

**SUBMITTED TESTIMONY OF
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WILMINGTON, OHIO**

**SENATE COMMITTEE OF AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
HEARING ON ENERGY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR RURAL AMERICA
FEBRUARY 15, 2012
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING**

Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Roberts, Ohio Senator Brown, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to the story of Energize Clinton County and our experiences rebuilding our community and region following the departure of our largest employer.

First allow me to provide a brief background. I grew up in Wilmington, OH, a rural community of 12,000 in southwestern Ohio. Like most young people who grow up in small towns, I left home after graduating from high school and attended college in Philadelphia to where I studied economics. Like most of my generation, I had no plans to return home.

The world changed for me—as it did for so many—in 2008. I had decided to put my training in economic development to work and the Peace Corps. As I was preparing for my departure, news from home reached me in Philadelphia. DHL, the region’s largest single source of employment, was ending its operations at the Wilmington Air Park. Realizing that the community where I grew up would be changed forever by this crisis, I decided to return home for the final months before my departure to the Peace Corps to reconnect with the community. Not long after my arrival in Wilmington, I was joined by Taylor Stuckert—another Wilmington native –who had been prematurely evacuated from his Peace Corps assignment in Bolivia in the fall of 2008.

As we witnessed the economic equivalent of a hurricane hitting our hometown, we talked to people throughout the community and quickly recognized a new energy brewing. There was a desire to push for increased involvement and ownership in the redevelopment of our devastated local economy. Something clicked and we realized that we could best serve our country by working in our own community, rather than by working overseas. We decided to stay home and contribute to the redevelopment of our region.

As Taylor and I set out on our economic development project, our perspective was heavily influenced by the Peace Corps model, which approaches development at the community level and emphasizes the importance of grassroots analysis and action. We believed that a Peace Corps approach in our community could generate solutions that were more immediate, actionable, and sustainable than traditional solutions and would complement

ongoing efforts by community leaders to acquire the DHL-owned airpark and leverage it as an asset to attract new employers.

In fall of 2008, Taylor and I founded Energize Clinton County (ECC), a non-profit community economic development organization. We quickly built a strong partnership with Chris Schock and the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and began developing programs that invested in our local assets and transformed citizens into agents of economic change. Together—along with an array of other community partners—ECC and the CCRPC have:

- Collaborated with citizens and local officials to establish the City of Wilmington as the country's first Green Enterprise Zone and assisted the city in developing a \$350,000 solar field at a city owned industrial site. Last year Clinton County joined the City of Wilmington in adopted green development legislation, becoming one of the first counties in Ohio to adopt legislation that allows for the creation of Alternative Energy Zones.
- Partnered with Dr. Kevin Hallinan, director of the University of Dayton's Building Energy Center to provide free energy report cards to Clinton County residents through an innovative data-driven approach that the University is developing. With the report cards homeowners are able to identify potential savings through energy efficiency. To date, ECC and the University of Dayton have provided assessments to more than 100 homes and 50 businesses. Following these assessments, 20 businesses received in-depth audits performed by a team of UD faculty and students. UD estimates that there is more than \$1 million in annual savings to be achieved by assisting 1,000 Clinton County homeowners to improve their efficiency to be on-par with the efficiency of the average home in the community.
- Established the Buy Local First Clinton County campaign to assist small businesses and entrepreneurs. The campaign now has nearly 250 participating businesses and 3,000 actively engaged consumers. The BLF campaign has been able to demonstrate the value and importance of a diverse and vibrant local economy to our community and has successfully shifted local consumer preferences towards locally owned businesses. In its most recent holiday promotion, the campaign accounted for \$158,525 during a three week period, equivalent to \$266,322 in local economic activity, a 25% growth over the previous year.
- Developed the Clinton Community Fellows program to provide professional experiences to the best and brightest from Clinton County. The CCF program provides stipends to college students and/or recent grads that are from Clinton County. The program coordinates a partnership with the Fellows and area local businesses and non-profits which have identified ways that the Fellows can help their organizations. The Fellows have provided over 3,200 hours of service to area

businesses and non-profits working on projects ranging from architectural designs to marketing research to social media education.

Now we are working regionally with the six other rural counties in our region most impacted by the departure of DHL. Last fall—with assistance from Ohio USDA state director Tony Logan—ECC received a \$48,000 USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) to fund a technical training initiative aimed at transferring strategies and techniques developed for supporting local businesses. These strategies make use of existing and emerging technologies, as well as traditional community organizing techniques to help create an environment in which locally owned businesses can thrive. This grant has given us the ability and the opportunity to build new partnerships and relationships with community economic development leaders in our region and coordinate strategies that strengthen local assets and invest in our shared future.

Whether it is expressed through green development, farmers' markets, buy-local campaigns, or efforts to develop sustainably, we've discovered an underlying desire in ourselves, and our community for ownership: ownership of our economy, ownership of our environment, and ownership of generations of culture and tradition. I cannot overstate, however, that this ownership comes with a great responsibility. It requires people to recognize that the preservation of place and community demands activate and committed participation in shaping the future.

If our community, and others like it, are to survive, it is critical that we establish a new vision for the place of rural communities in the world. A vision rooted in local ownership, resilience, and a commitment to place. The economic and social challenges of rural and small town America are often documented, and these challenges were further exacerbated locally in rural southern Ohio with the closing of the DHL Air Park in Wilmington, Ohio in 2008. The Wilmington Air Park facility had been the largest employers in seven southwest Ohio counties and the largest employer in the rural counties—where job opportunities had become scarce. Recovery was especially challenging because many of the small towns in the region lost young professionals, much of their skilled workforce, local stores and the diversity of local employment during the latter half of the 20th century. During this time, many small towns lost their identity and an understanding of their role in the broader region and global system. Many rural communities that have lost their sense of place have either been swallowed by the suburban sprawl of the metropolitan areas or experienced decades of decaying Main Streets and community life.

Today, communities like Wilmington stand at a crossroads; quickly develop a vision for themselves in the 21st century to inspire current and future generations of rural citizens to reinvest and rebuild their communities, or continue to suffer decline and decay. In our region we've come to see that for us the model need not be filled with prescribed programs and initiatives (as has so often been the case in the past), and instead should focus on building the capacity of communities to innovate and develop locally grown solutions to fulfill a long term vision.

To develop a new sense of place and ownership, communities most have a clear understanding of their resources, how local resources and opportunities fit into the broader regional, state, national, and global contexts, and agreed upon strategies for building on existing resources to accomplish achievable development goals. It is our belief that economic development planning, community development planning, and long-term visioning are essential component of a successful economic development strategy.

Without a long term vision and strategy, communities are at high risk of continued decline because they are likely to make poor decisions about how to use resources and likely to miss potential opportunities due to inaction. Without a plan and clear sense of direction, citizens are less likely to invest in necessary changes because they have large up-front costs, public officials are more likely to make reactionary rather than strategic decisions, and there are fewer mechanisms for a community to hold itself accountable.

In recent years, there has been a surge in the attention to the need and importance of developing broad, regional plans especially in rural parts of the country. Undoubtedly, this reflects the growing recognition of the interconnectedness of rural communities, irrespective of county lines, to one another and to neighboring urban centers. We have experienced this reality ourselves, as seven other counties were severely impacted by the loss of DHL in our community. We have a shared past and a shared future with these countise, and there is no doubt that regional solutions are critical. However, we have found that the process of re-envisioning rural communities must begin at the most local level possible—the township, the village, the city—before expanding to the county or multi-county scale.

We've found the need to localize the planning process to be critical for two reasons.

First, in the processes that we have observed, we have found that the planning process can have value in and of itself. Genuinely engaging citizens in asking questions about their shared future and exploring the realities of their economic and infrastructure situation gives them a stake in the future. A planning process built around creating a sense of ownership, individual responsibility, and commitment to place are critical to insuring that the process has a lasting impact. Such a process can only be achieved at the most local level.

Second, planning should begin as the smallest level possible to ensure that regional plans reflect the diversity of rural regions, even between neighboring counties. What we typically refer to as a region is less a unified concept, and more a network of unique, interconnected community nodes. Regions are strong when each node has both a strong sense of their identity as well as a commitment to the broader region. Therefore, we recommend that a program focused on rural planning take a ground up approach that allows for the development community level plans that can feed into larger regional plans that explore the interconnections between the diverse nodes.

Unfortunately, many rural communities lack the resources or the capacity needed to do the planning required to move beyond a purely reactive economic development approach. We

encourage Rural Development to explore new ways to assist communities and rural regions in planning. These planning processes need not focus on bold changes that would be too difficult and expensive to implement. Instead, they should be focused on helping communities and regions set achievable goals for themselves based on local needs and local resources.

We are confident that transformation can be accomplished with limited resource allocation. For the record and the Committee's review, I have included a case study of a plan planning process completed for Lynchburg, Ohio—a village of 1,300—by the Clinton County Regional Planning Commission and a student planner from the University of Cincinnati immersed in the community for a ten week period. This plan it is an excellent example of a low-cost strategy for community planning with demonstrated results of increasing ownership, including: catalyzing investment in the community's parks and natural resources, reviving a festival that benefits local businesses and non-profits, coordinating community volunteer projects, and inspiring citizens to become engaged in public service.

Expanding the involvement of institutions of higher education in rural development is critical to providing critical resources to rural communities that build capacity and great self-reliance. We have received positive responses from institutions of high education—even beyond our land grant college— interested in involving their faculty and students in the process of rural planning and development. We believe that USDA can play a critical role in bringing partnerships together of universities and rural communities to complete community and regional planning.

My thanks to you, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Roberts, Senator Brown, and to the Committee for considering my testimony, and for your focus on meeting the needs of America's rural communities and citizens.

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A Village Plan for Lynchburg, Ohio

This key loss of identity—the product of lost storefronts, local jobs and local talent—is characteristic of small towns which have little capacity to execute a planning process that addresses the economic development, community development and the vision for the community. The Clinton County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)—recognizing these challenges at the village level—adapted from the traditional focus of broad county comprehensive plans to working with specific villages who wanted to proactively address these issues. The Village of Lynchburg, Ohio was the first in this effort. The village of 1,300— like most small villages—had never had a plan and incoming Mayor Jeremy Shaffer recognized that the plan process would be key to developing long term strategies.

Understanding that a village needing its first ever plan would need extensive outreach, and public participation, the CCRPC devised a strategy of “immersion planning.” The CCRPC reached out to the University of Cincinnati's School of Planning—which has long history as the pioneer of cooperative education— communities and hired a student game for the challenge and the opportunity of being immersed in Lynchburg, living and working with the Village to develop practical strategies.

David Alpern, an undergraduate in the School of Planning from Ann Arbor, MI accepted the immersion assignment and spent 10 weeks in the small village. Living in the village without a car, David spent much of his time getting to know local businesses and stakeholders and working with CCRPC staff in developing a first ever plan for the Village. The plan process was sensitive about proposing ideas which would be too difficult to implement anyway, but rather the goal of plan was one of self-awareness—the process of finding and reinforcing the identity of the place.

The planning process was considered a success, but its impact was most clearly demonstrated by through village politics. In the following village council election, three local women—who had gotten involved in the plan process but had never served in elected office— ran for village council on a platform of implementing the recommendations in the plan. The community rallied behind their vision, and all three women won. Energized to implement some of the plan recommendations and carry the plan forward, they got to work on the plan's main recommendations including downtown cleanups and the development of a neighborhood park area for which they won a grant for the improvements. But just as the loss of identity was a gradual process in small towns, the planning process is just the start for the Village of Lynchburg. The plan highlighted various physical improvements, infrastructure needs, future land use and other recommendations and efforts which will take time and additional resources to implement.

The reality of globalization has changed small towns and the plan attempted a pragmatic center between waxing nostalgia and grandiose futures. Of course, the long term success of the plan is dependent on leadership and implementation. The CCRPC has continued to acknowledge that strategic plans are but a first step in building more self-reliant and more aware communities, the CCRPC continues with programs which proactively address the elements highlighted during the planning process.

[Please find excerpts from the plan attached]



Lynchburg, Ohio was described as a quiet place where nothing ever happens by all of the people I met immediately after moving into town. That was all anyone would say after telling them that I have been living in Cincinnati, which by comparison might as well be New York City. For the most part, it was a quiet little town of just under 1,500 people. The grander entertainment opportunities that I had been accustomed to my entire life were no where to be found. But the air was clean and I could hear birds chirping at all hours of the day. And as if those simple pleasures weren't enough to instill a new found respect for small town America, the characters of Appalachia that I met behind every door and across each service counter were some of the most genuine people that I have met in my travels across the country.

Monday, January 19th marked the beginning of my time in Lynchburg and immediately, though it was a cloudy, breezy day, I was instantly met with smiles and welcomed to the town. As the mayor showed me down the street to the place that I would call home for the next 2 months, I realized that my commute to work was going to be a ONE minute walk. As we climbed the rusty staircase that rose from the back alley to the doorway that symbolically marked the passage way between my private life and personal experience thus far in life and the drastically different world that I was now officially immersed into, I caught my first glimpse of Lynchburg's setting. The landing at the top of stairs was on the west side of the building, only two blocks from the western edge of town. The view overlooked a small but locally important river valley. Beyond fields dominated the westward expanse until the treeline; that scene has become my new visual definition of Ohio.

Once I stepped inside, I found the Mayor's mother and the police chief's daughter readying my new abode. The Mayor then helped me bring in my things, including the mattress. In a small town, even those at the top of the social ladder will provide the most basic helping hand. Perhaps my viewpoint is a bit skewed as I wasn't in town long enough to experience the downsides of living in a place where the trees, walls and of course the neighbors talk, but at one point over lunch a few weeks later, the Mayor suggested that I appreciate small town community more than the people who have lived it their whole lives.

That theme has dominated my understanding of the planning field; we don't know what we have until it's gone and often we take the simplest things, the most important things in life, for granted. It was from this perspective that I began to develop the concepts behind what would become the plan. In short, the approach was to protect and enhance the positive attributes of the Lynchburg lifestyle, its natural environment and its identity.

By the end of the initial physical analysis of Lynchburg, it had become rather apparent that the town had good bones, but the flesh had fallen away. The overall layout of the old section of town was not only intact but incorporated alleyways into the circulation system. In a conversation with the Mayor one afternoon, I had mentioned to him that a current trend in the field of urban design has been to go back towards the "old urban fabric" - the basic framework that the New Urbanists have been pushing as a development doctrine. The Mayor nodded with understanding.

It was this understanding that was a critical component of formulating this plan. The Village of Lynchburg, as had been made expressly clear in various conversations with the local townspeople, has had a poor history in regards to progress. But from our first telephone conversation, the Mayor conveyed to me that things were different under his administration. No longer

would opportunities for the village slip through the cracks. No longer would the future of the village happen haphazardly without any foresight or intervention.

Knowing that we could more or less throw the old books out the window and start anew in Lynchburg with a progressive outlook was the greatest gift a planner could ask for. From that perspective, the freedom to suggest more creative solutions was there. In my opinion the best solutions are the more creative and unique as they respond directly to the challenges and opportunities present in the localized situation.

Thus the plan is not necessarily a comprehensive plan but a hybrid plan that, while still looking at the larger picture, it incorporates some strategic planning influences to tackle specific issues such as economic development, hence the focus on Main Street and the park infrastructure. As these two physical aspects of Lynchburg can be easily influenced by the village itself, it made sense to emphasize their redevelopment. After all, it is those two pieces of the built environment that can be shared by everyone.

And finally, it was that idea of everyone that we really desired to see in the plan. Most of all we wanted to see the villagers in the process. On one of my first days in the office, I was surveying the Mayor's bookshelf and noticed *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam sitting there. I was in the process of reading that same book at the time and the Mayor and I often referred to it as the inspiration for exciting each of our own interests in civic engagement in every step of the planning process from thence forth. For too long the mentality of us and them dominated the mind set of the average citizen of Lynchburg. The construction of this plan proved to be one of the best opportunities in a long while that called on the citizenry to take hold of their own future.

After it has been said and done, I would really just like to thank everyone who pitched in along the way, whether it be a ride to grocery store in Hillsboro, as there was no full grocery in town and I did not have a car, or for the use of a washer and dryer on laundry day. Not only did I get to learn about a way of life that had been foreign to me until January of 2009, but there was an exchange involved for all of us and we were able to bridge one of the most forgotten cultural divides in our country: the gap between urban and rural.





When developing goals, objectives and plans for the future, it is important to first understand the past. The precept is simple: you don't know where you're going unless you know where you've already been. More concretely, the current state of affairs is always a product of the past and key insights into what should be done to remedy the problems of the present are often found in the past. In the case of urban composition, both social and physical, this analysis is imperative.

So where does that story of Lynchburg, Ohio begin? According to Hugh Isma Troth, an amateur yet thorough local historian, the tale begins in Virginia. From there, the Byrd family claimed land in the Virginia Military District as payment received from the Commonwealth of Virginia for service during the American Revolution. This land was in what would become southern Ohio. The owning family had ties with Lynchburg, Virginia and the property in Ohio then inherited the name.

1806 marked the first year that Westerners settled permanently in the area. The names Van Meter and Miller came from Kentucky while the name Stroup came from Pennsylvania. These families located in Dodson Township in the area that would become Lynchburg. At some point two additional names that would contribute to the future of the area arrived; they were Smith and Botts. In 1830, the village was officially platted by the two latter arrivals and the recorded history of Lynchburg began.

The first plat of the town shows two streets, Main and High, being the first crossroads of the town. There were 12 lots, six on either side extending north along Main Street from the intersection. Additionally, the system of alleys originated at this time. Main and High Streets formed the nucleus from which the town grew. By 1833, the rail line that once ran through Lynchburg had been established and ran diagonally across Main Street to the south of Pearl Street. The grid pattern of streets and alleys was fully taking form by this time. By 1898 the village had stretched eastward to Park and Grand Avenues and South to Turtle Creek.

Growth did not return until 1940's and that was when the subdivision and in-fill period of development in Lynchburg began. The northeastern corner of town was developed at this time and, given the differences in lifestyle preferences between the two centuries, the individual parcels developed in a different manner from the original sections of town. The automotive paradigm had taken hold; driveways replaced alleyways and the lot sizes increased. Architectural differences emerged as well. The Glenavy subdivision was began in the middle 1990's and typified the modern subdivision with curvilinear streets, large lawns and long driveways. It is important to note that this development is situated on the other side of Turtle Creek from the rest of town. This site is still in the process of being completed.

The railroad tracks that ran across the town were removed half-way through the last century. This act left a major axis perpendicular to the only other through right-of-way, that being Main Street, void of any development. Buildings were constructed in this space blocking the land from being used as a transportation corridor. There has been a mix of commercial and residential uses ever since.

But the economic history of Lynchburg is one of the most important pieces for discussion in this section of the plan. Given that the town was settled shortly after the turn of the 1800's and was located in land previously unsettled by Westerners, the initial residents were primarily subsistence farmers and much of the rest of the nearby areas functioned as agricultural land. Once a critical mass of production was reached, certain individuals could operate services for the community concentrated in the town.

1857 marked a distinct changing of the guard in Lynchburg. That year, the Freiburg and Workum whiskey distillery opened its doors and began employing people in the vicinity of Lynchburg. The distillery eventually became the largest employer in the town and fostered the existence of a manufacturing base in the town. This was a dynamic shift from an agrarian economic base as, in accordance with the history of industrialization in other areas of the county, the jobs paid in cash allowing the workers to partake in the larger economic world (i.e. the Sears and Roebuck Catalogue).

However, Prohibition was a death sentence for the distillery and its doors were closed just before the 1920's began. The loss of the largest employer in town, especially one that provided a trade surplus, was a major blow to the overall livelihood of Lynchburg. Sadly, many note this incident to be the beginning of the end for a vibrant local economy. Ever since, the shift to small scale production of goods and, more recently, the reliance upon the retail/service sector has increasingly forced residents to find employment outside of the incorporated area.

There have been two key actions made by the local government to first actively, and then passively reinforce this process with policy. In the 1970's the village government, primarily through the office of the mayor, set the village on a path to being a bedroom community instead of a relatively small employment center. This was done by denying industries from setting up their works in the village. This course of action was a direct choice made in light of the intended consequence.

Again in the 1990's the village government blocked an industrial use within the village limits. This time however, it was not for development reasons. An offer was made to rekindle the distillery as a production facility once again for the purpose of making whiskey. However, the reopening of the distillery doors was denied on the grounds that alcohol production was inappropriate for village values. This was an act that inadvertently withheld jobs from being located in the community.

The sum of these events has left Lynchburg with little means of local employment and lent the town to the mercy of the industrial cycles in Hillsboro and Wilmington. The critical mass of economic activity needed to keep the system moving has been dwindling for quite some time. However, it has not disappeared and it will be crucial for the vitality of the village to capitalize on suitable offers in the future.

Lynchburg is located approximately 50 miles from Cincinnati, Dayton and the Ohio River. From this position the village enjoys reasonable access to a large network of jobs in the southern and central sections of the state. Additionally, the recreation opportunities that come with the aforementioned areas are nearby as well. While the village is not located immediately off of a US Interstate route, its proximity to various state routes and extremely short distance to US 50 keep Lynchburg connected to the overall network of key transportation corridors.

There are two major regional centers serving Lynchburg. Both Hillsboro and Wilmington provide most of the jobs and services demanded by the citizens of the village. Very often, as casual social surveying evidenced, individuals and households often enjoyed the services of the regional center in which employment was located. Cincinnati and Dayton fill the rest of the service gap when necessary and also provide job opportunities.

Demographically speaking Lynchburg has a very homogeneous population but has a diverse age distribution. Over half of the population is under the age of 44 with over 50 percent of that grouping over 18 years of age; there is a prime workforce contingent living in Lynchburg. Women hold a slight advantage over men in numbers.

Household makeup is primarily of the family variety. The majority of these households are traditional family units. However, a quarter of the population is counted as nonfamily households. Elderly people living independently also count for nearly a sixth of the total number of households.

Most people own their own home in Lynchburg leaving renters as the minority. The average size of these units, distinguished along the same lines is remarkably close. The most glaring difference between owners and renters, other than the ratio of the two, is that rental vacancies are higher than owner occupied housing.

Educationally speaking, most residents of Lynchburg completed high school or attained an equivalency or sorts. Just under 15 percent of the village residents have completed a higher education program including associates degree programs. While the school district is one of the best in the area, taking the next step seems to be an issue.

Due to recent events in the economic landscape, the data collected for measuring employment in the year 2000, is extremely obsolete. As a general point, interpretation of that data should factor in an extreme downturn in larger economy hitting the "Production, transportation, and material moving" sector of the economy very hard; this of course was the largest employment area at the time of information collection.



On Saturday, January 31st, we conducted an open house during which the attendees were asked to participate in a survey. This arose from the need to engage the citizenry of Lynchburg in order for them to become more active in local government processes. Right from the beginning of the project, the Mayor's office had indicated that this was a top priority of the administration. For decades, participation and faith in local governance had been in a substantial decline. The comprehensive planning process provided one of the best opportunities to canvass the public and invite them back into the fold of what should ultimately be their government.

Even though the Village of Lynchburg had made attempts to draw the public inside the decision making process, efforts mustered little, if any, turnout. Thus, aided by the Planning Committee of Council, we hit the streets and spread the word about the event by going into businesses and politely asking to post an event flier while simultaneously informing the recipients on some of the critical details regarding the what was to take place.

As a result, we managed to attract a solid number of participants; most of whom had not been engaged in local government in quite some time, if ever. Eight of the fourteen participants had not been involved with the comprehensive plan previous to the open house. The remaining members were made up of a couple of council members, the Mayor and village employees. While they may have a slightly different background for answering the questions due to their employment status, we can consider their votes relevant nonetheless since they reside AND work in the village; this is to say that they more or less spend their entire lives interacting with Lynchburg. The gender distribution was fairly equal with six women and eight men. The age of the responders was slightly above the average age of all adults in the village.

As shown on the opposite page, there were eight boards placed on the walls and each participant was given a colored marker. They went around the room at their own leisure and were asked to prioritize each item in relation to the others on the sheet. There was little need for extra direction after this as the participants picked up the programming of the exercise in stride. If a question did arise, the designer of the survey was on hand at all times to provide any clarification.

The questions are all displayed at right so we will now summarize the results in the following narrative providing the mode value and then the average of the responses to each subheading in parentheses following the question:

When asked what is nice about Lynchburg, "Natural/rural setting" (Mode: 1; Average: 1.64) dominated the polling. Each of the other sub-questions fared relatively equally and do not need extra prioritization. The second board, which asked the converse of the previous board, the responders indicated that "Loss of community/culture" (1; 1.73) was the gravest problem facing the community. "Limited personal growth" (2; 2.67) and "Amenities" (3; 2.73) were next and were only statistically separated by the switching of one vote. "Size of the community" (5; 3.6) and "Slow-paced lifestyle" (5; 3.87) were not seen as problems facing the community.

Parks and Recreation headed the third board and saw "Type of facilities" (2; 1.93) rise to the top of the charts. "Availability/Accessibility" and "Features/Amenities" (both 2; 2.71) tied for second and had identical voting patterns. "Location" (3 and 4; 2.86) closely followed and "Number of facilities" (5; 4.07) was an outlier at the bottom of the list.

Housing issues were presented on the fourth board. "Maintenance and upkeep" (1; 1.73) was far and away cited as the biggest problem with the housing stock. "General quality," "Utility costs," "Affordability"

and "Size/space" all shared the same mode (3) but can be ranked in descending order by their respective averages (2.87, 3.0, 3.33, 3.67).

Fifth came transportation and the "Street lighting" (1; 1.14) was clearly the dominant issue on this sheet. "Parking" (2 and 3; 2.92) came next and was closely followed by "Circulation/flow" (3; 3.14). "Alternative Methods" (5; 3.64) had a greater mode value but a lesser average than "Traffic" (4; 4.07). The statistical inference that we can make here is that "Alternative Methods" was a higher priority to more people than "Traffic."

The sixth board, relating to economic development, was the first format variation of the boards. This one had only three subheadings to comparatively rank with an optional fourth. "Service Businesses" (1; 1.36) held a narrow priority margin over "Industry/manufacturing" (2; 1.64). "Agriculture" (3; 2.5) was a clear last. Only one "Other" optional response was submitted as a fourth priority: "Eco-friendly energy."

A main street wish list followed in the seventh spot. "Grocery" appeared 9 times out of the 14 responses. Three other responses can be considered as a component of a grocery (bakery, "Save-a-lot" and meat market + produce). The other two responses were still food related (sports grill and a place for women to gather over tea and pie).

The final board was labeled "Critical Issues" and was designed to be the integration of most the other boards. "Amenities/Services" (2; 1.87) and "Economic development" (1; 2.6) emerged as top priorities. "Appearance" (3; 2.8) followed next. "Housing" (4; 4.17), "Parks and Recreation" (4; 4.33) and "Transportation" (5; 4.47) were generally considered of less importance among the respondents.

As a brief summary, economic development, appearances and a better diversity of services are the biggest issues facing Lynchburg. The loss of community/culture came as no surprise given the attitude towards the Village of Lynchburg as noted in the period leading up to the event. This also can be understood to connect back to the identified physical problems in the village, specifically the appearance. Civic pride is certainly in need of bolstering.



As the previous pages presented the associable problems with landuse, these two pages propose remedies.

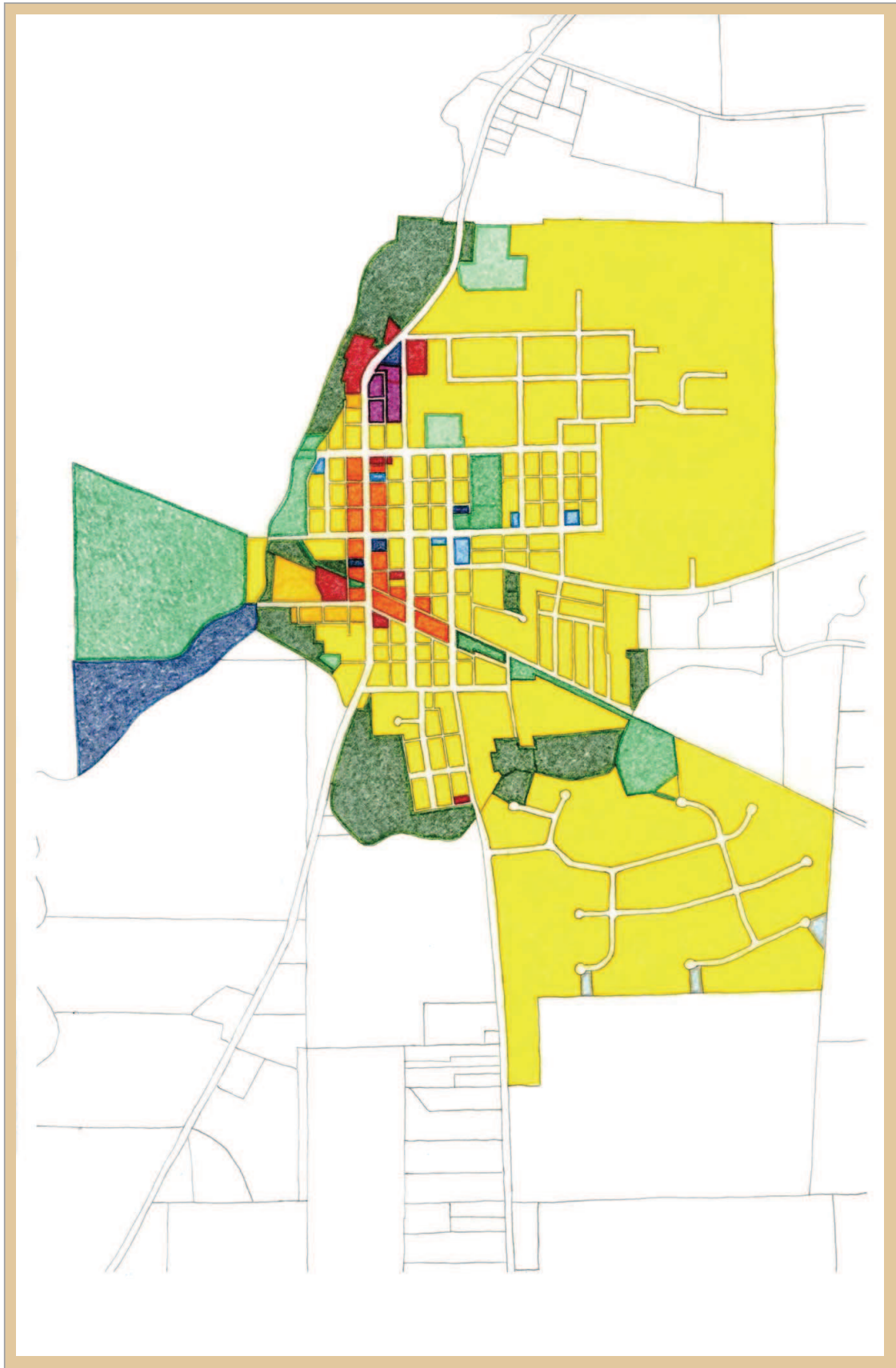
Working backwards through the listed problems, most of the land in the floodplain is designated for passive recreation, shown in dark green. This land would remain undisturbed; whatever survives naturally in these areas is allowed to stay. It would be feasible to locate trails within these areas as well as they can double as recreation and transportation spaces without compromising their purpose.

As far as the locales already functioning as park space go, they all remain as such. The only modification needed in these areas is the updating and enhancement of the facilities. As mentioned earlier in the plan, adding an additional park space in the Glenavy subdivision would be extremely advantageous. Locating this space on the northern edge of the subdivision would be the most preferable scenario. From this position (the middle shade of green on the map) we can take out two birds with one stone. First of all, the need for an accessible park in that area of town is met. Secondly, locating it there, with the addition of a pathway bridging back to the terminus of Washington Street on the other side of Turtle Creek, will create a bridge of another sort as well. With a literal common ground between the residents of the adjacent areas, a social bridging can take place. Truthfully, the potential for children to meet in this space offers the most promise of all. More on the connection back through to Main Street will be made later under the expanded section concerning parks.

Vacancy is a simple problem to solve on paper; on the ground it becomes a more complex issue. For the purposes of this plan, the strategy for resolving the general issue of vacancy in Lynchburg is twofold. First, effective economic development and growth should act to flesh out the community at large beyond its existing situation. Second, development should occur within the existing boundaries of the village before taking place elsewhere. While it would be logical to save existing structures first, unoccupied land weighs in at a close second. Nonetheless it would still be a good idea to develop a means to take better care of unoccupied buildings and barren lots.

Single family, detached housing will continue to dominate the Lynchburg landscape. Because of the village's role within the region as well as its size, this is the most suitable housing type for the foreseeable future. This is the vernacular housing typology and should remain as such for one primary reason: culture is largely contingent upon living arrangements. Drastic changes would be destabilizing to the population. However, the inclusion of new housing types to augment the existing pattern will help to increase lifestyle flexibility. This can be done by expanding attached and multifamily housing units. These uses should be placed near the heart of town primarily along Main Street; this, of course is the most accessible section of town.

Working back towards Main Street then, as well as the old railroad corridor, the designation of mixing uses (orange) will further this endeavour. Beyond the expansion of housing types, buildings that have the capacity to mix uses will also fill out the street frontages, better defining the neighboring spaces. This is especially critical for the redevelopment of Main Street seeing as how it is the most suitable corridor for both use and appearance. In other words, Main Street will have a more complete look, feel and function. This will really give the village a stronger center of town.





As we transition now into the first of the strategic elements of the plan, we find ourselves back on Main Street between High and Pearl Streets. This is the northern portion of a two block target area for a redevelopment plan of Main Street. Since Main Street is the life line of Lynchburg, it makes sense to concentrate activity along its route through town. This way there can be a critical mass of businesses that can combine to serve the demands of the community. There are currently plenty of available spaces, within a building or not, that can be made use of for economic development purposes.

Looking back upon the results of the open house, there were a number of results relevant to Main Street including economic development. Expansion of services and amenities, cleaning up the appearance of town and establishing a grocery store are all things that will have their grandest impact on Main Street. As these projects move forward, an opportunity to preserve the identity and history of the town arises. While some buildings need more work that others to be fully rehabilitated, the architectural character is worth saving. After all, they don't build them like they used to.

Utilizing the Community Investment Corporation (CIC) to monitor and assist in implementing a redevelop program is the avenue of choice for making the necessary changes to the strip. Under the control of the CIC, economic stimulus funding can be applied for to reduce the overhead of starting a business. This reduction in the cost of doing business will allow for business creation or expansion in a market otherwise not conducive to such an activity. Called a Retail Business Incubator, jobs can be created or retained in sectors including services and office work. The CIC will administer the program and will be responsible for the functions of applying for funding, aligning potential businesses for the funding, and making the sites relatively job ready.

The drawing at right shows a less intensive redevelopment of Main Street. Infill projects have filled the voids left between the buildings on the east side of the street near Pearl and on the abandoned lot south of the post office. These buildings should be constructed in a manner where the scale and form match with the surrounding context. Also, they should be compatible to mixing uses. This way the old style of main street development, retail on the ground floor and apartments or other services on top, is feasible. The thriving businesses are left untouched and allowed to flourish. Repairs and facade refurbishments are a must and are the responsibility of the property owner.

The street space is laid out according the previously displayed right of way designs. The street trees, vintage lighting posts and reorganized parallel parking instantly impact the appearance of the street. The bump-outs are best placed at the intersection of the alleyways and the street. This prevents vehicles from blocking these access points to the rear of the lots. A regular dispersal of street elements occurs naturally in this layout as well.

Two public spaces occupy principle points on this block. The post office features a public posting area that is highly visible. Since there is no mail delivery, this is a location that is visited by more people, more frequently, than anywhere else in town. The purpose of this element is to bolster community communication. Civic engagement and community involvement were highlighted as major issues from the perspective of both the citizens and the mayor's office. The posting area is conceived to foster the fundamentals of this effort. Across the street and down the block, the site that formerly was occupied by the gazebo has been redesigned to serve as a more inviting public space that before. The large trees and hedges that physically and visually cut the space off from its surroundings have been removed. At the corner, the old fire bell from across the street has been transplanted to server as a sculptural piece of historic value. In the heart of the space, a hardscaped mound gently rises about

two to three feet above grade. Snaking through the middle of the space is a vector of flower gardens and a believer seating platform. From this perch, a person can overlook the life in the plaza and the intersection of the two main streets in town. Behind the exaggerated bench are more flower gardens. Individual plots can be given to different community groups so as to enable a little friendly competition. And for the hot and humid summer months, the space is complete with a drinking fountain. Meanwhile, overlooking this plaza is a perfect location for a mural to cover the large brick wall of the juxtaposed building.

The second strategic element of the plan deals with the park and open spaces system around town. These areas are crucial to the long term health of Lynchburg. Parks not only add significantly to property values but also foster better physical and emotional well being among residents. While these areas require a public investment in construction and maintenance, the return is substantial.

Per earlier discussion in the plan, we found that a good volume of park space already exists within the village but is lacking in crucial areas. Also, almost a third of the land area of town has no immediate access to the greenspace infrastructure. Additionally, there is land in the floodplain of both the East Fork and Turtle Creek that can be reclaimed as a higher use in the form of passive recreation spaces. The task at hand is to appropriately expand the park facilities and connect them in a manner conducive to park like activities.

On the diagram at right, the darker green hues mark the places where the passive recreation spaces should be located. Most of these are on parcels that are predominately in the floodplain. The others occupy lots that are tough to access via a public right of way; basically this is will assign a definite value to lots that are not suitable for private development. Largely due to geographical features, these spaces generally form a ring around most of the village. While not intended to be a greenbelt, this will form a good transition between Lynchburg and its contextual milieu.

The lighter green areas are the active recreation parks. The western most of which is Crampton Park. This park will fulfill its role best with an open layout, a picnic shelter, barbecues, a playground, and possibly a band shelter or stage to complement the covered bridge at the north end of the park. This should be a place for community wide events during the appropriate seasons. Due east of Crampton Park lies the park where the old school building once sat. The design of this park will be detailed more on the next page; for now we will mention that it should be more of play oriented space than a gathering place. South of this park, the vacant property in between Washington and Jackson streets should be redeveloped into plots for community gardening. Like the flower beds at the corner of Main and Pearl, some more of that friendly competition between different community groups could produce (no pun intended) interesting results. Following Washington Street out east, we can find the other new park space primarily for the use of the Glenavy residents. This park should be similar to the park in the center of town. Playgrounds and fields as well as other sporting facilities should be located here to complete the availability of amenities. This park is of the utmost importance for both play and social reasons. We have already mentioned that there is no such space available to that section of town at present. Placing a park here will also have an important social ramification. When a pathway is built in between this park and the terminus of Washington Street, it becomes a point of interest and a meeting ground for residents from two distinctly different sections of town.

But it is the connection aspect of this strategic plan that is the most important. Serving both recreational and transit purposes, making attractive and effective connections between the park spaces will dramatically enhance the quality of life in Lynchburg. When it comes to attracting new residents, this will be a major selling point. It is safe to say that no other community in the immediate region has any type of network even remotely similar to this proposal.

To accomplish this task, reclaiming a portion of the wide right of way on Washington Street is mandatory. Continuing back along the old railway corridor, back towards Main Street, Washington and Jackson Streets should be converted into one way streets in order to narrow the designated area for vehicular traffic freeing space for the main pathway. The South Main Revitalization diagram shows the intersection of this path and Main Street, the location that most necessitates

an intricate design. Out of the entire comprehensive plan, this feature is one of the most important elements. It is in this manner that the town can once again be unified into one coherent social unit.

Lastly, the other two parks (Crampton and the former school site) should be connected via the alleyways. Pedestrian traffic is already following these right of ways and can be further directed to do so by an alternative paving scheme for the center section of the alleyways. This will denote that the alleyways, those of course being the one east of Sycamore Street and north of Pearl Street, make a formal and important connection between two nodes of activity.



The layout of this park should serve as a model for the principles associated with park redevelopment in Lynchburg. The space as whole is acutely defined by street tree plantings. Structured activities should be clustered at the most accessible point in the park. Shade trees should be planted in these areas to counter the hot summer sun and to create a visual epicenter iconic of a gathering place. Excess open areas should revert back to natural habitats for both environmental protection purposes as well as reduce maintenance costs. Also, a balanced assortment of activities should be taking place in each park.

So in this park we can see these principles clearly at work. Along the edges, trees help to set the park apart from the surrounding context. Really the division between street and field is the most important point behind this. The preexistence of the baseball diamonds influenced the orientation of the overall park layout. These spaces are large and open and are balanced on the other end of the park with separate fields for other types of sports play. In between, two shelter houses provide space for family, church, etc. get-togethers or simply for relief from the weather, rain or shine. The addition of a playground and a basketball court fulfill demand for other types of activities, especially for children. Providing spaces for their play will help to keep them out of trouble. The meeting ground of the park is located at the point where the pathways from the other parks meet. The activities are primarily clustered around this point. And finally on the eastern edge of the park, there is a field of indigenous plants; during the spring and summer this space will come alive in color with flowering plants.

