

Bethlehem Community Plan December Community Plan Summary

A community meeting was held on December 18th at Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church. About 65 Bethlehem citizens were in attendance. WPCOG staff will compile all of the input from the meeting and the committee will use it when drafting the plan

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was conducted to help identify what the plan needs to cover. Separate lists were created then community members voted on which topics they felt were most important. See the results below:

Strengths:

- Proximity to Lake Hickory (9)
- Proximity to I-40 and Hickory (5)
- Low taxes (2)
- Highly educated population
- Room to grow (1)
- Close knit community
- Recreational opportunities
- Alcohol sales (4)
- Low crime rate
- Commercial corridor (future)
- Fire department
- Faith community
- Good schools
- Post office (1)
- Library
- In the country/Rural small town feel (10)
- Climate
- Government transparency
- Good communication (1)
- Good business cross section (1)
- Strong Volunteer Fire department
- EMS food for size
- Few doctors
- Medical services (1)
- Mariana (1)
- Hardware Store (3)
- Restaurants
- Churches
- Supportive Community
- Good veterans service office (2)
- Senior center
- Educational system
- Pride in community (7)

- Easy access to amenities (4)
- Safe Community (2)

Weaknesses:

- Proximity to hospital/ Lack of good healthcare (4)
- Availability of land/Potential mismanagement of development (1)
- Lack of other modes of transportation/no bike or pedestrian (5)
- Lack of new business/Weak economic base (7)
- Lack of recreation opportunities/parks (13)
- Vacant Buildings (4)
- Proximity to Hickory
- Lack of retail (6)
- Lack of technology service/choices (5)
- Retention of young people/ aging demographics
- Lack of municipal structure
- Lack of available jobs (3)
- Banks keep closing (5)
- Sheriff's substation (5)
- No police presence (2)
- No highway patrol
- Lack of lighting in rural areas
- Lack of youth activities (2)
- Lack of restaurants/diversity (14)
- No community pool
- Infrastructure – sewer/water/natural gas (1)
- Road width (1)
- Dangerous curve at west middle (1)
- No ABC store (5)
- Increased littering (2)
- Nuisance issues (2)
- Business diversity (11)
- Lack of aesthetics in architecture
- Miscellaneous signage/zoning (1)
- Rural roads not paved (1)
- Library extension/community room (10)
- Lack of childcare
- One grocery store
- Hickory zip code (2)
- Update ems training (1)
- Emergency radio communications (3)

Opportunities:

- Vacant land
- Vacant buildings
- 127 widening project (5)
- Sewer infrastructure (9)
- Branding/destination (4)
- Highly educated population
- Splash Park (3)
- Park/recreation opportunities (3)
- Geographic location/Proximity (2)
- Public waterfront area (5)
- Shooting range
- Community center (5)
- Retail and housing (4)
- Gateway to community (1)
- Urgent Care Center (20)
- Alcohol (3)
- Keeping younger generation in area (3)
- Infrastructure improvements (1)
- Smart Growth (3)
- Transportation planning to include all types of transportation (5)
- Blank canvas-plan opportunities accordingly
- Market potential is here (10)

Threats:

- Big box retail
- Proximity Hickory (11)
- Older population (3)
- Declining workforce
- Consolidation of school system
- Loss of young population (1)
- Opioid Crisis (11)
- Land rights (6)
- Safety and security (2)
- Increased traffic on narrow roads (3)
- Business leaving (1)
- Water pollution on Lake Hickory
- Aging population
- Lake erosion (2)
- Sustainable tax base
- Bridge closing during 127 project (8)
- Government intervention (3)
- Drug trafficking/prostitution (1)
- Wildlife access
- Lack of effort on business owners part (1)
- Increased traffic (6)
- Annexed by Hickory (19)
- 127 project (2)