

FIELD TOUR NOTES: North Webster, Indiana

Overview

The information discussed during the field tour has been organized into four key categories to allow for easy review and comparison between communities. The categories are defined below:

General Considerations:

A portion of the information discussed during the field tour meetings was to provide general information the community, the history and the residents living and working within the area. Items that could not be included in the three categories below have been accounted for in this General Considerations category.

Aspirations:

Aspirations are the goals/ objectives/ projects that the community hopes to achieve during or after this planning process.

Strengths/ Opportunities:

Strengths are internal, positive attributes of your department and/or system. These are things that are within your control. Opportunities are external factors in your environment that are likely to contribute to your success.

Weaknesses/ Threats:

Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from your strengths. These are things that you might need to improve on to be competitive. Threats are external factors that you have no control over. You may want to consider putting in place contingency plans for dealing with them as/ if they occur.

Summary

On Tuesday, February 23, 2021 members of the project team met with Lisa Strombeck, the Town Council President, at River Coffee House to discuss the Town of North Webster's existing conditions, aspirations, and overall needs. James Turnwald, Stephanie Overbey, Katie Clark, Scott Siefker and Alec Poremien were in attendance from the project team.

General Considerations:

- The North Webster has a population of approximately 1,151 residents.
- Lisa works at Barts Water Sports. While located outside of North Webster, the business sees little turn over in staff.
- The Town, historically, has featured multiple community festivals including the Mermaid Festival (end of June), Dixie Days (end of July) and a summer carnival.
- The Town does offer senior living within one specific subdivision development. The subdivision, located north of Epworth Forest Road along Panorama Drive, is split in half with one area

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offering rental homes to all ages, and the other offering rental homes to those over the age of 55.

- The Town of North Webster does not have a local water service. Water is provided through wells only.
- A top attraction in the area is the Heart of the Lakes Antique Mall.
- One grocery store, Neighborhood Fresh, is in North Webster.
- North Webster is within the Wawasee School Corporation. North Webster has its own elementary school, located south of 600 N on Blaine Street. Middle School and High School facilities are located outside of North Webster.

Aspirations:

- Some within the community would like to see the existing Midlakes Mobile Home Park, located near the northwest corner of Main Street and Crystal Flash Road, redeveloped in the future. A potential use could be for senior living and/ or apartments.
- The North Webster Chamber of Commerce is working to bring new businesses into the area.
- Some within the community would like to see the Town establish a façade program for downtown businesses. An idea for the character of the facades would be a fishing village which would tie back to the Town's history and culture.
- The Town is interested in identifying/ completing new trail connections to both local and regional destinations.

Strengths/Opportunities:

- The owner of the property at the northeast corner of SR 13 and Backwater Road is interested in donating the property to the Town of North Webster. Currently the site contains a pavilion structure that was used by the American Legion. If the donation occurs, the site would be used as park space.
- Webster Lake is known for having Muskie fishing, which is a unique feature for the region.
- North Webster features the historic Dixie Boat in the summer months. Built in 1929, The Dixie is Indiana's oldest sternwheel excursion boat. Cruises are offered daily and run from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend. Tours were suspended in 2020 due to COVID 19.
- The area adjacent to the Dixie features two overnight options for guests. Each business also includes an outdoor pool.
- North Webster has a Community Center which also includes a local library. The building offers the YMCA gym and meeting rooms.
- The downtown has only a few vacant buildings/ storefronts. There were minimal closures due to COVID 19.
- The Town recently completed improvements to their sewer and wastewater treatment facilities due to state mandated projects.

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Weaknesses/ Threats:

- The existing Community Center is not supported by tax dollars. It is a constant struggle to keep the business model sustainable.
- There is no downtown Main Street organization currently.
- Currently the Chamber of Commerce helps facilitate improvements/ actions throughout the community, however it relies on Town Council for funding. This relationship causes some confusion on roles and responsibilities.
- While outside of the limits of North Webster, there are homes along Webster lake that do not have sanitary service. Historically there has been some interest by these homeowners to connect into existing services.