

Greenhills Steering Committee

Community Input: Issues and Perceptions

The Greenhills Comprehensive Plan kick off meeting on December 3, 2008 provided an opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to come together to participate in a SWOT exercise. The Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) format allows participants to identify elements that will influence the long-term goal of becoming a thriving community. Input from the community was recorded as phrases or key words. Members of the steering committee¹ have made an attempt to translate those ideas into full fledged statements that spell out the intent of the participants' comments.

Strengths

- **Greenhills Pride:** The Village of Greenhills is a Greenbelt Community which prides itself on the small town community theme. In this “small town community theme”, spirit, heritage, & friendliness of the residents/neighbors reign supreme. Greenhills is a self-contained, stable community where leadership from all levels, be it from government or volunteers, binds its residents together as a stable entity.
- **Green Space, Greenbelt and Parks:** The Village of Greenhills abuts Winton Woods. Winton Woods is Hamilton County's second largest park. The Hamilton County Park, Winton Woods, provides many amenities that, not only Greenhills residents, but residents from other communities use regularly. By initial design, the Village of Greenhills is also buffered by a Greenbelt which adds to its beauty, uniqueness, & lure. Greenhills has been nationally recognized for its mature trees which line the streets.
- **Government and Community Services:** The Village of Greenhills prides itself on its Police Department & one of the last all-volunteer Fire Departments. The Police Department recently instituted a “patrol on bicycle” program with its officers. The volunteer fire department works hard each and every day to provide the highest quality of service through training, maintenance of fire lines and systems, and overall morale.

The Village of Greenhills' maintenance division takes on many duties such as; leaf collection in the fall & cleaning & salting the roads in the winter. They also maintain the grounds at the golf course which is located adjacent to the community's swimming pool.

A recently renovated swimming pool is located adjacent to a nine hole, community-owned golf course. The swimming pool is an integral part of many of the resident's time during the summer months and creates an important and positive atmosphere for families and friends.

¹ Jason Covalcine, Glen Drees, and Mike Viola.

A very recent addition to the space between the golf course and the swimming pool is a public bathing cage. This bathing cage was donated by residents of the village and installed by local volunteers to improve an already strong family-friendly atmosphere.

Access to Winton Woods from the Village of Greenhills was recently improved by the construction of a winding sidewalk along the west side of Winton Road. Residents are now able to access the park much more easily and this addition has become a main thoroughfare for walkers, bikers, and runners that are not only found in this community, but from surrounding communities.

The Village of Greenhills administration works in cooperation with the Forest Park based, Waycross Community Media. Greenhills televises its council meetings live via this cooperation. This allows residents to “sit in” on council meetings from their residence.

Segments of the local infrastructure have been recently improved. Streets, curbs, & the additional electrical services to the Greenhills Commons have been added.

- **Public Safety:** The Village of Greenhills, over the course of its history, has enjoyed a low crime rate. The Police Department consistently pursues higher training for its officers.
- **Location & Accessibility:** The Village of Greenhills abuts Winton Woods. Amenities from this Hamilton County Park include but are not limited to; fishing, camping, hiking trails, walking/running paths, & educational programs for adults and children.

Winton Road is the main access road in and out of Greenhills and is centrally located to several major interstate corridors. Its proximity to I-75, I-275, & Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway enables residents easy access for work or travel. The commute to downtown Cincinnati is approximately twenty five minutes.

The Village of Greenhills is located on a Queen City Metro bus route. Convenient parking for bus travelers is located behind the Greenhills shopping center. Several major shopping centers can be easily accessed from Greenhills.

There are several parochial school options in nearby neighborhoods providing alternatives to public schools.

- **Pedestrian Friendly:** The Village of Greenhills is a community where accessibility is important. “Cut-thru” sidewalks are used to enable walkers the ability to access the entire village quickly. This characteristic of the Village of Greenhills is unique. Village residents walk or bike to the shopping center, swimming pool, golf course, & other amenities which border the shopping center.

- **Historic Community:** The Village of Greenhills was one of only three planned communities designed by the United States federal government in the early 1930's. A portion of the residents are third and fourth generation. The original government-built area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Affordable, well-built homes in the historic district make Greenhills unique and captures the design essence of the village.
- **Distinguishing Characteristics: Greenbelt and Connectivity:** The Village of Greenhills has become known for its ease and accessibility to other sections of the community by walking. Sidewalks border residential lots and the extra amenity of "cut-thru" sidewalks sub-divide each circle of neighborhood blocks creating an effortless accessibility to all part of the village.

The use of cul-de-sacs create private areas of reduced traffic and noise. Homes on the outlying regions of Greenhills often times than not, border against the greenbelt. This was designed as a buffer for green views separating other communities. The appeal of this greenbelt is strong and makes Greenhills unique.

- **Housing:** The residences in Greenhills are of many designs, layouts, & styles. Greenhills has recognized the need not only for young families, but for an aging population. The need for housing to support this array of age groups as well as all sizes of families is important and Greenhills provides these different needs.
- **Diversity:** The Village of Greenhills is a diverse community ranging from a broad base of ages, family sizes, & cultures.
- **Community Events:** Throughout each year, Greenhills comes to life bringing its residents together in several different festivals, musical acts, as well as other entertainment for all ages and families. It takes a great deal of work in providing all of the entertainment that takes place each year and volunteers from Greenhills take on the challenge year after year.

The village is proud of its VFW and American Legion as well as other organizations such as the Historical Society and the Senior Club.

- **Destination Retail & Services:** The residents of the village are proud of the retailers and services that are provided in the shopping center. The shopping center provides retailers and services such as; Ameristop, Riley's, Molloy's, Village Keg, & Bearcat Grill. Other amenities include; a Hamilton County Public Library, recently acquired Post Office, Credit Union, Dentist Office, State Farm & Simons Insurance Agency. There is also a laundromat and of course, the Greenhills Barber Shop. There are other stores as well that provide much needed services to those in the village. The swimming pool and the golf course are big destination points for those in the village each spring and summer.

The Greenhills Journal is also important and is run by local volunteers highlighting current as well as upcoming events in the village.

- **Churches – Places of Worship:** The Village Greenhills offers several different places of worship of different denominations.
- **Education:** Teachers, administrators, Village of Greenhills’ residents, & board members of the Winton Woods School District work hard to provide leadership and an excellent school system for students, parents, and employees.
- **Green Design:** The Village Greenhills recognizes the need for working with builders, manufacturers to provide “green” products not only for future construction, but for existing conditions and structures.

Weaknesses

Our inability to attract and retain stakeholders (owners) due to an inadequately rated school district, deteriorating shopping center and the absence of an adequately/ well-organized promotion of the community’s image and amenities.

Furthermore, there appears to be a general absence of the feeling that “This is the place to be”. In fact, there seems to be a constant and growing force that is converse to the objectives of a healthy community.

Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Greenhills to develop or in some cases redevelop itself. A significant opportunity exists for improved marketing of the village, its historical past, and its new urbanist green community future. Surrounded by Winton Woods, Greenhills offers a safe, small town atmosphere with a real sense of community.

The infrastructure within the Village is unique for a small community and its offerings include bike paths, walking trails, the Village Commons, golf course and pool complex, ball fields, tennis courts, a community building and public parks. These venues are used for events such as Concerts on the Commons and have the possibility of being used for other activities.

The Village of Greenhills has chance to both develop and redevelop the housing stock. There is much energy about continuing to provide affordable owner-occupied housing for all ages and income levels. Suggestions include a golf cart community, developing the new housing behind the Middle School, redeveloping and updating older housing stock, and incorporating the Bastion into Greenhills. There is a definite sentiment about the historic significance of homes in Greenhills.

The Comprehensive plan provides an occasion to look at redeveloping unutilized and underutilized sites including the Damon/Winton corner, Johnny's Toys, OLR school, and unused greenspace.

There are opportunities for educational improvement. Residents would like to see more choices and higher quality from the existing public school.

Finally, the business district provides an opportunity for retail improvement. The Johnny's Toy site is for sale and available to be redeveloped. Many ideas exist for its new use. Residents would like to see the shopping center better maintained with a wide variety of destination businesses.

Threats

The overwhelming threat is that the apparent adverse trends continue and that the general mind-set lacks the necessary entrepreneurship required to attract stake holders who appreciate the assets that we have in place and can economically provide with a vision of future anticipated benefits. If we fail, we will become an irrelevant community (in decline) with decreasing per capita income which will accelerate the aforementioned.