

What's your future, SW Ohio?

September 30 - October 7, 2019



Background

In Southwest Ohio, a changing economy, addiction, racial tension, and gun violence have left many people feeling unsure about the future and in need of information from local journalists.

While reporters don't usually have many opportunities to sit down face-to-face with their communities, the Dayton Daily News, WYSO, WHIO, and Soapbox Cincinnati have committed to doing things differently. They wanted to hear how their communities were experiencing local changes and challenges, their hopes for the future, and what they were proud of. Gaining a better idea of their community's needs also helps local media hold leaders accountable ahead of upcoming elections.

Conversation Summary

From September 30 - October 7, 2019, Your Voice Ohio and local news outlets hosted 6 community conversations where journalists shared a meal and sat with dozens of community members and local elected leaders from Dayton, Kettering, Trotwood, Lebanon, and Springboro, to ask and answer three key questions:

- What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?
- What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?
- What are the strengths or assets of the community?

After exploring these questions, participants worked together to create action plans for the changes they wanted to see, identifying concrete steps individuals, journalists, and leaders could take.

Overall, participants said the Dayton region has many strengths, including local innovation, a thriving arts scene, water, colleges and universities, and public parks. They focused on how these strengths and more could help overcome economic, food, housing and education disparities, increase access to transportation, build community connections, confront racial inequity, and support local news.

The meetings are designed and run by the state-wide news media collaborative Your Voice Ohio, which is listening to residents all over the state in order to better represent their concerns and solutions in the news and in democratic processes. Over 30 meetings with more than 1,200 people have been held in communities across the state.

Ideas from these meetings will be used to shape community-centered election coverage ahead of the 2019 local and 2020 national elections, amplifying community voices in the democratic process.



Dayton

Date: September 30, 2019
Location: Dayton Public Library

About 20 people attended the first forum, where they discussed the issues they want to see politicians and the media cover during the next election cycle. Many participants focused on collaboration between citizens and leaders. Journalists from the Dayton Daily News, WYSO, and WHIO - TV were in attendance.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- Vibrant, fresh, clean (no blight)
- Less stress, anger, crime, drug abuse
- Higher life expectancy, lower infant mortality
- Vibrant parks, community centers, less vacant storefronts, less vacant homes
- Stronger educational outcomes, less student debt
- Ensure inclusivity is the goal
- Equity and vibrancy in all neighborhoods
- Much less poverty and wealth inequality; more public & civic space; more communal connection and investment
- Busy, filled with activity; reduction in charitable work aimed at poverty, no need for food bank
- Strong collaborations - business communities, governments, etc. working together
- Everyone would be able to see their interconnectedness and benefit from their relationships & more public civic space
- Debt free higher education
- Civic opportunities/spaces
- Fewer Boarded up buildings, fewer homeless people, more kids out playing in the parks outside; less food insecurity; more grocery stores
- Fully employed; drug counseling centers & rehabs no longer necessary
- Good neighborhoods, clean & safe; Livable wages; no homelessness; no crime; community oriented policy model; Strong schools
- Greater civic involvement & accountability
- People with jobs that are fairly paid; education; holding kids to a higher standard/expectations; real life skills & knowledge
- Cultural diversity & inclusivity; educational empowerment
- Community services available to all and reliable
- More money in pockets, better schools, better choices in area (food, etc.)
- Free of crime and drugs; no monetary concerns; all are welcome and respected

What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- I would implement policies that include opportunities for inclusion for all who want to partake.
- I would change the city of Dayton's representative structure to wards, so that all communities will have representation
- Implement county-wide school system for equitable distribution of resources
- More transparent and accountable political representation; More local ownership of businesses and housing; More investment in more and better local media/journalism
- Change the way school funding and support happens to increase quality and equitability of our schools
- Less inequality - income, education, food access, child care/preschool, etc.
- Less segregation; more generosity; less us v. them - we should want opportunity and prosperity for everyone.
- Public/civic spaces for people to engage with each other; that we see each other as people, learn from each other, support each other, hold each other accountable.
- Less inequality; more well paying jobs with benefits;
- More diverse police force; more grocery stores; more access to fresh produce
- Stronger schools with more support for struggling children
- Fewer boarded up building, but also more opportunities for assistance for families struggling to get by
- Affordable healthcare for all; debt free higher education; language study for kids
- Opportunities for more inclusiveness between citizenry → decrease fears/stereotypes, develop empathy; more public engagement!
- Police become more active with citizens
- Real estate development west of the river
- Educational & employment opportunities - actively recruit disenfranchised youth
- Re-entry programs; Find vacant land owners and hold them accountable (fines)
- Change how we treat taxes; Fair wages; regionalize school integration; change to county government; Equal housing -- less incentives for luxury homes
- Equal treatment and opportunities; hold people accountable for their actions, but in a learning & helping each other way, help find solutions without penalties
- Food deserts; transportation
- Quality food sources; funding shift for schools to become thriving institutions; employment benefit for parents to remain home with children age 3-5
- Tax hospitals and universities that are acting like for-profit corporations; higher wages, paid leave and vacations, affordable universal health care; debt-free higher ed and trade schools; connect all schools electronically for consistent education, i.e. best science teacher beamed to every 5th grade class, teachers provide individualized lessons; eliminate tax exemptions.
- Encourage people to be more accountable in every aspect of their lives (raising their children, maintaining their property/neighborhood), healthy lifestyles, smoking, drugs, eat better, exercise; city employees required to live in the city limits; pay their property taxes, no abatements!
- All neighbors are required to serve in their neighborhood: Volunteer school, neighborhood cleanups, neighborhood priority boards, leaders are transparent

What are the strengths or assets of the community?

- The people's desire to be better
- Caring people, good people; history of invention; many colleges and universities that might support initiatives; diverse communities (race, income, ethnicity and languages); willingness to work hard together; great architecture; strong neighborhoods
- Water; topography; universities/research facilities/ Wright Patterson Air Force Base; housing stock; travel time; walkable community; infrastructure-highway system
- Economic opportunities; diversity; innovative spirit; natural resources/climate; transportation access; healthcare resources; diverse employment (high and low income); affordable housing
- Some collaboration (needs to include the "common folk" not just the people with money/power) with communities; universities and colleges; park system; water; inventive nature/creativity; libraries; arts.
- Willing collaborators; strong community pride/identity; hard workers; creative problem-solvers when given the chance; not too big, not too small, manageable for change if we choose; accountability -- news bloggers etc who are not afraid to challenge those in charge; natural resources, parks
- The people, friendly & accessible; resilient, gritty, hard working; affordable (compared to big cities); lots of potential, opportunity, desire to improve; Wright Patterson AFB but it needs to be more integrated into the city; great location, driving distance to 50 percent of the population
- Basketball courts, soccer fields, library, each person in the room, Dayton Daily News, WYSO, Metro Parks, Dayton Dragons, Arts Center
- Long history of cultural and scientific/civic creativity; a gritty resilient civic pride that exists, sense of community; huge rivers of data fiber that can be developed into high speed public broadband/ internet; some really good educational institutions; good geographic location and affordable living environment
- Organizational skills; community based fund-raising
- Diversity -- inclusiveness, Muslims, Hispanics; strong churches/religious institutions; the 1-percent still here and interested in the communities as a whole; strong fine and performing arts organizations; number of higher ed institutions
- City of neighbors; grassroots mindset; history of inventions and firsts; schools of higher education and libraries; rivers, parks and culture; diverse population; regrowth of strong downtown; centrally located, affordable; programs for young people
- Schools -- Career and college prep; hospital; strong neighborhood association; police
- Schools; upkeep streets; sense of community; people out and about; homeownership/pride
- Comes together; helpful; friendly; small
- Diversity; access/proximity to universities and colleges; resourcefulness; innovation; location respective to climate change
- The people (most of them anyway)
- Flyer Bus; Catholic Social Services; Dayton Foundation; Levitt Pavilion; Libraries; Metro Parks; Dayton Arts Alliance; Univ of Dayton and Sinclair CC; historic foundation sets Dayton apart



Defining Action Plans

To prioritize the changes participants said they wanted to see, all of the ideas from Question 2 about changes were posted on the wall. Each person received two sticky dots and was asked to stick them to the changes they thought most important. Changes with the most dots then became the focus of detailed small-group problem-solving conversations, where people were then asked to create action steps for individuals, community leaders, and local journalists.

County-wide school system to provide equitable funding; network of high-quality teachers that provide individualized education – 8 votes

- Individuals: Push leaders to move forward -- look at best practices, desired outcomes; show up; refocus priorities (show up for school board forums vs football games)
- Community Leaders: state legislation mandating county-wide system with community-based committee/mechanism; ask people what they want first; Listen, listen, listen!
- Journalists: Reporting on best practices; reporting ahead of time to drive attendance for these events vs. after the fact; Slow down and get the story right -- facts over action vs getting the scoop. Help us understand what others are thinking; present the history for background

Network of locally based news and information, funded media – 6 votes

- Expand support and involvement with already existing local community media like WYSO, DATV, etc and new Miami Valley Public Media
- Restructure journalism, fund it as a public trust, emphasize local ownership
- Move away from clickbait reporting and refocus on community reporting; move away from clickbait and do stories that matter and inform; coordinate solid messaging and community focus on community service, back to community reporting, seek feedback from community and non-profits to educate about services.

One group combined 2 similar ideas for exploration.

Neighborhoods of shared interests and values that facilitate socialization and civic action – 4 votes

+ More opportunities for community gatherings, civic spaces – 4 votes

- Neighborhood associations take responsibility, act as advisers, accountability
- Local parks: Increased use or very local activities

Who are the people & organizations making a difference in your community?

- Neighbors Over Politics – voter awareness
- UpDayton
- Gem City Market – project to bring full-service grocery store to near west side; community based co-op model
- WYSO and DATV in informing and connecting our community both civically and culturally
- Dayton Metro Library
- Derrick Martin; Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy People, Healthy Community
- MVOC
- Gotham Soccer League, providing opportunity to come together for shared interest and talk to people who are different from you
- Your Voice Ohio – the new model for quality media, the community tells media what to ask
- WYSO
- Levitt Pavillion
- Girl Scouts of Western Ohio
- Dayton Blight – Lynn Lamanee
- Re-Entry Program, Quinn Howard on Edwin C. Moses
- Think TV Network
- Dayton Foundation

What do you feel compelled to do after tonight's conversation?

- More grassrootsing, organizing
- Be a social leader, community leader other than a politician
- Learn more about the needs of more communities within Dayton
- Attend more community meetings
- Inform myself
- Increase my involvement in my neighborhood affairs
- Become a more caring person
- Infant mortality focus
- Learn more
- Clean up an alley, neighborhood
- Volunteer where I can make an impact
- Help promote events to draw more participants





Kettering

Date: October 1, 2019

Location: Dayton Public Library – Kettering Moraine Branch

In Kettering, participants talked about hunger, addiction, racism, lack of economic opportunity, lack of transportation and the need for affordable housing. While they acknowledged community problems can be tackled by people working together, success requires leadership and follow-up.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- Reduce road rage and just generally more opportunity to be nice to our neighbors
- Less addiction; reduce road rage; less hunger; people have a safe place to live; small businesses are successful residents have rewarding jobs; no domestic abuse
- The question used the word “happy” which made me think of mental health right away. Individuals in communities can not be guaranteed happiness, but there can be services to help fulfill one’s potential. Mental health services (accessible help) and job outreach services are the words that came to mind when reading “happy & fulfilled.”
- Neighbors could communicate with each other with the topics people concerned and make common opinions, such as on the rise of gentrification
- People know and take care of each other
- Equity across all demographics; housing stability; education access; socio-economic stability and opportunities for upward mobility
- Neighbors taking time to know each other; feeling of safety and trust; participation in community events to highlight cooperation
- Prosperous, vibrant
- Financial stability; access to healthcare; housing options; resources for social/community involvement

What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- Finding ways to help people
- Teaching inclusivity in high school - Examples: LGBTQ issues in sex ed; diversity classes; students ongoing topical/current event conversations; safe space training; we should have more conversations about discrimination in schools
- Neighborhood being valued by other neighborhoods, investors, businesses for growth and development
- More community events discussing our goals & action steps
- Open forums to establish needs of community; create task force based on responses; establish realistic goals; enlist volunteers
- Increased community communication; Ensure rental properties are maintained; make grants for homeowners to upgrade their properties when they cannot afford to do so; support neighborhood organizations
- Access to transportation for all; opportunities for gainful employment for all people, at all levels; Pre-k access for all kids
- Raise the bar for education; Erase Racism; Require police to reside in the city they serve and have to attend diversity & implicit bias training
- Job descriptions for local elected officials - written by the people, make them more reflective of what the people need
- The structure of schools focused more on integrating social connections & inclusivity into curriculum
- How we recruit employers & how our current workforce is developed/maintained

Community strengths and assets

- Young professionals
- Food
- Caring
- Green space
- Metro Parks
- Variety of events
- People
- VTA/libraries
- Arts
- Strong Youth Voice
- Networking and relationship-building
- Good budgeting
- Easily navigable
- Over 6 higher education institutions in 30 minutes
- Lt Gov from the area, and other leaders
- Good schools with career tech options
- Diversity
- Businesses that provide jobs



Defining Action Plans

This group was unique among Your Voice Ohio conversations. The participants respectfully negotiated among themselves to revise the guidelines for the final assignment in a way that they felt could move the community forward most effectively. The top changes they selected were neighborhood-building, job opportunities, and access to transportation.

They moved away from the latter two as something over which they had the least power and too little time to address. They chose instead to all gather around one table and talk about **building relationships**. Participants discussed what it takes to bring people in the community together regularly, where they can get to know their neighbors, openly discuss shared community challenges, and address them together. Community leaders asked probing questions and everyone contributed from their own perspective. We then asked them to create action steps for Individuals, Community Leaders, and Local Journalists.

Individuals

- People need to show up and commit to doing these various tasks
- People need to set the common agenda, provide the input, have ownership over their challenges and solutions
- Engage leaders

Community Leaders

- Need to provide more opportunities to listen to citizens, and engage with them through distributed media methods

Journalists (what should communication/information in the community look like?)

- Glossary of where to get community information/resources



Who are the people & organizations making a difference in your community?

- Neighborhood Watch
- Partners for healthy youth
- School district
- Angela Williams (City of Kettering)
- Senior services coordinator, Vicki Carraher
- Darrico Murray
- Valerie, Kettering foundation
- Dayton Foundation
- Levitt Pavilion
- The Longest Table
- Interfaith Ladies monthly luncheons

What do you feel compelled to do after tonight's conversation?

- Learn about housing issues
- Build better community in my own neighborhood
- Raise awareness of long term keys to community success
- Get more involved in my community!
- Delve more into the CDC's Social Determinants of health
- Spread the meeting much more and bring people involved





Trotwood

Date: October 2, 2019

Location: Trotwood Community & Cultural Arts Center

Trotwood community members focused many of their conversations on the importance of education, including how to improve the Trotwood-Madison schools.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- Walk everywhere, work, play school all in the same place
- It would be like the TV show Cheers, everyone would have a place, everyone would be included, and there would be items to satisfy everyone's desire. Cheers was a diverse environment where individuality was celebrated. They had good clean fun and held everyone accountable on civility and responsibility. Amenities, diversity, housing, jobs, good schools, good infrastructure, safety, equity.
- The streets would be alive with pedestrians, homes freshly painted with flowers in the yard. Well attended local events where you would run into all your friends; convenient specialty shopping and lots of restaurant choices; attractive to young families; excellent local communications network.
- Income equality with great schools funded by fair tax system; limits on firearms ownership i.e. "you must have training and license to carry; urban gardening; ethical development for kids -- it would be your world kids; local paper.
- Crime would be down; people would be healthier, happier because they would have access to good jobs, fresh quality food, healthcare (preventative, ER), quality education, healthy lifestyle activities, vibrant arts throughout the community, diverse population
- Less income inequality -- no elite neighborhoods and no dangerous poor neighborhoods; everyone feels safe, anywhere in town, even at night; everyone feels proud of the quality of public schools
- Economic stability; easy access to basic goods/ services; participation in community events/ institutions, social groups, churches

What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- Allow denser housing options (including apartments above the garage + tiny homes)
- Stronger identification/interaction among neighbors → all new homes have big front porches
- More training for police in community; more programs directed for youth; more community use of Sycamore Park!
- Employment/skill building opportunities for youth → training kids to grow food, help elderly
- Affordable childcare for all
- Statewide school funding equity; tax incentives to attract businesses (retail & high tech)
- Increased employment options & better wages so work/life balance; better school funding & resources
- More walking & bike paths, that are lighted and safe, high speed internet, disc golf course
- High-achieving schools, fund education equitably
- Create a greater connection between the school and the community to provide mentorships, internships
- Create multicultural events to teach about the common ground in our diversity by connecting with each other
- Provide opportunities to teach our community the importance of civic engagement

Community strengths and assets

- Good police, fire and EMS
- Natural resources: water (Wolf Creek and water resources)
- Location: minutes away from two interstates, minutes away from job
- Low-cost environment
- Good colleges, workforce development (CIC and Sinclair)
- School facilities
- No traffic jams
- Small-town mentality
- People feel safe here
- Youth, football
- Public transportation



Defining Action Plans

In Trotwood, participants all chose to gather around one big table to discuss education in their community. Participants discussed how youth could be more involved civically as a means to generate more engagement and community ownership. Participants were excited by the idea of lowering the voting age for certain local offices and giving students the option to take a civics course in order to be eligible for voting.

A common theme within the conversation was the need for more youth mentorship opportunities, to get young people engaged, equip them with life skills and work experience, and “gives them a clear vision that their education means something”. Community members discussed the importance of collaboration among local educational institutions and local industry, in order to make this plan a reality. Trotwood-Madison High School teacher Alicia Pagan, and Deputy City Manager Stephanie Kellum, participants from the conversation, say they plan on keeping the conversation between the city and schools going.

Who are the people & organizations making a difference in your community?

- Alicia Pagan - advocates for Trotwood students on local, regional and national levels - make change happen!
- Regina Kleinhenz
- Sisters of the Precious Blood, homicide vigils, peace education, social-justice oriented, investment in the community
- Claude Keeling, Trotwood Historical Society
- The City of Trotwood, striving to change dynamics
- League of United Latin American Citizens, Ga-li Arts Ed

What do you feel compelled to do after tonight's conversation?

- Talk about mentorships in our community!
- Post on Facebook
- Next week, I'll share the DDN article w/coworkers and friends ask them to be more involved
- I want to look for pedestrian funding
- I will do my best to foster more involvement with the schools



Dayton #2

Date: October 3, 2019

Location: White House Event Center

At our second Dayton conversation, a new group of community members gathered at the White House Event Center. They focused a lot on measuring the community's well-being versus economic success in terms of job numbers, and they also developed action plans to address low voter turnout and food deserts.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- Access to basic needs: Healthcare, quality public education, fresh/healthy food, clean air, cloths, shelter, green space, safe place to congregate with community
- Living wages & quality employment opportunities
- Access to healthy food no food desert!
- Adequate and affordable transportation
- Affordable healthcare & access to medical services, including mental health
- Equitable education
- FOR ALL - Inclusive & Equitable
- Affordable housing, neighbors know and take care of each other, care about community concerns, safety from crime/drugs
- Medical insurance for all, economy stable, non gentrified, job opportunity, stable housing/ homeownership, no poverty or working class, healthy food, policing that is safe and equitable, no divestment
- People helping each other, safe and healthy lifestyle, high quality of life
- A thriving community is made up of thriving people. People thrive when they feel a sense of:
 - Purpose - is fulfilled when ones gifts and hearts are fully utilized and appropriately rewarded and celebrated
 - Connectedness – comes from a network of support and inspiration from friends & family
 - Optimism – happens when one is free from worry about healthcare, affordable childcare, affordable housing
- Everybody has access to healthy affordable food, clean safe water, air, streets, homes
- Access to medical care that makes sense
- Natural & green spaces for the community; good work that honors dignity of person; nobody is without basic necessities; no more gun violence; mental health care is expansive and affordable for all ages

Continued: what does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- No more homelessness or hunger everyone would have access to a safe home and healthy food
- People would feel comfortable approaching all others and sharing their stories and lives; restorative justice; Transformative justice
- No one is disposable; everyone's basic needs are met; restorative justice practices; opportunities to share gifts/talents with others – open economy – find & develop purpose with dignity, mutually beneficial relationships with nature (trees, rivers, ferns); land-based economies & systems; education for life skills, relational living for innovation & creativity
- Viable neighborhoods: clean, pride, green space, shared care of community space
- Opportunities for entertainment, strong community resources, viable employment opportunities with livable wages, quality childcare, strong progressive schools, community diversity
- No crime community-oriented policing
- Gainfully employed & retirement stability; access to healthcare, public transportation, & housing; competing school districts; safe
- Highly diverse and integrated neighborhoods; abundance of green space; variety of forms of transportation available in all areas; teachers diverse in all schools; equitable funding for public schools
- Everyone is safe; thriving arts scene; diverse & integrated neighborhoods; strong infrastructure – physical & cultural; balanced economy
- Accessible mental health services: happiness is not a given, but people can receive help; equity for all (less realistic)
- Everyone is employed and our kids have access to excellent schools; and we trust that our elected officials are working for us
- Ample employment opportunities; education a priority; access to quality food & groceries



What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- How we define and measure “success” as it relates to communities → having the emphasis be on “well-being”, rather than economic indicators
- Living wages; safe & affordable housing; transportation - ease of access
- Elimination of food deserts; sense of community & integration; safe communities - elimination of gun violence
- Education resources allocation; transportation; housing
- Lots of community input opportunities; affordability of services; accessibility towards low income and/or disabled communities; more youth involvement; sustainable city practices; home repairment
- Some measure of realistic gun control; less influence from lobbyists, big pharma, PAC regulations
- \$25 millions was granted to Dayton to tear down homes, i wish we could reinvest that money into stable housing for Dayton; close Good ram; restructuring of mayoral powers in Dayton to grant more ability (less power than 20 years ago)
- Engaged parents in children’s education; car free downtown, where its built for people, not vehicles; more than one option for groceries
- More grocery stores in neighborhoods; hospitals in all neighborhoods; better paying jobs (seems like there’s only low paying jobs available); “share the wealth” of the downtown Renaissance out to the surrounding areas; we need more availability of mental health services for all ages
- More government investment in areas where there is little (i.e. food desert NW Dayton)
- Politicians who are serving the people; Attract viable businesses with strong wages/benefits; equitable school funding; Live, learn, work, & play all in the same area
- 3 or 4 day work weeks; improved government regulations to protect people from bad businesses and crime; better neighborhood communication; healthcare that won’t bankrupt you if you get sick
- More equity across neighborhoods → reinvest in east + west sides
- Bridge the gap among the neighborhoods & change the perception of struggling neighborhoods
- Change the hierarchy structure of power in communities; less restrictions to voting /make it easier to vote
- Open budget process (resident voting power); mandatory investment by corporations into divested communities (regional collaboration); Financial, legal educational support for community investment in real estate; designated green spaces; trade schools for sustainable work
- Redistribution of resources reducing income inequality, equalizing access to nature, arts, quality education, housing
- Less focus on your job as the definition of WHO YOU ARE; Opportunities for all to shine in their own ways and each contribution to be valued; Cultural activities recognized for their whole impact
- Make voting easier; make paying taxes a virtue; tax carbon to encourage public transportation

Community strengths and assets

- Grassroots community, motivated, people ready to do big things
- Humble
- Hopeful, optimistic
- Care towards others
- Willing investors
- RTA
- LGBTQ affirming
- Liveable size, convenient to get around, tristate area
- Dayton Police Dept has done a good job of collaborating
- Strong history of firsts, creativity, inventions
- Library
- Breweries
- Largest number of minority owned businesses
- Welcome Dayton initiative
- After crisis this year, a sense of generosity, resilience, compassion and pride
- World class culture
- Metro parks bike trails
- Welcoming of diversity
- Powerful
- Public radio and Think TV
- Youth energy -- entrepreneurs and arts
- Accessibility to higher education
- Clean water
- Collaborative across services

Defining Action Plans

To prioritize the changes participants said they wanted to see, all of the ideas from Question 2 were posted on the wall. Each person received two sticky dots and was asked to stick them to the changes they thought most important. Changes with the most dots then became the focus of detailed small-group problem-solving conversations.

Making voting easier and popular – 7 votes

- Civic education in Pre-K through post grad
- Not a burden to vote -- but a privilege
- Reach out to high schools to register to vote
- Make election day a paid holiday, or Columbus Day an early voting day
- Have a voter ID card at the BMV for non-drivers
- More ways to provide ID to vote
- Incentivize employers to let employees vote
- Easy to get transportation to the polls
- Rebate on state taxes if they vote
- Automatic voting registration, and restoration when get out of jail
- Popular vote should count
- Restructure Electoral College -- Rank voting
- Community forums on issues
- Limit election campaign time

Redefine Success – 5 votes

Five-year initiative. Move away from job creation to quality of life. Use Gallup organization definition of well-being – Dayton now is 144th of more than 180 cities based on five measures:

- sense of purpose
- social relationships
- financial security
- relationship to community
- physical health

Equity in development – 6 votes

No more food deserts – 5 votes

Who are the people & organizations making a difference in your community?

- Dayton Arts/Victoria Theater Association
- Up Dayton
- Dayton Art Institute
- Gem City Market
- Community Solutions in Yellow Springs
- Hunger Initiative
- Miami Valley Resource Planning Commission
- Jewish Family Services
- Levitt Pavilion, free concerts
- Welcome Dayton
- Culture Works
- Dayton Peace Museum
- Goodwill w Miami Valley -- creating jobs for individuals with disabilities
- Welcome Dayton
- Kids Voting (they need to come back to Dayton)

What do you feel compelled to do after tonight's conversation?

- I will work with a regional group focused on schools and community support of public schools
- Do more about food deserts and housing instability
- Get engaged in civic discussion
- Educate myself on more issues that shape our whole community
- I would like to be more involved in making voting easier and with equity in development
- I would love to take action and plan/try to formulate a youth representative; change voting participation in my school
- Run for public office
- Encourage more people to vote





Lebanon

Date: October 6, 2019
Location: Countryside YMCA

In Lebanon, participants focused on redefining what typical “success” looks like in education and jobs. They also explored how to build the community’s collective spirit around celebrating their history, leaders, and cultures.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- Sense of hope! Transparent communications: Sense of place and community gathering; Appropriate housing available for all groups; Ease and diversity of movement; Green spaces abundant throughout the community; diverse places to eat and drink locally; good jobs available with varying skills; a safe place to live, work and play.
- Our community would have many different opinions in order to create balance. Political labeling of different parties would be set aside. All sides would come together as one to place safety, families, and self-sustainability first and focus on the morals and values of our children and grandchildren and also listen to the generations before us.
- Recreational opportunities would be more available; People would take advantage of opportunities to talk – not Facebook exclusively like today; recognize local; leaders are far more trustworthy and they should be recognized for that.
- Reliable, affordable public transportation; everyone has a role to play; a balanced economy; everyone feels they belong, has a place; lively arts and recreation programs; strong schools; everyone has a voice, can be heard; strong library; trust and respect; people feel responsible for the well-being of the community; hopefulness; we take care of the children
- Heterogeneous – people of different races and backgrounds living together; Felt ownership and responsibility for community institutions; regular life activity causes people to interact; organizations, institutions and citizens recognize their common values, demonstrated by bringing one another together to address problems.
- Recognition of everyone’s value, regardless of their job, income level, appearance etc.; an understanding about lifestyles other than their own; paying attention to poverty and what it’s like to struggle through that so that appropriate job creation, services and wages are in place to enable upward mobility, more sense of community, more creativity/play.

What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- Promote travel, national and international; define education as broader than the public schools and force partnerships with other organizations to broaden the scope; let the local community decide how and what to educate on, let teachers teach!; seek solutions to local issues from many and various sources and groups within the community and not just rely on government for answers; excellent community breeds excellence in all aspects.
- Ease the middle-class squeeze; consider local uber-like services or localizing uber; celebrate community leaders and participants; make civic participation easier; regulate social media; get more people involved.
- Whenever dealing with problems named as “education,” the people convene all groups that deal with children – not just schools; diversity fairs showcasing differences in people and their ways of life; hire (elect) community leaders who seek not just to be trusted but more importantly they know what it means to trust citizens.
- Increase focus on our roots – museums, in local curriculum; I like diversity awareness to be increased via festivals, 3rd Fridays etc.; increase MLK coalition, outreach to challenged areas of the town.
- Some sort of focus on the importance and value of the trades and how it’s ok to pursue one as opposed to the higher education route (given the student debt crisis today); more initiatives/brainstorming on behalf of individuals and community organizations to enhance transportation (non-profit creation – i.e. Changing Gears in Cincinnati – carpools)

Who are the people & organizations making a difference in your community?

- Kettering Foundation; Ohio Public School Advisory Network
- Scott Brunka, city manager; Amy Brewer, mayor; Angie Smith, Exec dir Lebanon Chamber of Commerce
- Warren County Arts/ Larry Stone

Community strengths and assets

- Strong sense of place, small but not too small
- Small businesses
- Sense of history
- Countryside YMCA (largest YMCA in the world?)
- People believe they’re heard, people leaning forward, not minimizing
- We’re festival central (Third Friday activities)
- Schools
- Arts community – have our own orchestra
- Churches/faith community do so much
- We’re the county seat
- Services – mental health
- Organizations come together to address social issues
- Wealth/endowments

Defining Action Plans

This group chose to gather around one table and talk about **building community spirit**.

Ideas

- Find ways to celebrate history
- Get to know each other
- Celebrate leaders
- Cultural exchange
- Listen to people – not just experts

Tactics

- Expand Third Friday events to May
- Community focus groups for understanding
- What works for city government also should apply to schools
- Experts run schools – is this a problem?
- Care for the elderly
- Local government should be diverse
- Celebrate individual stories and history

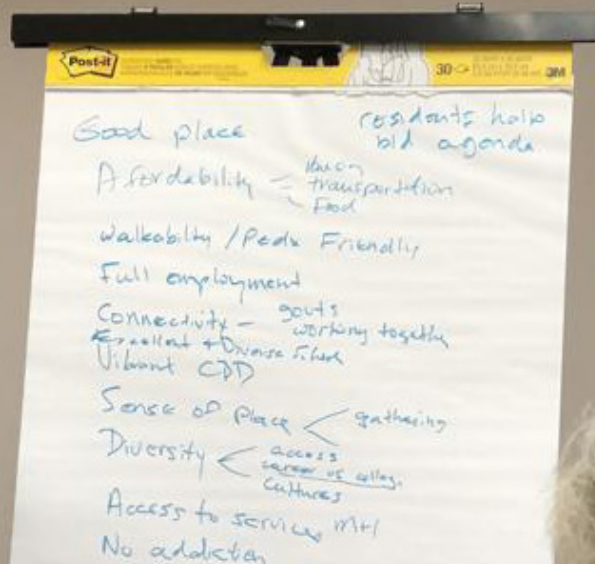


Photo: Lawrence Budd, Dayton Daily News

Date: October 7, 2019
 Location: Coffman Family YMCA

At the final conversation in Springboro, residents discussed confronting addiction, mental health care, affordable housing, and how to create a stronger city center with a vibrant downtown area.

Participants were asked to initially write their answer to a question, then discuss with their neighbors at a table conversation, and finally report back to the large group. The bullet points below represent their individual ideas.

What does a community look like where people can live happy and fulfilled lives?

- There's an interest in inquisitiveness; diversity in life is appreciated and welcomed; sufficient welcoming and accessible social services; safe and affordable housing; easy and affordable options for public transportation; thriving arts and recreation scene; affordable childcare and excellent and diverse school system.
- A place to live, walkable, affordable housing; full employment; at least a middle class standard of living; diverse ethnicities.
- Acceptance of diversity of interests and people; access for support and transportation; good transitions from high school to careers and college; sufficient mental health support for children and families
- Affordable housing, food and transportation; connectivity between city and township? pedestrian friendly
- Good schools; well-run city government; good parks and recreation program; well planned zoning; small-town feel

What changes would you make to your community to move it in the direction of becoming a place where people live happy, fulfilled lives?

- If the community is 90 percent white, and I don't know what this would look like, but some sort of initiative to make people feel welcome. In Cincinnati, there is an initiative where people have a habit of asking people "where did you go to high school?" but it automatically ostracizes people.
- In the neighborhood, get to know neighbors. Learn about them and their needs; share ideas with each other without being part of a political party argument; Promote community and neighborhood spirit; Take action for change and volunteer the time to do it. There are separate generations -- listen to each other.
- In the morning people turn on the lights, flush the toilet, the school bus comes on time. People are happy until they're not. Attract business and manufacturing for income taxes; qualified workers to attract business; parks and recreation; manage a growth plan together; residents help build the agenda.
- Concerned for mental health, wealthier white communities like Mason, Centerville and Springboro have mental health issue with depression and stress, kids pushed to go to Miami, Harvard or Yale and go into debt, ridiculed by parents, mothers in particular for not wanting college; private access to mental health is insufficient; affordable child care.
- Affordable housing for seniors who need to downsize from home where raised family -- there is no affordable senior living; make the city safe [from traffic] for walking; create a strong downtown

Defining Action Plans

To prioritize the changes participants said they wanted to see, all of the ideas from Question 2 were posted on the wall. Each person received two sticky dots and was asked to stick them to the changes they thought most important. The change with the most dots, **create a stronger city center**, became the focus of a detailed problem-solving conversation.

Stronger city center – 4 votes

- Include affordable housing, especially for older residents, in the new central business district
- Diversity of food -- a brewery is currently part of the plan
- Create a sense of history, particularly celebrating Quaker history. Historical places should be gathering places
- Walkable -- not bad right now
- Access to services, such as hub for parents and students to address career choices, stresses and mental health
- Arts center just opened -- invite diverse arts, foods
- Need good communication so that community knows what's happening
 - Individuals: Don't just show interest, learn how to be informed and interested
 - Community Leaders: Engage with the public to gain understanding of what people need, where they agree
 - Journalists: Build a local social media and Linked-in network to distribute your work

Better transportation – 2 votes

Affordable housing for all, especially seniors ready to downsize – 1 vote

Support sources of news and information that can be trusted and is generationally accessible – 1 vote

Involve government in more active communication with the community so that government can be the driver of change with schools, higher education and business – 0 votes

Hubs to support families and students, such as career coaches (career vs college); mental health – 0 votes

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Doug Oplinger @ doplinger@yourvoiceohio.org

Participating Newsrooms

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Participating Organizations

