

**Report to the Community:
Project Good START**

**Prepared for:
The Elmore Area Chamber of Commerce**

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Executive Summary

Local governments are being required to take a larger part in the planning and development aspects of their communities with fewer resources than ever before. Because of this, it is important that they take a comprehensive assessment of their community, its needs, and its vision of future development. The Village of Elmore's participation in the Good START project has provided the baseline for the planning and development that will take place in the village. The sponsoring of the project speaks well about the willingness of the Elmore Area Chamber of Commerce and the Village Council to work together for the village.

It is clear from the results of this project that the residents of the village are the most important ingredient for successful planning and development. Their assistance in the various parts of the project was only one indicator of their desire to work together to plan and control the future of Elmore.

The Good START project developed the following goals for the village to consider.

The village should continue the process for planning and development begun during the Good START project. Many residents have become involved and have expressed willingness to participate, and they will be invaluable resources as the village moves forward.

Efforts should be made to improve the small business base and revitalize the central retail area. Retail businesses need the support of the village and its residents to be successful.

Promoting of the existing business and marketing the community as an attractive location for desirable new businesses and industry will shape the future of development. The village will need to continue its efforts and work on new ventures to encourage the types of development it desires.

Residential growth and maintenance of the existing "quality of life" are desired as expressed by a large number of the residents and businesses in the community. Efforts to retain youth, to develop housing appropriate to the needs of the village, and to make the inevitable residential growth a positive should be continued and expanded.

The new State Route 51 turnpike interchange will impact the future of the village. A coordinated effort by all concerned to plan for and control that impact is imperative. It will be most important that the village draw from all resources available to assist it in making this interchange a positive for the village and all its residents.

The encouragement and development of leadership skills within the village and the surrounding area will provide the resources necessary to encourage the members of the village to work together.

As the Village of Elmore works together on the planning efforts, the need for more effective communication skills and means to provide accurate information to all members of the village will become increasingly important. The development and enhancement of communication skills will serve the village well.

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Introduction

This report is designed to help guide in planning the future of the Village of Elmore. It is an attempt to point out areas where the people of Elmore - its most important asset - can make a difference in determining their collective future.

Some things, such as location along a river and excellent highway access, cannot be changed. However, many other factors can be influenced by a well-organized community with clear unified goals and vision. It is our hope that this report will help focus Elmore toward these goals and that vision.

It is clear from the Good START process that the most critical ingredient for successful planning and development exists in abundance in Elmore. That ingredient is an interest in one's community. This high level of interest has been displayed throughout the data gathering process:

- The response rate to the community attitude survey, which was delivered to nearly every household in the village, was an outstanding 34%, brought about by the willingness of Boy Scout Troop 314 to deliver and collect the surveys door-to-door. In addition, several businesses and the library agreed to be drop-off points to facilitate the collection of the surveys.
- As the businesses and individuals were interviewed, each made extra efforts to accommodate the process by scheduling appointments and allowing time during the business day.
- A forum and discussion session held on January 29, 1996, was well attended with over 40 residents present. The participants contributed greatly to the discussion, and many signed up to continue to take part in the planning and development process.
- Throughout the Good START project, the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation has provided a partnership that assisted in the coordination and implementation of the project. The interest and enthusiasm shown during the project is indicative of the level of concern by the CIC for the community.

The following report is designed to outline the Good START process and the goals set by the community. It includes background information and suggested action steps that may be taken. It has intentionally been kept brief. As a working document, it will be subject to modification as time passes.

This report, by itself, is secondary to goal-oriented action. The process that led to the development and which will continue through action planning of the report is the single most important part of the project. The ability and willingness of the citizens of the village to work together in the process is more important than any written report. Without the continued commitment of the people of the Village of Elmore to read the report, change those Focus Priorities which over time do not reflect the true direction of the village, and most importantly, act upon the recommendations; the report has no value. The people are the most important asset to the Village of Elmore and to its future development. Not because of this report, but because of the people, things will happen.

Community Background

History

The Village of Elmore was founded in February of 1851, when John H. Foster of Huron County purchased 48 acres in section 18 of Harris Township and declared his intention to have a town laid out. By 1870, this new community, Elmore, had 543 inhabitants and was the largest community in Ottawa County. This early development of Elmore, like much of northwestern Ohio, was due in part to the great impact of a location along a major railway.

The many attributes that are a part of Elmore are the same that were in existence at the time of its founding. The access to transportation, the location, the small town "quality of life," and the people are the strengths of the village, just as they were at the time of its founding.

Location

Elmore is situated on the south side of the Portage River. State Route 51, which travels north from Route 20 and turns northwest to Toledo, passes directly through the village and is its main street in the business district. Just across and following the river is State Route 105. The two routes provide north/south and east/west access to the village. Interstate 75, the region's primary north/south highway, is 15 miles west. State Route 20 is 4 miles to the south. The current construction of a new a turnpike interchange in Elmore will provide direct access to Interstate Routes 80 & 90.

Major nearby employment centers include the Toledo metropolitan area (Toledo is 20 miles west) and the City of Fremont 15 miles east. Major shopping centers include the Woodville Mall north on State Route 51 and several shopping areas in Fremont.

Elmore has a land area of six tenths of a square mile and is located in southwestern Ottawa County. Ottawa County is known for resort and recreation activities on Lake Erie. Lake Erie can be reached 15 miles north. Elmore is on the fringe of the tourism area and with the new interchange it becomes more important as a "gateway" to this region. Port Clinton with a population of 7106 is the county seat and is 20 miles east. The nearest community is the village of Genoa, 5 miles northwest on Route 51 with a population of 2262. Elmore and Genoa form the business center for rural western Ottawa County, given the distance to the larger cities mentioned.

Census and Demographics

The 1990 population census figure for Elmore is 1,334. Ottawa County's 1990 population is 40,029. There are 538 households in the village.

Other related census facts are (taken from the 1990 census figures or more recent state unemployment data):

- The median age is 35.3 years.

- Of the residents over the age of 25, 81.5% have graduated from high school, and 14.3% have a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- The median per capita income is \$13,899. Ohio median per capita income is \$13,461, and Ottawa county's is \$14,144.
- The median household income is \$29,667. Ohio median household income is \$28,706, and Ottawa County's median household income is \$31,360.
- Five per cent of the individuals and 2.1% of the families are considered to live in poverty.
- The unemployment rate is 4.7%. Ohio Bureau of Employment Services reported unemployment for Ottawa County in 1994 was 7.7%.
- Sixty-two percent of the residents have lived in the same house since 1985, indicating a factor of stability.
- Sixty-nine percent of the houses are owner occupied, another indication of stability..
- Forty-seven percent of the homes have children under the age of 18.
- The median price of a house is \$59,900, reflecting affordability of homes in Elmore (the county median is \$68,500.)
- The largest public employer is the county itself.
- The county largest private employer is Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station owned by Toledo Edison with 900 employees.
- The Elmore area's largest private employer is Brush Wellman, Inc. with 750 employees.
- The county 1994 unemployment rate is 7.7%.

Due to the location of Ottawa County and the influence its recreational activities have on the economy, there is some seasonal fluctuation in the unemployment figures.

Within the county, there are five industrial sites. Two of these have existing rail access. There are also numerous enterprise zones throughout the county.

Ottawa County provides a variety of cultural and entertainment facilities. In the surrounding area are historical sites, a large number of restaurants, theater groups, and sport sites.

Industrial Diversity

The Elmore area has one major regional employer and several smaller manufacturing plants. Many residents travel to other areas for employment. The following is a list of the area's industries.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Brush Wellman, Inc.	Metal products	750
Chipmatic Tool & Machine, Inc.	Machining	41
Elmore Manufacturing, Co.	Machining	8
Lucky Farmers	Fertilizer and Feed	5
Machining Technologies	Machining	31
Martin Industries, Inc.	Rubber products	17
Special Cast Molds, Inc.	Molded castings	9
Tank's Meat	Meat processing	19

Central Business District

Elmore's central business district is roughly defined as those properties adjacent to Rice Street, which is State Route 51, between Maple and Toledo Streets. The businesses and services available in the village include the following:

bank	gift and florist shop
pharmacy	hardware store
fire station	convenience store
law office	restaurant
pet store	post office
gas station	printing shop
village hall	computer repair
police station	insurance agency
realtor	tavern
churches	general store/antique mall
medical center	grocery
library	

Utilities and Infrastructure

Electric power is provided by a municipal system affiliated with the statewide collective of municipalities known as AMP Ohio. Natural gas is supplied by Columbia Gas of Ohio. Telephone service is provided by General Telephone. Cable television service is from Cablevision of Ohio. Water and wastewater treatment is handled by the village. The village is currently in the process of separation of the storm and sewer lines.

Transportation

The highway system surrounding the Elmore area allows good access to a variety of transportation routes. The Toledo Express Airport is just to the west of Toledo and provides daily freight and passenger service. The imminent turnpike exchange will vastly improve access times both east \ west (via the turnpike) and north \ south (via Interstate 75, a major interstate corridor which will be less than 15 minutes away). Elmore is within a 20 minute drive of the deep water Port of Toledo.

Community Facilities

The villages of Elmore and Woodville form the consolidated Woodmore School District. Students attend kindergarten through eighth grade in Woodville. The high school for the district is located in Elmore. The total district enrollment is 1,273. The average ACT score is 22.7, the highest in Ottawa County.

In addition, Vanguard-Sentinell Joint Vocation School District and Terra Community College are located in Fremont 15 miles to the east and offer educational opportunities to Elmore students and residents. Owens Community College, Bowling Green State University, the University of Toledo, and Medical College of Ohio are within a 20 mile radius of the village.

The village is served by a weekly newspaper and is within the market and coverage area of Toledo, Bowling Green, Port Clinton, and Fremont television, radio, and newspaper media.

Recreation and social facilities include an 18 hole golf course, a variety of youth organizations, and civic groups. There are several churches in the village that provide a source of recreation and fellowship. School sports teams are well supported within the village.

Elmore has a 30 member Chamber of Commerce that meets monthly and supports various activities in the community. Recent projects include a Christmas decoration contest. The Chamber of Commerce, the village administration, and the village council have strongly supported the development of this report.

Village Structure

The local government is served by an elected mayor and three council members. There is a part-time village clerk/treasurer/tax commissioner. There is no village administrator, and physical and other needs are overseen by a Board of Public Affairs.

The Elmore Corporation tax rates include 72.50 mills on personal property, 49.98 mills on residential property, and 58.31 mills on industrial and commercial.

The county has a 1% county sales tax in addition to the 5% state sales tax.

Economic development is facilitated by the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation based in Port Clinton; technical assistance in matters such as zoning and subdivision review is provided by the fully staffed Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission of which Elmore is a member. The village also participates within the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments.

The Good START Project

The previous information was intended to offer some descriptive background which provides a basis for consideration of any future development plan. To be effective, development planning must consider this descriptive information, but equally important are the thoughts and attitudes the residents and the businesses have about their community.

Data Gathering Process

The following is a summary of the data gathering that was done in connection with the Good START project. The committee formed to begin the project in Elmore was made up of the Mayor, Village Clerk, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the village council. This committee reviewed the survey and interview materials in the Good START project and revised them to be reflective of the village. Changes were made in some areas to include services that the village provided and concerns about the future growth patterns. From this revision, several techniques were developed to be used to

gather data in the village. They are as follows:

- **a four-page survey instrument**, along with a cover letter from the Chamber of Commerce which sponsored the project in the village. This Community Attitude Survey was distributed to every household in the village by Boy Scout Troop 314. The surveys were collected one week later. Surveys could also be dropped off at three other locations in the village. This provided a 34% return rate with 182 of 538 surveys being returned. The results of the survey, printed on the survey form, are included in this report as Appendix A.
- **an interview form to be used with the businesses and industries** in the village. The businesses were mailed the form which was followed up with interviews by the Good START staff and the CIC Director. Sixteen businesses and industries were interviewed. In addition, three completed forms were returned by mail. The results of the interviews, printed on the survey form, are included in this report as Appendix B.
- **a questionnaire** developed to be used with the community leaders to guide personal interviews. The results are included in the report.
- **a community forum** at which members of the village and surrounding government entities joined the Chamber of Commerce in a discussion of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they relate to the village and new families and businesses coming into Elmore. In addition, three smaller groups were formed to consider specific Priorities of Focus. Input generated at the forum is included as Appendix C.

Report and Recommendations

The Good START program has been designed to allow staff from W.S.O.S. Community Action Commission, Inc. working with local and county level development officials, to facilitate the generation of data from a variety of sources. The information gathered is intended to present a snapshot of Elmore as it exists today and how the community views itself. By posing a set of questions within the surveys and the community forum, and through analysis of survey results, an attempt has been made to identify those priority areas where the community, as a whole, has reached some degree of consensus guiding future actions. This report is designed to present to the leadership of Elmore and to the community at large the factual results of the various survey and information gathering processes and trends in thinking which were repeated beyond one source of input. In addition, this report presents the recommendations of the outside facilitators based on all information gathered. The most important of these recommendations is that a local action group continue to carry the recommendations with the highest priority and greatest consensus forward.

This report marks the end of the data gathering phase, the "passing of the torch" from the outside impartial facilitator to the community stakeholders who are charged with translating these printed words into tangible actions, and thus the beginning of focused and deliberate action planning. This planning will require the continued effort of the village government and other such groups as the Elmore Area Chamber of Commerce and the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation.

The following sections present the results of the surveys and the community forum. The goal of these sections is to present an overview of the information gathered.

The Community Attitude Survey

The following is a summary of the responses from the survey. It is important to remember that while the response rate was very good at 34%, the information provided is only from the residents who chose to return the survey.

The first page of the survey covered a series of demographic questions. Results of the survey indicated the following:

- Household size varied from one to eight or more with two being the most common at 43.6%. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents had 3 or fewer household members.
- Fifty-five percent responded that they had lived in the village for over 30 years. Only 5% had lived in the village less than 2 years. This represents a stable community with slow growth.
- Ninety-one percent owned their home, well above the census figure of 69%. Due to high response rate of home owners, this survey may not represent renters' views fully.
- The largest age group was 46-65 years of age with 31.2 %.
- Place of employment varied. One fifth of the primary family workers reported they worked in Elmore; however, one in four were employed outside of Ottawa County. Of the second household member reporting employment, 16% worked in Elmore and 28% were employed outside of Ottawa County. The remainder worked at other sites within the county, such as the nearby Brush Wellman plant.
- Thirty-seven percent of both primary and secondary household members reported being retired. This reflects a large portion (over one-third) of the respondents and in part explains the relatively small average house size.
- Most responses for household income fit into two ranges, \$20,001-35,000 at 32% and \$35,001-50,000 at 31%.
- Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported having a high school education. Of these, twenty-nine percent had some college or trade school, and 21.6%, a fairly high percentage, had a college degree.

Professional and Retail Services

Respondents were asked whether they purchased certain goods and services in Elmore. Pharmacy items, medical services, groceries, convenience items, and legal or accounting services were the five most frequently purchased. Clothing, appliances, cars or trucks, auto repair, and hardware were the least purchased items according to the survey.

When asked how often they shop in Elmore, 59% reported shopping in the village several times a week. Another 32.5% reported shopping in the village at least once a week. This reflects a large portion of the respondents currently in the pattern of shopping in Elmore regularly.

When asked how much need there is for certain businesses in Elmore, the respondents indicated grocery, hardware, medical office, convenience store, and gift or floral shop in that order as most needed. In addition, they were given the opportunity to provide suggestions not on the list. In this group, a 24 hour gas station, bakery, dry cleaner, bank, and car wash ranked the highest.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents use a local bank. The high portion of Elmore shoppers and those banking in the village indicates that it is likely that much of the community's wealth is remaining in Elmore.

When asked to rate selected qualities of the downtown, respondents listed as most positive the service and attitude of the clerks. Following that in order were safety, sidewalk conditions, cleanliness, and overall appearance of the downtown. Retail selection and prices were followed by parking availability, advertising and local promotions, building appearance, and store hours as the lowest rated factors. Future planning should work to capitalize on identified advantages, while working to correct negative perceptions and overcome identified barriers to success downtown.

Village Services

The residents were asked to rate twenty-five items about the village. The items were "scored" from one (poor) to five (excellent). The scores ranged from 4.60 to 2.32.

Fire protection, the municipal electric utility, refuse collection, police protection, and sewage treatment were the five highest rated services. Job opportunities received the lowest rating followed by housing availability, cultural and entertainment opportunities, senior citizen programs, and day care facilities.

Attitude Toward the Community

The respondents of the survey feel of Elmore have a very positive overall opinion about the village. A strong sense of community is also evident among the respondents. Three-fourths of them feel that the community works together at least sometimes in pursuing community goals and another 25% feel it does so frequently. The results also show that community pride is very strong with 86% reporting that residents frequently demonstrate pride in Elmore. According to the survey, half the respondents in Elmore

feel that they generally get along well at least sometime, and nearly another half feel they do so frequently.

Information

Three questions asked the residents about their sources of information concerning government, shopping, and social activities in the village. Seventy-four percent responded that they received their information about the government from one of three newspapers. "Word of mouth" was indicated by 22.7% of the respondents as their source of information about the government. Advertisements provided 35.9% of the respondents shopping information, and newspapers provided 55.7% respondents with their shopping information. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents got information about the social activities from "word of mouth."

Development

The survey included items about the future development of Elmore. When asked about increasing the size and population of the village, 54.6% of the respondents were in favor. While not an overwhelming mandate for growth, it does indicate that a majority of the respondents are willing to support efforts to increase population.

A list of seventeen additional items concerning development were presented for consideration. These were scored from 1 (oppose) to 5 (support). The range for these items was from 4.32 to 2.17.

The single item receiving the greatest support for its development was recreation programs for youth. A related item, efforts to keep youth and young adults in the village, was rated second. Taken together these suggest a great deal of concern for the future of the village. Following these items were historic preservation of buildings, downtown business development, and park development and improvements. Planned economic growth was the 6th ranked item under development.

More traditional indicators of growth and development like attraction of light industry and service industry ranked numbers 9 and 11.

The respondents indicated the least amount of support for attraction of heavy industry, tourism promotion, tax reduction for new job creating businesses, annexation of land to the village for growth, and new private housing subdivisions.

This section revealed a concern for "quality of life" item such as parks and recreation programs, which will benefit current residents, but which can also be built into selling points for prospective business and residents. Curiously, although available housing opportunities earlier scored poorly, construction of new housing was not assigned a high priority in this section.

Other Questions

In addition to the above questions, the survey included four open-ended questions specifically asking about strengths, weaknesses, improvements, and challenges for the Village of Elmore. The majority of the respondents provided answers to these questions.

Strengths

1) A combination of small town attributes were rated as the most important overall strength of the village. Among those attributes, safety was considered to be the number one strength of Elmore. People also ranked the small size of the community and its small town atmosphere as the second and third strengths. Sense of community and a caring about one's neighbors were frequently mentioned as an important component of the small town.

2) Utilities from the standpoint of both cost and reliability were ranked as the second overall strength. Respondents were satisfied with the utility service and felt that it was a valuable asset in attracting others to the village. This was supported by earlier questions.

3) Location, schools, and village services also ranked high in the listing of the strengths of Elmore by the respondents.

Weaknesses

1) The most frequently cited weakness was the lack of a plan for the growth of the village. Respondents felt that growth was definitely in the future for Elmore and expressed a need for the ability to direct it to the village's advantage. Several respondents expressed a concern about the lack of room for development.

2) While the respondents were largely willing to support the citizens and their neighbors in the village, another weakness was considered to be the attitudes of some of the people of Elmore. There was a general concern about the willingness of the people to work together and the reliance on rumor and gossip rather than direct communication with others in the village. The communication factor was also evident in responses about the governmental jurisdictions in and around the village.

3) Government was identified as the last category of weakness. Comments covered issues like council governing to its own agenda, not listening to people, and a feeling of closed door governance. There was no large single issue in this group, but rather a general feeling that the government was not as responsive as the citizens would like it to be.

Needed Improvements

1) The single largest number of responses concerned the condition of the streets and alleys in the village. A levy had been recently passed in support of that issue.

2) Growth was again identified as an improvement issue. The need for a development plan and more jobs

along with a general desire for more businesses were the foremost concerns of the respondents, reinforcing earlier responses.

3) Downtown, in general, and parking, specifically, were areas that the respondents to the survey would like to see improved. There were several comments about the need to improve the image of the downtown area. The example of Grand Rapids, Ohio, bordering the Maumee River in Wood County, using that riverfront location and highway access to best advantage, was suggested. Another concern for the downtown was the lack of support for the businesses currently located there. The respondents would like to see more village residents support local businesses by shopping in them rather than going out of town.

Parking, especially in the downtown business district, generated a number of comments. Many people were concerned about the lack of parking in the main shopping area.

Challenges

1) The biggest challenge that the village will face according to the respondents is the need to control and plan for the growth that will be occurring. Generally, the respondents seemed to feel that growth was inevitable, and that the village should be prepared to positively guide the growth rather than reacting to it.

2) Closely related to the growth issue in the responses of the many of people are the issues raised by the proximity of the turnpike as a negative force for the village. Most considered it to be an opportunity. However, they stated that there must be an effort and a plan to make it a positive force in the village. Traffic was noted as a part of the concern about the challenge that the turnpike presented to Elmore.

3) Attracting new business and industries was the next largest category that respondents considered to be a challenge for the village.

Business and Industry Interviews

Sixteen businesses and industries were interviewed for the Good START project. Each was sent an interview form and appointments were made to speak to a representative. Many of the questions and items paralleled those of the Community Survey.

According to the results of the interviews,

- there has been a net gain of 31 jobs during the last 5 years among the survey sample.
- nearly one quarter of the businesses reported plans to expand at their current location within the next 5 years, suggesting a potential for growth from within.
- fifty-six percent have difficulty recruiting skilled and semi-skilled employees.

Development Briefing: Networking

While confidentiality is the key word in dealing with a prospect, a considerable amount of communicating should go on between economic development oriented persons in the community in preparation for working with a prospect.

The more interaction those responsible for economic development in the community have with local, regional, and state resource persons, the better. It is not so much "having all the answers" as it is knowing where to look and who to ask.

The main source of information at the local level is the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation office in Port Clinton. This one contact provides instant access to all county and state agencies regarding incentives, public sector financing, and training programs available to the prospect. The County development office also maintains direct ties to the county's State Representative and Senator, as well as to the various divisions of the Ohio Department of Development.

Additionally, contact should be maintained with representatives of all locally-serving utilities. These people also can provide instant access to expertise at the regional and state level of their respective organizations.

Ongoing contact with all these sources, coordinated through your CIC professional, is crucial to being prepared for economic development, and once included within your "network", these professionals can be counted upon for assistance when prospects are being handled locally.

Local individuals involved in economic development may also benefit from membership in organizations which are devoted to development on a larger geographic scale. The Ohio Development Association (ODA) produces newsletters and seminars with information for novice and professional alike, and presents ample opportunities for networking with others from around the state, including your utility and railroad representatives and the County economic development office. Even further information can be gleaned from an annual correspondence course and seminar on economic development, and the more formal Basic Economic Development Course (BEDC), both sponsored in part by ODA.

- twenty-nine percent have difficulty recruiting professional employees.
- ninety percent rate the quality of the workforce that they are able to recruit as good to excellent, suggesting a very high quality in the existing workforce.
- nearly eighty percent rated the village as a "good to excellent" place to do business. The remainder rated Gibsonburg as "fair," and no one scored it as "poor."

Community Information

The businesses were asked to rank village services using many of the same items that were a part of the citizen survey. Highest ranked in this group was ambulance/EMS service. Rounding out the top five were fire protection, police protection, access to highways, and electricity rounding out the top five. Lowest ranked in this group were street cleaning, telecommunications, inspections, brush removal and water quality.

Impact on Business

When asked to rate the importance of certain factors on their businesses, the highest scores were given to reliability of services provided by the village, followed by the responsiveness of the local government, public services, labor costs, state and local taxes, and land costs. Factors with the least amount of impact on the business and industries were transportation costs, energy costs, parking, and building costs.

Strengths

Business respondents indicated that the greatest strength of the village was its people. The ability of the people to get along and help each other as needed was cited as most important. In general, business leaders felt that the people of the village supported their businesses. This mirrored opinions expressed in the Citizen Attitude Survey.

Quality of life issues were listed as a strength of the village. Low crime rate, friendliness, cleanliness, maintenance of property values, schools, and churches were listed as a positive part of the quality of life issue. The cost of electricity, water quality, and location were also included as strengths.

Weaknesses

While the respondents did not rate the lack of parking as having high direct impact on their businesses, it was listed as a weakness for the village as a whole.

The business interview results listed the retail sector as a weakness for a number of reasons. Lack of volume of sales, inability to buy what is needed in Elmore, and lack of support by the residents were the concerns of the respondents. The latter may be a misperception as the vast majority of respondents indicate they shop locally.

The third ranking weakness was a lack of progressive thinking in the village. Business respondents felt that the residents of the village lacked a desire for progress, somewhat conflicting with attitudes expressed on the Citizen Attitude Survey.

Other issues listed as weaknesses were quality of phone service, increasing land costs, lack of water availability to support business expansion, inability to get consensus on projects, and the number of people moving in from Toledo.

Improvements

When asked to cite specific improvements needed in the village, the business respondents listed first several issues that affect the downtown shopping area. These issues included the need to improve parking, to increase the selection of goods in the stores, to encourage the residents to "buy locally," and to improve the downtown design to reflect a Victorian atmosphere.

Water quality and the unresponsiveness of the village council were listed as other issues that need improvement.

Challenges

The businesses indicated that the biggest challenge is growth. Under this large category were several concerns. Ranked first was the need for the village to develop a strategy that is dependable and not subject to change by political bodies. Included in the growth issues were zoning and permits and the need for more jobs. Last under this category was a concern about the residents of the village not wanting to support the growth and not being aware of the incentives available for growth.

Another challenge identified in the interviews is the need to maintain and support the local businesses and keeping the tax dollars in the village. Included in this is a concern about competition with the major chain stores in the surrounding area.

Residential growth and concern that the village will become a bedroom community, infrastructure capacity, and the impact that increased traffic will have on the village were included in the list of challenges.

Development

When asked to discuss the development issues facing the village, business respondents identified the retail, industrial, and housing sectors. The retail development needed included a concern about both vacant store fronts and a lack of retail frontage. Generally they wanted to protect and promote the businesses in the village and develop the image of the retail area like that of the one in Grand Rapids.

The respondents also made a list of the additional businesses needed in the village. A gas station, bank, car wash, clothing store, lumber yard, expanded hardware, grocery, and fast food were the businesses they wished to see added to or expanded in the village.

Industrial development concerns included a need to improve the tax base and to recruit businesses with better paying jobs. Controlling industrial development to prevent an influx of heavy industry and developing an area for industrial development that is located away from the residential areas in the village were also cited as development issues.

Housing concerns included the need to recruit younger families into the village, however, the business expressed concern about the number of people coming into the village from Toledo.

Communication

Generally, the business leaders were concerned about the quality of communication in the village, a concern also revealed in the Citizen Attitude Survey. They cited that the government bodies needed to work more closely together, and they felt that better communication would encourage people to get involved in the village in a more positive way.

Turnpike

Because of the addition of a turnpike interchange to open in 1996, there were a number of responses that pertained to that issue. Generally businesses believe the interchange will be an improvement to the village as it will provide excellent access to the highway system. They were concerned about the changes that will result from it and felt that the village should do all it can to control the development of the area around the interchange and in the village. This concern has also been expressed in the Citizen Attitude Survey.

Community Forum

On Monday, January 29, 1996, over forty Elmore residents attended a forum held in the township hall. The residents were from a cross section of the community. Several were business people, various governmental entities were represented, and many were interested citizens. The forum was led by Mark Reilly and facilitated by the Good START staff. All the input generated at the forum is included in this report.

The goal of the forum was to solicit further input from the community representatives, to review the survey results, and to discuss three issues that were selected as being the most critical for the village.

During the forum, participants were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the village from the perspective of families thinking of moving into Elmore and from the perspective of industrial prospects.

The discussion generated the following comments.

Positives identified for families

- schools and libraries

- good village maintenance
- community pride and friendliness of the people
- security
- available day care
- parks and recreational activities

Negatives identified for families

- lack of housing for rent and sale
- few recreation activities
- no home mail delivery
- medical service is limited

Positives identified for industry

- good schools
- neatness of the community
- willingness for abatements - Enterprise Zone
- attractive utility rates
- accessibility to markets
- EMS and fire protection
- quality of labor force
- cooperation between local governments to attract business

Negatives identified for industries

- not much vacant space for business
- lack of parking downtown

In addition, they were asked to consider what they would like Elmore to be in the year 2001.

Elmore in the year 2001

- Ohio Department of Transportation responsive to traffic change with the addition of the turnpike exit
- planned and organized growth so services are possible
- cooperative growth plans
- job opportunities for skilled and entry level positions
- people to fill the available positions
- Elmore has it own area to develop for business and industry

A summary of the survey results was presented to the forum participants. A short explanation was made about the format and the procedures used.

Goal 2: Improve the small business base and work to revitalize the central retail area.

Background

The Citizen Attitude Survey recognizes as pluses the superior service and positive attitude of clerks, safety, sidewalk conditions and cleanliness, and overall appearance of the downtown area. Concerns of the residents are retail selection and prices, parking availability, advertising and local promotions, building appearance, and store hours. Business interviews reinforce these concerns in the specific area of parking. Additionally, the businesses are concerned about sales volume and lack of support by the residents.

Action Steps

1) The Chamber of Commerce and CIC can plan a public meeting and presentation by the staff of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) to discuss the "Main Street" program and other OHPO technical assistance available and to offer advice on specific building treatments.

2) The CIC and Chamber should work with property and business owners and other interested parties (school district and churches) to pursue downtown revitalization and a new image for the central business district and to explore market niches to build on local traffic generated by the turnpike interchange. The strategy can include:

a) "adopting " and decorating vacant storefronts

b) developing a unified effort to promote the central business district which can include

- store operating hours,
- develop a logo identifying and uniting downtown Elmore and the access to Lake Erie recreation opportunities
- joint advertising efforts - recruit advertising department of newspaper to provide advice on most effective approach
- develop a flyer enumerating the businesses and services available in the central business district. Place flyers in all businesses in the area including Village Hall, Library, and grocery - and outside locations
- acknowledge price and selection factors of small retail business and actively promote "service," while pursuing unique mixes and market niches

c) visit with and discuss the experience of officials of Grand Rapids, Ohio, to determine the success and challenges of their development efforts. Grand Rapids has built upon a location along the riverfront and state highway.

d) continue to sponsor the festival promoting a prominent position for retail sector. Festival hours can coincide with store hours to give visitors exposure to products offered in town. Encourage stores to have promotional sales at that same time.

e) encourage "buying local" by providing promotion - develop "Elmore Bucks" theme from the Christmas decoration contest

f) focus on one business in each Hayseed publication doing in depth information linked with a coupon - see Marketplace approach in News Messenger

g) review parking availability

- survey customer parking habits and preferences
- review parking patterns and limits to verify appropriate use of parking space
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- consider development of parking area in rear and/or east end of central area

Development Briefing: Saving Downtown

Downtown revitalization in smaller communities is an uphill battle, but not necessarily an impossible one to win. The international acceptance of the regional shopping mall has changed the role of downtowns forever. However, the shift from the local general store to the discount K-Mart or Wal-Mart, and from the downtown catalog store to the ubiquitous mall "anchor," has left several roles for the central business district to still play.

Downtowns are still serving effectively as local "service centers" - homes for insurance, real estate, business services, professional offices, and the like. They also serve the local and convenience needs of residents who don't want to travel long distances for every purchase.

Beyond these obvious functions, downtown organizations and individuals are meeting varied degrees of success in creating new roles and carving out new niches. Success requires a concerted effort, a plan, and a goal. A community can strive to become an "antiques center", but it takes more than one antique shop to attract significant out-of-town traffic.

More likely, the community needs to put together several shops, an attractive restaurant, perhaps an old-fashioned ice cream parlor for summer traffic, an outside "event" such as a concert by the local school band, and an overall atmosphere which attracts people and makes them comfortable to be downtown.

A tried-and-true method to approach downtown revitalization is known as the **Main Street** approach, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and promoted in Ohio by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. That method includes four major components: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Each component is viewed as essential, and the overall strategy is incremental, with no short-term anticipations. Like industrial prospect development, downtown revitalization takes time and patience.

Organization requires unified and coordinated management, with primary responsibility falling on the downtown business community. Downtown businesses must work together - on common **promotion**, jointly sponsored events and advertising, uniform hours, and in the best of cases, uniformity of new building and storefront **design**.

Successful organized marketing of the downtown will result in a unified, positive **image** and consumer recognition of the downtown as a **singular entity** first, and a collection of individual businesses second.

The downtown business community, if organized effectively through the Chamber or other means, can also work to attract new businesses where voids are documented.

Other recommendations include:

1. Formation of a **downtown revitalization committee** to carry out the community's downtown development strategy. This may most likely be suited to the Chamber for implementation.

2. Contact with the **Ohio Historic Preservation Office** for information on building revitalization, Main Street concepts, restoration techniques, and other technical assistance including a possible local seminar for interested property owners.
3. Business owners should work to establish **uniform shopping hours** and to **promote the downtown jointly**. A joint logo or slogan is often helpful to promote a single image for the downtown, and to create a collective identity shared by all downtown businesses.
4. The potential benefit of **advertising on the turnpike** to "snag" out-of-town customers should be analyzed. What business, products, and services should be advertised?
5. **Promotional events** should be organized. Events should be coordinated with business hours. Sunday events in front of closed storefronts will not produce revenues! (Rather than abandoning Sundays, stores may wish to consider special hours during events). Other events could include auto shows, agricultural shows, flower shows, craft shows, a "Farmers Market", special children's events and contests, and sidewalk sales.
6. **Downtown should be viewed as not just a place to shop, but as a place to have fun**. Mall management works hard to achieve this image. The five elements for successful events, as viewed by developers such as James Rouse, are overlapping events, food and drink, something given away free, something for the children, and music. This formula is employed at Disneyland and at successful "Festival Marketplaces" around the country.
7. As with industrial prospect development, an **inventory of available downtown storefronts**, sale or lease costs, and other information should be maintained. Available financial and other incentives for new businesses should be explored. With enough interest, funding could be sought from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program.
8. Conversion of downtown properties to attractive **apartments** should be explored as potential income producing activity. This could provide housing for those who value access to downtown amenities, such as elderly households.
9. Those with a stake in the downtown should work to capitalize on the time demands increasingly placed upon two-paycheck households with little time to shop. Increasing value is placed on "convenience" shopping close to home which takes little time.

Goal 3: Capitalize upon the new S.R. 51 turnpike interchange as an asset for the village by planning and controlling its impact on the village.

Background

While most feelings about the interchange are positive, the need to effectively plan for and control its impact on the entire village is acknowledged. The interchange will be a true challenge for the village; however, the residents are most concerned that the traffic on State Route 51 will create problems for the central business district. In addition, they are somewhat concerned about the negative activities that may occur because of the increased traffic into the village.

The business surveys indicate favorable opinions about the interchange. The improved highway access is an asset for many of these businesses. However, several businesses mentioned concerns about development around the interchange itself. These concerns were primarily about outlying businesses that would be established in that area and compete with existing business in the village. The residents also expressed concern about excessive commercial development around the interchange.

Action Steps

- 1) Continue efforts to control the designation of the interchange as local or recreational, not an alternate route to Toledo via S. R. 51
- 2) Work with adjoining government entities (especially Harris Township) to develop plans for future development
- 3) Conduct traffic counts as necessary and maintain contact with the Ohio Turnpike Commission and Ohio Department of Transportation. Both entities may be helpful in designing methods to control or facilitate traffic flow through Elmore if a significantly higher traffic count results. Improvements may include devices such as traffic lights, street alignments, pavement widening, and intersection redesign to accommodate truck and traffic turning movements
- 4) Survey license plates of through town traffic and parked vehicles
 - determine where traffic originates
 - design marketing to target tourist/visitors
- 5) Promote location as quality farmer market - focus on area's agribusiness
 - use turnpike sign to attract
 - identify, market, and stock specialized agricultural products
 - cooperative marketing with local farmers
 - identify off-season activities to offset seasonal nature of agriculturally-oriented products

Goal 4: Promote existing businesses and market the community as an attractive location for desirable new businesses and industry.

Background

As a part of the desire to control growth in the village, residents and businesses both respond they are interested in recruiting small industry. These groups are selective about the types of industries that they are interested in attracting to Elmore. Also mentioned numerous times in the surveys is a need to work to retain and promote existing businesses.

The proximity of the Portage River to the village contributes to the "quality of life" issue. It is identified in the survey responses as a positive resource for the village. Development of the riverfront would be an attraction not only for the current residents, but also would be a good marketing tool for the village. It would enhance any downtown development project.

Action Steps

- 1) Consider development of a low-cost, proactive marketing strategy including
 - identify most desired industries which are most likely to locate in an area then plan target mailing, working with Ottawa County CIC
 - identify linkages to nearby industry/businesses most likely to partner with - suppliers which need to locate near client plants within a specific drive time
 - identify potential for "just in time" market
 - identify markets within local area to complement one another
- 2) Establish standard procedures and reliable "team" of individuals, conversant in relevant data concerning the village and available incentives for dealing with prospects
 - maintain a "scorecard" of experiences with prospects and others showing interest in Elmore. Note their evaluations as points for improvement.
 - ensure local contacts are included within county-wide and regional prospect development teams for site visits
- 3) Develop and focus on theme (access to recreation) and availability of transportation as a positive economic development factor
- 4) Create a "billboard" along turnpike to promote Elmore and carefully select image and theme
- 5) Work closely with CIC to develop marketing tools to target desired industry
 - a) may include development of a piece to include in the Ottawa County brochure
 - b) develop and maintain a descriptive "catalog" of incentives available to local development, including favorable utility rates, enterprise zone, local fees and rates for services, schools in and around village, and appropriate state/federal financing, labor training, and technical assistance programs
 - c) emphasis on municipal electric system and its comparative advantage

6) Conduct retention and expansion business visitation program with commercial and industrial businesses within the village to develop more effective relationship

- to be initiated by the Chamber of Commerce
- partnership with the CIC as appropriate (especially with the manufacturers)
- develop a monthly "after hours" with all local businesses inviting other interested parties

7) Inventory existing space and available land for building - provide to CIC

8) Work with AMP Ohio to take advantage of promotion by that organization

9) Partner with Schedel Foundation to promote village and explore mutual promotional projects

10) Work with regional entities, county, township, regional planning commission, etc.

11) Continue efforts with Visitors Bureau for inclusion within Lake Erie tourism region

12) Research the "best use" for the riverfront area. This resource could be a community-wide asset, as well as, a tourism promotion. The development of the riverfront could provide recreational, cultural, and commercial benefits similar to those realized in communities such as Grand Rapids in nearby Wood County.

Development Briefing: Marketing Elmore

The big players spend a lot of money on marketing. Thousands of dollars go into the design and placement of advertisements in select publications. Attractive and eye-catching packages are developed for mass or targeted mailings. Fees are paid to consultants to help target those industrial sectors which are most likely to take a serious interest in the community as a potential site.

Obviously, Elmore does not have tens of thousands of dollars to spend in marketing. This does not mean the village cannot be an effective player. An efficient, low-cost marketing strategy can be developed which will make certain desired business prospects take note of your community.

Here, then, are some low-cost suggestions:

1. The existing Ottawa County brochure with enclosures is a winner. We recommend developing an Elmore enclosure and keeping a stock of the brochures available, updating them as needed. Put multiple copies in the hands of officials from the Ohio Development Department, utilities, rail officials, commercial realtors, commercial builders, and lenders. Local industries could receive one, as well, during an R&E visit.

2. Proximity to the turnpike (and I-75) may well be the community's biggest asset in prospects' eyes. Exposure on could result from an eye-catching billboard. It may be most cost-effective to construct and own one, rather than renting space. A good slogan or catch phrase can result from local brainstorming or a contract with a public relations firm. A slogan could result from a community-wide contest.

3. One inexpensive targeting ploy: Someone can spend a day or two recording whose trucks are most frequently passing by on the turnpike. Of special interest are manufacturers' trucks. If a manufacturer shows up frequently, and it doesn't have a plant nearby, it may make sense from a transportation cost standpoint to locate a new plant in the village.

If you also record common carriers' trucks, it is possible that a regional center for a trucking firm would be cost-effective. Commercial distribution centers need not be ruled out; either.

4. An obvious target for marketing is the automotive industry and auto suppliers. Even with a recession and sales downturn, the I-75 stretch from Michigan to Tennessee is the "auto belt", and Elmore is doubtless a contender for auto supplier plant locations.

5. Other potentials which would match local labor availability and site conditions: plastics molding, electronic assembly, metal fabrication. Water availability should be clearly ascertained by the village, in order to know of any potential constraints posed by prospects (such as some plastics operations) which use large amounts of water in their operations.

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knowledge of special linkages between nearby businesses and prospects which want to locate in the area. Local plant officials should be courted as valuable resources, and efforts should be made to gain their contributions to Chamber or CIC activities.

From the survey results, three major themes were selected to become the Focus Priorities. These were chosen due to the number and content of the responses related to them. In the selection of these priorities, consideration was given to both the residential and business survey results.

Participants were divided into three groups to discuss the three Focus Priorities: growth, leadership, and communication. Each of these groups discussed the information presented to them from the forum and the results of the surveys. From the discussion, they developed a list of issues relating to their priority.

Growth

- industrial
- residential
- commercial
- concern for utilities
- small business - competition with large stores in surrounding area
- marketing the village

Leadership

- communication needs to be improved to and from the citizens of the village
- leadership must have honesty and integrity
- leaders should not be afraid to lead
- public relations should be improved

Communication

- mailer or newsletter was suggested
how to get people to read it?
- Chamber of Commerce activities
What is it about and what is it doing?
- some definition of "community" should be developed

The conclusion of the forum included a reporting back from the priority groups and commitment to get the information generated at the forum back to the participants. To continue the Good START process, interested participants were encouraged to complete a form that indicated their choice of Focus Priority and asked for their participation in that area.

The Elmore Good START Strategy

The overall purpose of a coordinated development effort is to exert local control over the destiny of the village to the maximum extent possible. Without a proactive initiative in this regard, the well-being of the community will be increasingly dependent on factors and forces outside the control of the people who make up the community.

In the Village of Elmore, there are several groups in place who are working toward the development of the village. It is important to acknowledge the work that these groups have done and are currently doing. It is part of the strategy to reinforce the work that is now being done, not to replace it. It is very important to coordinate the efforts of the various groups and communicate progress on all fronts with a single coordinated message.

The underlying mission of the strategy is to maximize the opportunity for all local residents to enjoy the quality of life which can only be realized in a small town, while bringing to reality those improvements which are feasible and of highest priority, and to create opportunities for all businesses to operate as efficiently and successfully as possible.

Through the efforts of the entire community, the Good START process has identified three Focus Priorities. These priorities are growth, leadership, and communication. An additional priority that should be considered is the effect that the turnpike interchange opening in the summer of 1996 will have on the future development of the Village of Elmore. Goals and action steps are suggested in the discussion which follows for each of these priorities.

Focus Priorities

The following goals, or "Focus Priorities," have been selected for planning and action in the short run, based upon the several methods of input described previously. A more in-depth discussion of each follows this list.

Growth

Growth is inevitable for Elmore. Based on survey results, Elmore's citizens are well aware of this. The construction of the turnpike interchange will offer Elmore the opportunity of being within minutes of metro Toledo and the growing I-75 corridor, yet offering the advantages of a rural small town.

Residents (and business representatives) are clear in their views that the positive aspects of the small town - such as knowing one's neighbors and feeling safe - must be preserved. Less clear, but easy to infer from the survey data, is a desire to retain and improve on the physical small town character of Elmore. This desire points toward managed, slow growth as a goal and area of focus.

In the forum discussion, several tools and methods were listed to harness or control growth. These include zoning and subdivision regulations, formalized communications with area local government,

coordination with Ottawa County officials, and possibly comprehensive planning, including planning and recruiting for the central business district.

For the near future, the planning committee should focus on putting tools and processes in place to guide development, rather than endure it. Recommendations are included in this report which focus on several facets of controlled growth.

1. Continue the "Good START" process for planning and development.
2. Improve the small business base and work to revitalize the central retail area.
3. Promote existing businesses and market the community as an attractive location for desirable new business and industry.
4. Create an atmosphere for residential growth that will allow for increases in the population and maintain the existing "quality of life."
5. Capitalize upon the new SR 51 turnpike interchange as an asset to the village by planning for development and controlling its impact on the village.

Leadership

Survey results - both through broad-based trends and individual comments - pointed toward a need to identify, develop, and capitalize on local leadership. The opportunity must exist for new leaders to emerge and contribute to their community. The citizen attitude survey reveals that leadership development is of critical importance in both the public and private sectors. Those currently in leadership positions should be given every opportunity to contribute. At the same time, future leaders need to know there will be a place for them to hone and apply their skills. Leadership development will not just happen; it must be planned for and actively promoted. Recommendations are included in this report to help ensure that leadership opportunities will continue in those areas where they will be most needed.

6. Encourage and develop effective leadership in the village and the surrounding area.

Communication

Elmore, like every other community, benefits or suffers from the level of use, quality, and accuracy of its communication networks. These can be formal media - such as the weekly Hayseed, or area newspaper and radio. Survey responses also pointed to the importance of more informal networks: "Word of mouth" was cited by numerous residents as a primary source of information.

In a time of change such as that imposed by the turnpike interchange, the need for a flow of accurate information to everyone in the community is vital. To maintain credibility, local government must take steps to ensure that accurate information reaches as many residents as possible.

7. **Develop and enhance effective communication skills and means to provide accurate information to all sectors of the village.**

Goal 1: Continue "Good START" process for planning and development.

Background

Cited as a priority concern of residents is the ability of the village to plan for "inevitable" growth and the desire to plan for it effectively. Business interviews support the need for the continuation of the planning process. It will be important to frequently revisit any plan and its goals and action steps made frequently as the changes coming to Elmore are likely to be significant with the addition of the turnpike interchange.

Action steps

- 1) Expand the existing committee with significant private and public sector participation
 - include the leaders of existing community groups - service groups, youth organizations, churches, etc.
 - solicit speakers on team building techniques
 - incorporate into the planning process those who are currently involved at some capacity within the village, i.e. various other committee members
- 2) Actively solicit the assistance of those who volunteered at the Community Forum and maintain their role (and interest) in the process
 - develop committees under Chamber umbrella for Leadership, Growth, and Communication - incorporate existing groups when possible.
- 3) Engage resources for technical assistance pertaining to strategic planning
 - Terra or Owens Community Colleges could be resource for assistance
 - other resources: WSOS, TMACOG, Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, Ottawa County CIC
- 4) Build into the planning framework the requirement to review the process on an annual basis and issue a report to the residents and the businesses in the village - allow for "feedback" or evaluation of the process by interested parties, while building a measure of accountability.
- 5) Assess capacity of infrastructure for growth and plan accordingly - perhaps through comprehensive planning to best use economic development plan resources.
- 6) Design and implement a comprehensive land use and growth plan
 - begin now in order to be proactive
 - target Elmore but with forward look to surrounding area
 - incorporate township and county input
 - consider use of other initiatives such as Enterprise Zone to control or guide growth

7) Examine zoning and subdivision regulations in detail (use resources of Regional Planning Commission)

- **evaluate those currently in existence**
- **consider best use for land**
- **designate future development areas reflective of community wishes**

Development Briefing: Community Image

In answering the surveys, several comments were made about properties in the village that needed cleaning up and junk removal. To help tidy up the unkempt image perceived by some, service organizations could sponsor one or more "community clean-up days" or weekends. Incentives to clean up could include a promise of free hauling of trash (which may require a donated payment to a commercial hauler). Volunteer labor could be offered by service organizations and Scouts to help elderly or other residents in carting away their eyesore trash. Similarly, donations of paint and materials could be solicited, with volunteers supplying labor to paint and fix up visible properties throughout the village. Elderly or low-income households could be targeted for assistance. Such a strategy has been employed elsewhere in many communities and neighborhoods.

A more negative, but potentially successful, approach is to tighten up the terms or enforcement of village ordinances covering property conditions, zoning, storage of waste, storage of vehicles, and similar issues. Village Council should consider this approach.

Simultaneous with the community clean-up, and possibly tied to school and athletic booster activities, the Chamber could develop a promotional slogan to be offered on banners downtown, bumper stickers for residents, and possibly the billboard discussed previously. Bumper stickers provide a low-cost promotional medium every time a resident travels out of town! Widespread acceptance of the promotional campaign by all sectors of the community is important from the start.

Goal 6: Encourage and develop effective leadership in the village and the surrounding area.

Background

While "cooperation and small town community attitude" are very evident in the identification of strengths within the village, residents have identified a concern about the ability and willingness of citizens to work together. Business interviews include concerns about the lack of progressive thinking among the community members and an inability to focus on projects. Concern has been expressed that planning and projects are subject to the changes that occur in political office, and that there is no consistency. Planning for a better Elmore must transcend these limiting factors.

Action Steps

- 1) Recognize leaders of community organizations and profile in the Hayseed.
- 2) Schedule meetings (quarterly) for the leaders of community groups to share their interests and concerns about the village and examine progress in pursuing development goals. Encourage the members of council and/or other village and township officials to attend.
- 3) Encourage membership in or development of a "leadership class" often done in a county-wide format.
- 4) Develop leadership mentoring program with high school students. Include them in the planning process of community organizations.

Goal 7: Develop and enhance effective communication skills and means to provide accurate information to members of all sectors of the village.

Background

Clearly supported as a challenge within the village is the issue of communication. Communication between residents, leadership, local government, and businesses in any community is vital, but in a village the size of Elmore and with the changes that will develop as it grows it becomes especially important. Any perception of a failure to communicate will become an issue in the development plans, as all sectors have a vested interest in the village.

Effective communication must be timely and accurate. There needs to be one method or means that is accessible to all in the village. The residential survey indicates that the citizens are getting their information about various aspects of the village from a variety of sources, including "word of mouth." While most of these sources should continue to be used to their fullest, "word of mouth" is not the most effective way to convey accurate information. Efforts must be made to communicate more effectively.

Action Steps

- 1) Use media (Hayseed, cable television, newspapers, radio) in an organized uniform method to deliver a consistent message to the village.
- 2) Work with the publisher to suggest developing a part of the Hayseed to include the meetings of all the village council, township trustee, Chamber of Commerce, school board, and other public meetings.
- 3) Actively encourage attendance of the public at public meetings; publicize agendas prior to meetings.
- 4) Solicit members of government entities, Chamber, school board, etc. to speak at community group meetings on the activities and issues
- 5) Hold town meetings on a regular basis
 - invite members of all government entities
 - include question and answer periods
- 6) Research potential for use of local access cable channel to broadcast meetings, interviews, and other events of land interest

The Point of Planning

The Good START process deliberately focuses upon some of the state's smaller communities. The two major reasons for this focus present a paradox: (1) Small communities typically have very limited resources (funding, time) to devote to developing their vision for the future and working toward it; yet (2) Small communities hold desirable attributes which can present comparative advantages for business and residential growth.

Here are some reasons why it is valuable to invest time and energy in planning for the future of your community.

1. In his best-selling book, "Megatrends", John Naisbett charted the shift of our society from an industrial one to an information society. Since publication of that book, advances in cable and fiber optics and the expansion of the Internet and World Wide Web have borne out Naisbett's projections. New information-based businesses can rely less upon physical location within metropolitan market areas, as long as they can access the Information Superhighway. Rural areas become more favorable as a result.
2. Several surveys have pointed to public preference for smaller communities. A book entitled "Micropolitan America" cites a 1978 survey by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that found nearly half of a 7,000 person sample to choose small towns as the best place to raise children (only twelve percent favored large cities). A 1985 Gallup survey asked if people would move away from their communities if they could. Fully 41 percent of those in cities of over 1 million population registered dissatisfaction, compared to just 30 percent in smaller cities (50,000 to 500,000 population) and an even lesser 27 percent in rural areas.
3. The current political climate favors the decentralization of decision-making (and revenue sources) away from the federal level, to states, and ultimately to local governments. The need for planning by and for local communities has never been greater, as communities must rely less and less upon outside solutions to internal challenges.
4. Changing demographics will inevitably bring about changes in planning goals and objectives. The foremost trend is the growth of the elderly segment of population, already evident in rural communities where seniors make up a large percentage of village households.
5. Changing requirements for employment point to an increased need for education, especially in technical areas. Access to specialized education becomes increasingly important, posing interesting challenges for small, rural communities. Part of the solution will come through technology - presenting opportunities for distance learning centers. But the need to match the employee training requirements of local business with the capabilities of the labor force is becoming a paramount concern which can stimulate - or bring to a halt - economic development activity.

Conclusion

This report has attempted to convey the findings of a number of sources of input concerning what the building blocks of the Village of Elmore - its residents and business leaders - think of their community and where it stands in 1996. Based on this input, and the trends in thinking which can be discerned from the survey results, the report also includes an outline of recommendations covering growth, leadership, and communication as the top three priorities.

This information, and the "snapshot" which it presents, is very important at the time this report is first written, distributed, and absorbed. It is a "good start", and if it is successful, it will form the basis of an action planning and project development process which begins almost immediately, grabbing hold of those recommendations where local interest is great enough; moving from planning to DOING; acknowledging, evaluating, and celebrating projects which are completed; and moving to new focus priorities.

The transition from information collection and analysis to action planning and implementation is the most critical - AND MOST DIFFICULT - step in the process. The Village of Elmore is ready to take that step.

Here are a few suggestions in taking this crucial step:

1. Make reading this report MANDATORY for the Mayor and all Council members; and for at least a half-dozen leaders serving in the Chamber of Commerce. Others may be selected who must read the report.
2. Publicize this report. Make a copy available for viewing at the library; make more copies available to check out of the library.
3. Firm up the membership of the umbrella public-private committee which will oversee planning and implementation. Needless to say, all members get a copy of this report.
4. Take time for all to read the report, then call a meeting. Prioritize goals (new ones can emerge if appropriate); prioritize action steps within the top goals.
5. Stay with the action steps. Flesh them out; make them understandable, achievable steps. Assign persons or groups (which can include outside individuals and groups) who agree to take responsibility for carrying out their action step. Place time limits to get the step completed. Make those assigned the action step report back to the committee on progress and completion. Do not be afraid to widen the circle of participating persons and organizations, or to delegate tasks to partnering organizations, including service clubs, church youth groups, or scout troops.
6. Set a schedule for meetings of the umbrella committee. Include reports on each active goal and progress in meeting the goal. Invite outside officials who can help achieve the goal. If possible, get a meeting together at least once a month. Momentum and high interest is critical to

success.

7. Take minutes; turn them into easily readable reports to the community at large. Print the reports in the Hayseed or another medium which will be widely read throughout Elmore. Continue to solicit participation by new contributors.

8. Once every six months, step back from DOING the work and EXAMINE what has been done over the past half year. Evaluate progress against goals, and tracking of work steps. Revise schedules to represent the present reality, which will inevitably be different from your projection six months ago. Acknowledge groups who have contributed - perhaps with a plaque, presentation at a Council meeting, or other token of recognition. Revise goals and action steps as the committee sees fit, to reflect new realities. Consider any new threats or opportunities. Celebrate your progress!

9. Then get back to work (repeat steps 5-8)!

10. Finally, periodically check the community's pulse with another community attitude survey, business survey, or other method of obtaining input to insure the overall effort is on the right track. Do not be afraid to tinker with the goals and objectives.

"If you don't know where you are going, you might end up where you are headed."

Dr. Rod Gilbert, sports psychologist

Development Briefing: The ABC's of Site Selection

Today's industrial prospects are looking for sites or, better yet, buildings, which can be quickly and cheaply adapted to their needs and put into use as quickly as possible. The cornfield located one mile from the water and sewer lines doesn't make it past the first cut very often. Thus it is important to offer sites which are fully serviced by utilities (water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, telephone), zoned for industry, adjacent to a passable roadway.

It is important to inventory all sites within the village and surroundings which are available for prospects. This information should also be put in the hands of State, utility, and rail officials, as appropriate, commercial builders, and realtors. Sites should be definitively and competitively priced. Many communities take options on prime sites, to ensure they are under control and available for quick sale when a deal transpires.

Potential investors should be identified who may be interested in jointly financing the development of a **fully serviced industrial park**. A meeting of potential investors could be arranged by the CIC to present the potential benefits to the community and to the investors. Further, investors may be interested in constructing a "spec" building. The CIC can furnish information on common specifications (floor plan, square footage, ceiling clearance) to make the building as generally attractive as possible.

Most likely, such a venture would involve a private partnership of investors who hope to gain a return as property is sold or leased. Clearly, such a property must be attractive to prospects, and possess those characteristics which are most commonly sought.

So, what characteristics make for a preferable site? Experts vary somewhat in ranking them, but here is a list of ten important factors:

1. **Access to markets and to highways** (and in some limited cases, rail).
2. **Proper zoning**, under government control.
3. **Water and sewer**, of sufficient capacity, to the property line.
4. Increasingly, the **communications infrastructure**: cable television, discounted long distance telephone service, telephone service and quality for computer and fax transmissions, reliable one-day package delivery service.
5. **Positive labor force** characteristics (labor skills, labor costs).
6. **Financial incentives** affecting bottom-line decisions: low cost real estate, tax abatement, fixed asset financing programs, working capital financing, local lenders.
7. **Reliability and quantity of energy** (3-phase electricity, natural gas).

8. **Soil of adequate bearing capacity for construction** (ideally, community has information on file), drainage and flooding.

9. **Environmental** assessment of site should have been made and available to prospects: no underground storage tanks or history of toxic/hazardous materials burial, no identified wetlands on site.

10. **Quality of life factors:** weather, housing availability and cost, public school quality and rating, cultural opportunities, recreational opportunities, colleges and universities in the area, low crime rate.

Two final points deserve mention. First, industrial prospect development (and industrial park and spec building development) is a **long-term** activity. Failure to attract a business in the first year - or two - is not necessarily a sign of failure of the strategy in total. Prepare for the long haul!

Second, in an era where manufacturing is shrinking and services are increasing in economic importance, do not limit prospect development to industry! Many large service providers (such as credit card processing centers) only need good telephone lines to conduct business, and locate in non-metropolitan, low-cost areas.

Goal 5: Create an atmosphere for residential growth that will allow for increases in the population and maintain the existing "quality of life."

Background

An important strength identified within the village is the collection of issues that generally constitute "quality of life." The strong desire by both the residents and the businesses to maintain these qualities must be acknowledged and used as the basis for future development within the village. These qualities impact the village in a number of ways, including concern for the youth, housing, and residential growth.

The highest ranking concern is the development of youth activities in the village. Second to this, and directly related to it, is advocacy for efforts to keep youth and young adults in the village. The ability of the village to keep a large number of its youth after high school graduation or to encourage them to return to the village after college is extremely important in a community such as Elmore.

Housing is one of the "quality of life" issues that is identified as a concern by both the residential and business surveys. The lack of rental housing and of houses to purchase are both identified as weaknesses. To allow young adults to remain in Elmore and to recruit young families to move into the village, housing must be available and affordable. Available housing allows people to "buy up" and remain in the village, and first-time buyers are able to find housing in the village to purchase.

Residential growth was listed in both the citizen and business surveys as a challenge for the village. There is concern that the new residents moving into the village need to feel a part of the community. While there is a desire for a modest influx of new residents, there are concerns that the village will become a "bedroom" community with little connection to the qualities that attracted the new residents, and that the current residents will lose the small town attributes that they appreciate.

Action Steps

Retaining Youth

- 1) Encourage youth representation on the various committees and as non-voting apprentices to the village council to develop their interest in the future of the village
- 2) Establish a "mentoring program" by developing the connections between businesses and the school system
 - Use Ottawa County CIC labor skills planning team as resource

Housing

- 3) Housing development should be targeted to the needs of the village.
 - identify interested investors
 - identify contractors who are willing to work with the village

- keep the projects small and suitable to the market
- review the housing market and requirements frequently
- research need for multi-unit housing
- coordinate with area and county-wide housing initiatives, such as the Affordable Housing Collaborative

4) Research the need for and development of senior housing

- contact seniors at current facility and through churches and survey target group in western Ottawa County market area to do preliminary market analysis
- identify developers /contractors who work with senior housing projects and assess their interests and needs
- help facilitate coordination of a team to bring project to reality if feasible

Residential Growth

5) Continue with the establishment of a "newcomers" club

- recruit current residents who are willing to sustain the program
- work with local Realtors to locate the new residents in the village
- set up process that will partner the new residents with residents of the village to become active in the village

6) Conduct annual beautification contest

- use holiday decoration format
- provide award for most significant improvement

Goal 2: Improve the small business base and work to revitalize the central retail area.

Background

The Citizen Attitude Survey recognizes as pluses the superior service and positive attitude of clerks, safety, sidewalk conditions and cleanliness, and overall appearance of the downtown area. Concerns of the residents are retail selection and prices, parking availability, advertising and local promotions, building appearance, and store hours. Business interviews reinforce these concerns in the specific area of parking. Additionally, the businesses are concerned about sales volume and lack of support by the residents.

Action Steps

1) The Chamber of Commerce and CIC can plan a public meeting and presentation by the staff of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) to discuss the "Main Street" program and other OHPO technical assistance available and to offer advice on specific building treatments.

2) The CIC and Chamber should work with property and business owners and other interested parties (school district and churches) to pursue downtown revitalization and a new image for the central business district and to explore market niches to build on local traffic generated by the turnpike interchange. The strategy can include:

a) "adopting" and decorating vacant storefronts

b) developing a unified effort to promote the central business district which can include

- store operating hours,
- develop a logo identifying and uniting downtown Elmore and the access to Lake Erie recreation opportunities
- joint advertising efforts - recruit advertising department of newspaper to provide advice on most effective approach
- develop a flyer enumerating the businesses and services available in the central business district. Place flyers in all businesses in the area including Village Hall, Library, and grocery - and outside locations
- acknowledge price and selection factors of small retail business and actively promote "service," while pursuing unique mixes and market niches

c) visit with and discuss the experience of officials of Grand Rapids, Ohio, to determine the success and challenges of their development efforts. Grand Rapids has built upon a location along the riverfront and state highway.

d) continue to sponsor the festival promoting a prominent position for retail sector. Festival hours can coincide with store hours to give visitors exposure to products offered in town. Encourage stores to have promotional sales at that same time.

e) encourage "buying local" by providing promotion - develop "Elmore Bucks" theme from the Christmas decoration contest

f) focus on one business in each Hayseed publication doing in depth information linked with a coupon - see Marketplace approach in News Messenger

g) review parking availability

- survey customer parking habits and preferences
- review parking patterns and limits to verify appropriate use of parking space
- provide and enforce long term parking space
- consider development of parking area in rear and/or east end of central area

Development Briefing: Saving Downtown

Downtown revitalization in smaller communities is an uphill battle, but not necessarily an impossible one to win. The international acceptance of the regional shopping mall has changed the role of downtowns forever. However, the shift from the local general store to the discount K-Mart or Wal-Mart, and from the downtown catalog store to the ubiquitous mall "anchor," has left several roles for the central business district to still play.

Downtowns are still serving effectively as local "service centers" - homes for insurance, real estate, business services, professional offices, and the like. They also serve the local and convenience needs of residents who don't want to travel long distances for every purchase.

Beyond these obvious functions, downtown organizations and individuals are meeting varied degrees of success in creating new roles and carving out new niches. Success requires a concerted effort, a plan, and a goal. A community can strive to become an "antiques center", but it takes more than one antique shop to attract significant out-of-town traffic.

More likely, the community needs to put together several shops, an attractive restaurant, perhaps an old-fashioned ice cream parlor for summer traffic, an outside "event" such as a concert by the local school band, and an overall atmosphere which attracts people and makes them comfortable to be downtown.

A tried-and-true method to approach downtown revitalization is known as the **Main Street** approach, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and promoted in Ohio by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. That method includes four major components: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Each component is viewed as essential, and the overall strategy is incremental, with no short-term anticipations. Like industrial prospect development, downtown revitalization takes time and patience.

Organization requires unified and coordinated management, with primary responsibility falling on the downtown business community. Downtown businesses must work together - on common **promotion**, jointly sponsored events and advertising, uniform hours, and in the best of cases, uniformity of new building and storefront **design**.

Successful organized marketing of the downtown will result in a unified, positive **image** and consumer recognition of the downtown as a **singular entity** first, and a collection of individual businesses second.

The downtown business community, if organized effectively through the Chamber or other means, can also work to attract new businesses where voids are documented.

Other recommendations include:

1. Formation of a **downtown revitalization committee** to carry out the community's downtown development strategy. This may most likely be suited to the Chamber for implementation.

2. Contact with the **Ohio Historic Preservation Office** for information on building revitalization, Main Street concepts, restoration techniques, and other technical assistance including a possible local seminar for interested property owners.
3. Business owners should work to establish **uniform shopping hours** and to **promote the downtown jointly**. A joint logo or slogan is often helpful to promote a single image for the downtown, and to create a collective identity shared by all downtown businesses.
4. The potential benefit of **advertising on the turnpike** to "snag" out-of-town customers should be analyzed. What business, products, and services should be advertised?
5. **Promotional events** should be organized. Events should be coordinated with business hours. Sunday events in front of closed storefronts will not produce revenues! (Rather than abandoning Sundays, stores may wish to consider special hours during events). Other events could include auto shows, agricultural shows, flower shows, craft shows, a "Farmers Market", special children's events and contests, and sidewalk sales.
6. **Downtown should be viewed as not just a place to shop, but as a place to have fun**. Mall management works hard to achieve this image. The five elements for successful events, as viewed by developers such as James Rouse, are overlapping events, food and drink, something given away free, something for the children, and music. This formula is employed at Disneyland and at successful "Festival Marketplaces" around the country.
7. As with industrial prospect development, an **inventory of available downtown storefronts**, sale or lease costs, and other information should be maintained. Available financial and other incentives for new businesses should be explored. With enough interest, funding could be sought from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program.
8. Conversion of downtown properties to attractive **apartments** should be explored as potential income producing activity. This could provide housing for those who value access to downtown amenities, such as elderly households.
9. Those with a stake in the downtown should work to capitalize on the time demands increasingly placed upon two-paycheck households with little time to shop. Increasing value is placed on "convenience" shopping close to home which takes little time.

Goal 3: Capitalize upon the new S.R. 51 turnpike interchange as an asset for the village by planning and controlling its impact on the village.

Background

While most feelings about the interchange are positive, the need to effectively plan for and control its impact on the entire village is acknowledged. The interchange will be a true challenge for the village; however, the residents are most concerned that the traffic on State Route 51 will create problems for the central business district. In addition, they are somewhat concerned about the negative activities that may occur because of the increased traffic into the village.

The business surveys indicate favorable opinions about the interchange. The improved highway access is an asset for many of these businesses. However, several businesses mentioned concerns about development around the interchange itself. These concerns were primarily about outlying businesses that would be established in that area and compete with existing business in the village. The residents also expressed concern about excessive commercial development around the interchange.

Action Steps

- 1) Continue efforts to control the designation of the interchange as local or recreational, not an alternate route to Toledo via S. R. 51
- 2) Work with adjoining government entities (especially Harris Township) to develop plans for future development
- 3) Conduct traffic counts as necessary and maintain contact with the Ohio Turnpike Commission and Ohio Department of Transportation. Both entities may be helpful in designing methods to control or facilitate traffic flow through Elmore if a significantly higher traffic count results. Improvements may include devices such as traffic lights, street alignments, pavement widening, and intersection redesign to accommodate truck and traffic turning movements
- 4) Survey license plates of through town traffic and parked vehicles
 - determine where traffic originates
 - design marketing to target tourist/visitors
- 5) Promote location as quality farmer market - focus on area's agribusiness
 - use turnpike sign to attract
 - identify, market, and stock specialized agricultural products
 - cooperative marketing with local farmers
 - identify off-season activities to offset seasonal nature of agriculturally-oriented products

Goal 4: Promote existing businesses and market the community as an attractive location for desirable new businesses and industry.

Background

As a part of the desire to control growth in the village, residents and businesses both respond they are interested in recruiting small industry. These groups are selective about the types of industries that they are interested in attracting to Elmore. Also mentioned numerous times in the surveys is a need to work to retain and promote existing businesses.

The proximity of the Portage River to the village contributes to the "quality of life" issue. It is identified in the survey responses as a positive resource for the village. Development of the riverfront would be an attraction not only for the current residents, but also would be a good marketing tool for the village. It would enhance any downtown development project.

Action Steps

- 1) Consider development of a low-cost, proactive marketing strategy including
 - identify most desired industries which are most likely to locate in an area then plan target mailing, working with Ottawa County CIC
 - identify linkages to nearby industry/businesses most likely to partner with - suppliers which need to locate near client plants within a specific drive time
 - identify potential for "just in time" market
 - identify markets within local area to complement one another
- 2) Establish standard procedures and reliable "team" of individuals, conversant in relevant data concerning the village and available incentives for dealing with prospects
 - maintain a "scorecard" of experiences with prospects and others showing interest in Elmore. Note their evaluations as points for improvement.
 - ensure local contacts are included within county-wide and regional prospect development teams for site visits
- 3) Develop and focus on theme (access to recreation) and availability of transportation as a positive economic development factor
- 4) Create a "billboard" along turnpike to promote Elmore and carefully select image and theme
- 5) Work closely with CIC to develop marketing tools to target desired industry
 - a) may include development of a piece to include in the Ottawa County brochure
 - b) develop and maintain a descriptive "catalog" of incentives available to local development, including favorable utility rates, enterprise zone, local fees and rates for services, schools in and around village, and appropriate state/federal financing, labor training, and technical assistance programs
 - c) emphasis on municipal electric system and its comparative advantage

6) Conduct retention and expansion business visitation program with commercial and industrial businesses within the village to develop more effective relationship

- to be initiated by the Chamber of Commerce
- partnership with the CIC as appropriate (especially with the manufacturers)
- develop a monthly "after hours" with all local businesses inviting other interested parties

7) Inventory existing space and available land for building - provide to CIC

8) Work with AMP Ohio to take advantage of promotion by that organization

9) Partner with Schedel Foundation to promote village and explore mutual promotional projects

10) Work with regional entities, county, township, regional planning commission, etc.

11) Continue efforts with Visitors Bureau for inclusion within Lake Erie tourism region

12) Research the "best use" for the riverfront area. This resource could be a community-wide asset, as well as, a tourism promotion. The development of the riverfront could provide recreational, cultural, and commercial benefits similar to those realized in communities such as Grand Rapids in nearby Wood County.

Development Briefing: Marketing Elmore

The big players spend a lot of money on marketing. Thousands of dollars go into the design and placement of advertisements in select publications. Attractive and eye-catching packages are developed for mass or targeted mailings. Fees are paid to consultants to help target those industrial sectors which are most likely to take a serious interest in the community as a potential site.

Obviously, Elmore does not have tens of thousands of dollars to spend in marketing. This does not mean the village cannot be an **effective** player. An efficient, low-cost marketing strategy can be developed which will make certain desired business prospects take note of your community.

Here, then, are some low-cost suggestions:

1. The existing Ottawa County brochure with enclosures is a winner. We recommend developing an Elmore enclosure and keeping a stock of the brochures available, updating them as needed. Put multiple copies in the hands of officials from the Ohio Development Department, utilities, rail officials, commercial realtors, commercial builders, and lenders. Local industries could receive one, as well, during an R&E visit.
 2. Proximity to the turnpike (and I-75) may well be the community's biggest asset in prospects' eyes. Exposure on could result from an eye-catching billboard. It may be most cost-effective to construct and own one, rather than renting space. A good slogan or catch phrase can result from local brainstorming or a contract with a public relations firm. A slogan could result from a community-wide contest.
 3. One inexpensive targeting ploy: Someone can spend a day or two recording whose trucks are most frequently passing by on the turnpike. Of special interest are manufacturers' trucks. If a manufacturer shows up frequently, and it doesn't have a plant nearby, it may make sense from a transportation cost standpoint to locate a new plant in the village.
- If you also record common carriers' trucks, it is possible that a regional center for a trucking firm would be cost-effective. Commercial distribution centers need not be ruled out, either.
4. An obvious target for marketing is the automotive industry and auto suppliers. Even with a recession and sales downturn, the I-75 stretch from Michigan to Tennessee is the "auto belt", and Elmore is doubtless a contender for auto supplier plant locations.
 5. Other potentials which would match local labor availability and site conditions: plastics molding, electronic assembly, metal fabrication. Water availability should be clearly ascertained by the village, in order to know of any potential constraints posed by prospects (such as some plastics operations) which use large amounts of water in their operations.
 6. A good resource in helping target new industries is the existing industrial base. They know why **THEY** located there and may have a good insight into why others would as well. They may have

knowledge of special linkages between nearby businesses and prospects which want to locate in the area. Local plant officials should be courted as valuable resources, and efforts should be made to gain their contributions to Chamber or CIC activities.

Appendices

LEADERSHIP

Communicate (Improved)

- Newsletter

Public Relations

Honesty

Integrity

Public Opinion via Local

Business/Suggestion Box

Community Bulletin Board

Leaders not afraid to lead

Availability/Good Listener

Proven Results

Equality in Decision

COMMUNICATION

Government to the Citizens and

Citizen to Citizen

Mailer/Newsletter

- how to get people to read it

- input to leader

- unknown to leader

Suggestion Box

Chamber

- What is it about?

- What is it doing?

Young, new-- needs to develop a mission

Information exchange, shared vision

Define community

- Council/local government

- Chamber

GROWTH

Industrial

Residential

Commercial

Utilities

Small Business

- retail

- competition

Business Plans

Resources

Marketing

OPPORTUNITIES

Turnpike Opportunity
Housing
Proximity to urban areas (bedroom community)
-But still have small town atmosphere
Welcome wagon - Committee
Variety of churches
Expanding attractiveness of river front
Develop river front to increase enjoyment
Time to plan utility upgrading
-water
-sewer
-electric
Expand electric service municipal attractive
Plan for what/where you want growth
Schedel Foundation- to let people know where Elmore is

THREATS

Turnpike
Government mandates
Not having a plan
Fear of threats
Government passing down authority to regional entities
Small communities don't get enough job
Lack of diversity in industries
Current businesses fighting each other
Expansion of urban crime
-isolation
Large stores
-Walmart
-Kmart
Burden of extension of utilities
-Who pays?
Losing bedroom community
Fighting people with unlimited resources who want to do what we don't want
Loss of business due to growth opportunities

WHAT DO FAMILIES SEE?

Lack of apartments for the elderly
Parks/Scenery
Libraries
Churches
Good village maintenance
Recreation
Few empty houses
-not a lot for sale
Summer youth activities
No adult recreation activities
Are businesses in town
No Chinese restaurants
"Fortress Elmore" - hard to get to know the village for new families and businesses
Schools
Day care
Lack of rental housing
Turnpike
Good sidewalks- plus
Medical service
Aesthetics/Parks
Security
Community Pride
Entry housing
No home mail delivery
Bulletin board has activities
Friendliness of people
Library
No pool
Medical service restrictive

WHAT DO BUSINESSES SEE?

Schools-- good
Excellent work ethic
Elmore is well kept -- neat
Medical facilities
Police visible
Don't have a lot of room for businesses
Willingness for abatements-- Enterprise Zone
No available vacant space or buildings
Cooperation between local government to attract businesses
Attractive utility rates
Skilled labor

BUSINESS(cont)

Well kept properties
State licensed day care
Fire and EMS
Library
Accessibility to markets
Tax structure-- rates
Property- no vacant space
Parking problems-- downtown and East end
Enterprise Zone
Lack of skilled labor

ELMORE 2001

ODOT responsive to traffic change--
turnpike
Planned growth
Organize growth so services are possible
Cooperative growth plans
Job opportunities
-skilled and entry level
Village own area where business could
locate
Cooperation between governments
Depends on demand
Thriving bedroom community
- growth to keep services
-small businesses to support community
Utilize potential areas around community
People to fill job opportunities

CONTROL

Access control- transport
Business Park
Type of Business

LOCATION

Potential area?
Township (Village to turnpike)
Off St. Rt. 51 South/North

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Township Village Co-op
-Share tax revenues
Master Plan- indicate size

POLITICAL ENTITIES

Organize with long term plan
Cooperation
Use sources available
Control
-Small business
-Residential
-Industrial
-Utilities
-Current business
Retain and Expand Current Business

ELMORE COMMUNITY FORUM - January 29, 1996

Your Name

Why Are You Here?

In One Sentence...

-What do you want from this forum?

WHAT?

Direction

Information

Learn what citizens want

Direction - what community is about

Input of all community

Direction - vision now/future

Direction impact school

To see where I can help - I

To see what is happening

What's happening in community

Survey results - III

Avoid growth pains

Direction - I

Growth of small business

Growth - post office

See what happens to Elmore

Growth control

STRENGTHS

Schools

Friendliness

Security force/relative safety

Utilities

Churches

Location - Ottawa County - lake, river, etc.

Stability

Community Programs

-Youth

-Children/Activities

Broad range of businesses

Caring/Openness

Retirement Center

STRENGTHS (cont.)

Interest of citizens in Elmore

Civic Organizations

Village/Community Services

Economic Enterprise Zone

Planning

Churches

Medical Facility

Interest of Citizens

History

Community Services

Fire

Emergency Medical Services

Property Values

Families

Library

Parks

River

Beauty

Caring/Openness

WEAKNESS

No property for businesses to locate

Blade delivery

Job opportunities

Supporting small businesses

Geography - no room to expand

Fear of change

Cable service

No elder care facilities

Parking uptown

Local media

Rumors - gossip - distorted communication

Inward focus

Transportation flow - traffic

Not enough youth activities(teenagers)

One bank and one service station

Turnpike

improvement

challenge

village should direct and control changes

citizens adjusting to

development

tourism - link to Schedel Foundation

promote accessibility

industrial growth

use land around it for development

Communication

between residents, township and village

council needs to support businesses

council needs to listen to residents

council needs to participate in planning

miscommunication - rumors between people

better communication is needed

people need to get involved in a positive way

develop "Grand Rapids" style
water quality
council has been unresponsive - hoped improvement with election

Challenge

growth

developing and implementing strategy dependable and not changed by politics -
"Get a Plan and stick with it."
zoning and permits
more jobs
more growth
people divided about - want village to remain the same
people unaware of the incentives available for growth
maintain and support local businesses - keeping tax \$ in village
competition with major chains
residential growth
old money leaving community
concern that Elmore will become a bedroom community
infrastructure
sewer capacity
traffic, by-pass, bridge

Development

retail

vacant store fronts
retail frontage shortage
promote Elmore as a "Grand Rapids"
protect and promote what is here
additional businesses needed
another gas station
bank
car wash
clothing store
lumber yard
expand hardware
grocery
fast food
convenience for out-of-town employees

industrial

improves tax base/better pay
controlled, not heavy manufacturing
keep Brush happy
develop area away from residential

housing

recruit younger families
will become a bedroom community for Toledo people coming in (negative)
"Have a plan and follow it. People want the best of both worlds."

ELMORE Business Survey

Strengths

- people
 - getting along/helping when needed
 - felt people support local businesses
- quality of life in the village
 - low crime rate
 - quiet, friendly
 - cleanliness, property values more maintained
 - schools, churches, EMS/fire protection
- utilities
 - cost of electricity
 - water quality
- location

Weaknesses

- parking
 - lack of business parking
- retail
 - lack of volume
 - inability to buy what is needed in village
 - lack of support by residents - too easy to get to Toledo, people don't buy in the village
- progressive thinking
 - lack of desire for progress
- phone service does not allow for advanced uses
- land costs going up - deters business from coming in
- water availability to support business expansion
- hard to get consensus on projects
- people moving in from Toledo

Impact

- parking- no places, no business
- low cost electricity is a plus
- people can't find jobs

Improvement

- parking
 - parallel on street especially with increased traffic
- retail
 - "buy local" - residents and village
 - more selection in stores and the merchandise
- downtown design
 - quaint, Victorian design

Ohio Rural Enterprise Project
Good START
Elmore

Business Interview Questions

Business Category

[9] retail [7] manufacturing [] processing [] service

Business Information

1. What was your employment 5 years ago? _____ Now? +31
2. Is your company planning on expanding at this location in the next 5 years? [5] yes [5] no
At another location? [] yes [] no
3. Does your company have problems recruiting employees who are:
36% skilled 20% semi-skilled 7% unskilled 7% clerical 29% professional?
4. Overall, how do you rate the quality of the local workforce?
10% Excellent 80% Good 10% Fair _____ Poor

Community Information

5. Rate the following local services.

Circle your choice, from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

Poor	Excellent					Score	Rank
1	2	3	4	5	access to highway	4.50	4
1	2	3	4	5	adequacy of local streets	3.87	9
1	2	3	4	5	ambulance/EMS	4.85	1
1	2	3	4	5	health care/ hospitals	3.30	11
1	2	3	4	5	disposal of solid waste	4.12	6
1	2	3	4	5	fire protection	4.83	2
1	2	3	4	5	police protection	4.63	3
1	2	3	4	5	inspections (building, plumbing, etc.)	3.00	16
1	2	3	4	5	permits (zoning, etc.)	3.25	12
1	2	3	4	5	recreational services	3.37	10
1	2	3	4	5	snow removal	3.20	13
1	2	3	4	5	street cleaning	2.60	18
1	2	3	4	5	brush removal service	3.12	15
1	2	3	4	5	telecommunications	2.92	17
1	2	3	4	5	water supply	3.93	8
1	2	3	4	5	water quality	3.17	14
1	2	3	4	5	natural gas	4.11	7
1	2	3	4	5	electricity	4.13	5

6. Rate the following in terms of the impact each has on your business
Circle your choice, from 1 (none) to 5 (high)

None					High		Score	Rank
1	2	3	4	5		public services	4.17	3
1	2	3	4	5		reliability of utilities	4.62	1
1	2	3	4	5		labor costs	4.14	4
1	2	3	4	5		transportation costs	3.00	8
1	2	3	4	5		energy costs	3.00	8
1	2	3	4	5		local taxes	3.62	5
1	2	3	4	5		state taxes	3.62	5
1	2	3	4	5		land costs	3.62	5
1	2	3	4	5		building costs	3.50	6
1	2	3	4	5		parking	3.37	7
1	2	3	4	5		local government overall responsiveness	4.50	2

7. Rate your opinion of this village as a place to do business
33% Excellent 46% Good 21% Fair Poor

See attached for questions 8 - 15.

8. Identify the most important strength of the village.
9. Identify of the greatest weakness of the village.
10. How do these impact your business?
11. Identify the most important improvement needed in village.
12. Identify the biggest challenge facing the village in the next 10 years?
13. In what areas would you like to see the village become actively involved in promoting development?
14. Do you see a need for industrial growth?
15. Do you see a need for retail growth?

ELMORE Community Attitude Survey

IMPROVEMENTS	CHALLENGES
Streets and alleys - 20 (Huron)	Growth - 30 (controlling and planning)
Downtown	Turnpike - 27
image - 4	Traffic - 11
support of downtown businesses - 2	Attracting new business and industries - 8
Parking	Crime prevention - 4
downtown - 9	Water - 4
Post Office - 2	Housing - 3 (rentals and elderly)
Growth - 2	Leadership having an open mind - 2
more business - 5	Encouraging new residents - 2
more room for business - 3	Concern for small town culture
light industry - 3	Taxes reasonable without loss of services - 1
plan - 3	Enforce zoning - 1
jobs - 3	
Housing - 6 (Seniors and condos)	
Recreational programs - 6	
Clean up properties - 4	
Sidewalks - 2	
Utilities - 2	
Income taxes - 2	
Programs for seniors - 1	
Traffic control turnpike - 1	
Home mail delivery - 1	

ELMORE - cont.

[illegible]