

Summary of Two WARD Resident Surveys Conducted May 2016 and February 2013

Background

The property, comprising 41 acres, is located on High Street in Worthington, directly across the street from the Worthington Municipal Building and the Worthington Fire Station. This is the last major piece of developable land within the city limits. The United Methodist Church has owned this property for over 100 years and operated the United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) on it for almost 100 years. Changes in state funding priorities and requirements coupled with other incidents led to the closure of the facility in 2010. The property was put on the market shortly thereafter.

In 2013 the Continental Real Estate company put forth an offer to purchase the property calling for a 24/7 Giant Eagle grocery. Both the city and residents emphatically opposed this idea and Continental Real Estate backed out. In order to be better prepared for future development proposals, city officials called for a re-examination of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The city sponsored a series of public forums to gather public input of the revised CDP. A revised CDP was adopted by the city in August 2014.

At the same time a group of concerned Worthington residents began meeting and formed WARD (Worthington Alliance for Responsible Development). In February 2013 WARD compiled a survey of the residents to gain insights into the community's preferences for the future development of the property. Over 800 Worthington residents responded to WARD's survey.

In April 2015, WARD and a few city officials were invited to meet with the representatives of the UMCH Board and Lifestyle Communities (LC). At this meeting it was learned that the UMCH Board and LC entered into a tentative purchasing agreement and a proposed development plan was "broadly" outlined by representatives of LC. The highlights included: 3 office buildings along the High Street corridor, 2 high density apartments (350 -550 units); a mix of 200 one and two story "town homes" in the neighborhood core; 21 "estate homes" along the tradeoff the proposed development; Total new living units 571-771; provision for a "shelter house" and other green space scattered around the development; Curb cuts on Evening Street, Larrimer and Longfellow to ease traffic flow in and out of the neighborhood. WARD prepared and submitted a response to the City and LC three weeks later.

As Bonnie Michael, President Worthington City Council stated in the January 7, 2016 **This Week Worthington News**: *"We have been clear that the best approach would be to extensively engage the community and involve them in the planning for the future of the (UMCH) property"*. WARD compiled a second community survey regarding the UMCH property which was conducted in April 2016 and presented to the community May 5, 2016. This survey focused on four aspects of possible development of the UMCH property:

Density of the proposed development; **Connectivity** of the development to existing streets and neighborhoods; **Green Space** and **Quality of Construction**. The goal of this second survey was to help WARD shape it's response to Lifestyle Communities (or another developer) and the City as we collectively move forward as a community.

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Comprehensive Development Plan/WARD Survey overviews

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CDP (Comprehensive Development Plan)

The plan lays out a broad framework for development, emphasizing the historic significance of the UMCH property to the Worthington community and lays out stringent requirements for the type and quality of what can be built:

- Office space along High Street – 4 to 5 stories.
- Green Space.
- A mix of apartments and small one and two-story homes in what the plan refers to a “the neighborhood core”.
- “Estate” homes along the edge of the development to serve as buffers between any proposed development and existing neighborhoods to the West of High Street.
- Specific density numbers—density for neighborhood core should be between 6-14 units/acre.

OVERVIEW of WARD COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS February 26, 2013

96% in favor of development of UMCH. *If respondents had their way, the space would be turned into parks and other green spaces, including play areas for children.* Some of the priorities listed below were reflected in the revised CDP, other priorities were not.

MOST SUPPORTED: Five options were preferred by more than 60% of respondents with four of the five public uses

- Green Space-86%,
- Fountains/Gardens-84%;
- Playground/Community Garden-81%;
- Small Amphitheater-75%
- Locally owned small grocery-68%

RESIDENTIAL: No type of residential got a majority “for” it. Dense residential and apartments had majority “against”.

- Patio Homes – 49%;
- Single Family Homes – 47%;
- Dense 2 story single family homes - 25% for 53% against;

APARTMENTS: The higher the apartment building, the more against:

- Apartments 1 or 2 stories - 22% for, 60% against;
- Apartments 3 or 4 stories - 9% for, 80% against;
- Apartments 5 or more stories 0% for 88% against.

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OVERVIEW of WARD COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS May 5, 2016

Survey held during March 2016 focused on four aspects of possible development: Density, Connectivity, Green Space and Quality of Development. A total of 750 Worthington residents provided feedback to the survey: 55% female, 45% male with 26% in the 35 to 44 age range and 27% from the 65+ age group. Residents plan to remain in their current homes for at least 10 years with 27% planning to move to a different home within Worthington. 75% of participants who desire more residential growth also desire more commercial growth. General concern for density, maintaining responsible development and increasing tax base via commercial development.

DENSITY (of any proposed development)

- 40% of respondents supporting new commercial development, with 75% stating 2 or 3 stories to be acceptable in new commercial developments on High Street with setback like Fresh Thyme or Anthem,
- Parking behind buildings or underground are desired versus parking decks or parking along High Street.
- 75% of respondents felt the Lifestyle Communities plan had *way too many* (67%) or *too many* 8% residential units.
- Apartments are not desired. Owner occupied condos are preferred to any other multi-unit buildings.
- “Empty-nester” single story patio homes, 3 to 5 dwelling per units/acre with 54.1% in the \$300,000 to \$499,000 price range most preferred.

CONNECTIVITY

- Generally, 54% of participants either *strongly* or *somewhat support* ingress/egress **only** to High Street versus multiple connections as identified in the CDP.

GREEN SPACE

- 70% of the participants strongly desire a consolidated portion of open green space as opposed to distributed green space with 58.3% wanting between 7.4 & 14.8 acres.
- 77% desire green space with multi-use paths in all development areas while maintaining existing tree lines and berm.
- 92% of respondents want a three-season building and/or community performance area. Public restrooms, community garden space and splash pad are also desired.

QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT

- Participants care about maintaining Worthington’s character and green space.
- 78% voiced an opinion that any development must enhance the heritage, character and sustainability of Worthington.
- 77% of respondents felt new construction should fit the existing architecture of buildings and homes in Worthington.
- 32% of the 146 *written* comments opposed the June 2015 Lifestyle Communities proposal for the UMCH property.

ATTRIBUTES OF WORTHINGTON AND CONCERNS

- Most attractive attributes: Worthington schools, neighborhood character and location.
- Biggest concerns: too much development, apartments and fear of change.