Businesses not open when people are here – particularly for those who commute to other communities
  - Need to create a place where people want to be; create “community” through downtown
  - Big expense to open a new business—purchasing and repairs; need to subsidize start-up costs
  - Pop-up businesses
  - Niche stores have come in— but locals only buy so much, especially if not open when people are in town
  - Would like to see revitalization like East Village in Des Moines
  - Downtown Revolving Loan Fund exists but isn’t used much
  - People come downtown only for events; need more events to draw people in
  - Community needs to support downtown businesses
  - Maintenance of buildings by landlords and renters an issue

- **Food/Restaurants/Shopping**
  - Need sustained dining and restaurant opportunities
  - Town has some unique/diverse dining options
  - Trailside amenities could be unique draw
    - Like Whistling Donkey in Woodward or Flat Tire in Madrid (at trailheads)
  - Restaurants— not open consistent hours
  - Fairway not open on Sundays
  - People go to Des Moines for greater diversity – shopping and restaurants

- **Identity/Image**
  - Question raised by facilitators: What is Perry? Is it a bedroom community? Or is it an independent, small town?
    - Varied responses; some say “both”
Residents value access to Des Moines/Ames for work, entertainment/cultural, and retail options; but also enjoy small town character, close-knit community, and sense of having most day-to-day needs met in Perry

- Image of community is good/improving
  - Improved image will attract housing development and economic growth
- Perry has an identity as “place to go” for history – historic character and tourism is an asset to build on
- Empty storefronts on 2nd; lack of visibility of downtown
- Perception of Perry as a “safe” community – low crime rates

### Community Life/Activity

- Need sustained community festival/identity (festivals start/stop, change- would be good to keep consistent)
  - Consider a bike theme?
- Friday Fest – first in downtown, then moved to Pattee
  - Better in Pattee Park because of bring your own beer opportunities, additional space, more inclusive; but some vendors didn’t move to the Park when the location changed
  - Builds community; brings people together

### Growth + Development

- Do we grow or stagnate?
- Annexation is needed to expand the tax base
  - Need to bring in homes just outside of town that are already being served by city services (police/fire)
  - Need more area to offer for new development; create a good image to attract businesses and builders and diversify socio-economic level of families

### Economic Development/Jobs

- Diversify job opportunities (varying wages, higher wages) – manufacturing, retail, office
- Lots of residents commute out to Des Moines
- Expand commercial along Highway 141 to capture those who commute through Perry

### Education/Youth Development

- Good schools
- Need center/programming for youth

### Public Safety

- Perry provides public safety services to the surrounding area
- Need expanded space – particularly would benefit from a garage for vehicles
- Public safety has improved over the last decade, however, not sure whether those outside Perry perceive it as a safe community yet
- Highway 141 has the most accidents due to speed and congestion at the stoplights

### Infrastructure

- Pedestrian-friendliness – needs work
  - Around schools – better sidewalks and trails
  - In general, sidewalks in poor condition and missing/inconsistent
  - Sidewalks not built even though codes require them
  - Sustainable funding for sidewalk replacement/repair is needed
  - Sidewalks are responsibility of property owners; older residents don’t have funds to replace them
Alternatives? Concrete jacking, funding, prioritization, assessment policy (What is it currently? Can it be adjusted/improved?)

- Need amenities for bike riders
- Dangerous intersections for Peds/Bikes
  - Highway 141
- BlueZones – project one year ago to promote healthy choices/walking; are there other ways to get funding for improvements through “healthy living” programs