

What's your future,

Mid-Ohio?

January, 2020



Background

Across Ohio, Your Voice Ohio has been holding community conversations in partnership with local journalists to ask: *what will it take to make life better here?*

In Ashland and Mansfield, Ohio, over 100 people gathered over 2 nights to discuss the future of their communities. The events drew local elected officials, journalists, and everyday people to discuss questions including: What does a community look like where people are happy and live fulfilled lives? What would you change about your community to move in the direction of happy and fulfilled lives? And what are the assets of the community that can be applied to making change?

To host the conversations, we teamed up with local news organizations the Richland Source, Ashland Source, and the Collegian from Ashland University.

Ashland

Thirty-four Ashland area residents discussed community engagement, infrastructure, community gardens, and the importance of helping young people. When they moved to actions that could be taken to achieve those ideas, participants wanted to see:

- Better youth mentoring
- Public meetings at different times to increase community involvement
- Revisit and update community zoning laws, neighborhood infrastructure improvements and space for new housing.

Like most communities involved in the Your Voice Ohio pre-election conversations, there was a deep interest in building relationships through engagement and problem-solving, creating safe neighborhoods for people, affordable housing, access to food and jobs with livable wages.

Mansfield

Meanwhile, in Mansfield, almost 80 residents gathered to talk about how to make the community a vibrant place for everyone. Their ideas included:

- Jobs with living wages
- Visionary and accountable leadership
- Investment in all types of education
- Affordable housing
- Clean neighborhoods
- A senior center

Like many Ohio communities, residents expressed concern about emphasis on college at the expense of skilled jobs, such as construction trades. They also identified affordable education for all ages as an important factor.

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 1,000 people have been held across the state.

Ideas from these meetings will be used to shape local issue coverage ahead of the 2020 national elections, giving the community a voice in the democratic process.

Doug Oplinger, Your Voice Ohio



Ashland

Date: January 27, 2020
Location: Ashland YMCA
Attendees: 35

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.

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Diverse city/community activities; livable income; access to mental health/addiction resources/ public transportation for all shifts; neighborhood groups/ ways to interact at neighborhood level; white collar jobs; improve city/county agencies – Job and Family Services; Safety
- Living wages; vibrant, accessible parks; diverse amenities available to all
- Strong families; clean air/clean water; jobs available for anyone who wants one; plenty of recreational opportunities, passive and active; quality housing available for all incomes; unity – a spirit that celebrates our common values
- There would be jobs that pay a livable wage for those who need to earn a living; There would be opportunities to provide a meaningful “work” for those who were disabled or unable to work traditional jobs -- volunteer opportunities; Neighbors, church congregations and other organizations would know each other and care for and about each other regardless of differences; mutual respect is given to all
- Clean, livable, walkable, accessible, tranquil; free from filth, litter; drivable -- good roads; walkable -- good, even sidewalks and street lighting; accessible -- places can be driven, walked, biked to safely and quietly; liveable -- good work and business, opportunities, opportunities outside of traditional social constructs
- Everyone would have access to community resources: food access, transportation, education, green space/natural resources, economic opportunities
- To have a happy community I think the two biggest factors would be acceptance of all, despite political views, race, gender, sexuality -- should focus on making community great.
- Self sufficiency; safe, decent, affordable housing; recreation activities; spiritual component; collaboration, cooperation, communication among people, government, communities; safe community; clean
- The community would be clean; it would be full of family activities; there would be plenty of opportunity for everyone
- A bustling main street; places for families to go for entertainment, recreation and shopping; Nice neighborhoods, no more eyesores

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Ashland County Citizens Against Illegal Drugs
- Children safety; citizen involvement; living wages; youth work involvement
- Too much into appearances, but there clearly are pockets of poverty, substandard housing, and people who look like they're down, left behind
- Affordable housing for all; equal pay for equal work; healthcare that is affordable and readily available; walkable community
- Community based on sense of safety and security, inclusion of religious belief without persecution, communication without fear of offending someone, advocacy for protected classes of persons
- A connected community culture -- neighbors, businesses, non-profits, local leaders etc; access to needed resources: housing, jobs, food, social services; social programs -- sports, clubs, recreation, entertainment
- Successful; low rates of violence, crime, homeless; healthy people
- Have affordable shelter; have adequate food; not financially stressed; available medical care; available education; available jobs; available social opportunity; available recreation; security
- A nice place to live where everyone got along with each other
- No drug use, no homeless; churches would be full; there would be no broken homes; downtown would be thriving; no one who needed something would have to shop elsewhere to get it; all organizations would be fully funded; all businesses could find great employees; kids wouldn't leave after graduating high school or college
- Life, liberty, pursuit of happiness; opportunity; strong family; safety; sense of community
- Cohesive, able to tolerate and capitalize on our differences; thriving socially, economically and culturally
- There would be communication across the board; people wouldn't have to lock doors, be afraid
- Eliminate opioid epidemic; neighborhood playgrounds; regional job centers; recreational trails; sidewalks; tree-lined streets; non-sports opportunities for youth; diversity
- Full employment; active arts community; social safety net not overburdened; bustling downtown; good public schools; fiscally responsible government; entertainment options that include families; good public services, including police and fire
- Access to education; safety for vulnerable members of the community; recognize children's safety/best interest #1 priority; higher employment rates/filled jobs; Christ-centered; focus on the family
- Good schools; good restaurants; activities for kids; good parks; clean city; volunteer more
- Less traffic congestion, different timing of lights, clearer-marked flow lines; better more news coverage; more parks, food places on north side of Ashland (there is very little on north side)
- Everyone helping your neighbor; striving for greater good; worship God; Florida (unclear) retirement
- Gorgeous parks; great public spaces; outdoor concerts; events/things to do for all ages; healthcare that is reasonable, accessible, competitive; clean communities; less, not blight; people who encourage others to live there, too
- It would be a clean place with no drug use; parents would take better care of their children; there would be less judgment and more people helping others; start an open pantry where people can get and give food when they need it and when they have extra -- people helping people.
- Inclusive -- race, religion, gender; educated; safe; socially responsible; enough food, affordable housing, public transportation; green spaces easily accessible, updated; safe infrastructure; entertainment -- movies, music etc
- There would be diversity of occupations (all at a life-sustaining level) and a variety of recreations for all in their downtime; there would be pastimes and opportunities to socialize and have fun together so as to form a cohesive community.

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

Report back captured on flip chart

- Inclusive
- Safe
- Tranquil
- Appreciate differences
- Easier to help one another
- Public transportation
- Affordable, available housing
- Green space
- Family-focused
- Good and affordable education
- Activities for kids -- kids stay after graduation
- Medical care
- No homelessness
- No drugs/access to services
- Safety for vulnerable people
- Teach life skills to young people
- Strong local business
- Convenient shopping
- Opportunities to contribute/volunteer
- Infrastructure



What would you change about your community so that everyone could be happy and live a fulfilled life?

- Better education and health care; family services especially for young children; drug use prevention
- Develop land infrastructure, housing, children's activities, walkable neighborhoods; reward folks for good deeds and consistency; give duct tape to the complainers; make sure everyone votes!; focus on local; give children a voice
- Opportunity for residential improvements (examples: mini-grants as catalysts); increase access options for mental health, drug addiction, and social services; more sources of entertainment for all ages
- Zoning -- property; transportation; develop housing -- new and rehab opportunities; expand downtown area, encourage new business; better-paying jobs, new companies, higher expectations; food store fourth ward north of Cottage.
- Better-paying jobs across the community; better support system so people don't fall through the cracks.
- Overall a more lively community (housing, entertainment); add more entertainment and shopping to keep people; involvement -- get groups of all demographics involved; better health care, more affordable; teaching students life skills as well as trades; ask, like what are we doing now?; focus in making a more unified community; bring college and community together.
- Put prayer back in schools; educate young people, not indoctrinate; step up drug enforcement; enforce existing law.
- Putting prayer back in school; make a community center that addresses all ages, one part for kids, one part for teens and young people, and one part for older people; community center may help keep young people from getting in trouble because they have something to do that is good; so many people fight depression have a place to do things with others would help.
- Re-introduce prayer/God back into schools; improved communication between community organizations to better combine and utilize resources for the benefit of the community as a whole; community members exchange ideas without worrying about offending others.
- I would get to know my neighbors; change how people view people of other religions, or non-religions.
- Create opportunity and support local businesses over corporate out-of-town businesses; increase density of city core; strengthen connection to university; decrease downtown parking in favor of green space.
- Increase engagement of citizens in terms of government/politics; incentivise entrepreneurship in all economic sectors through taxes/grants; comprehensive city planning -- streets, sidewalks, zoning; clean up the community -- sanitation fixes.
- Focus on our common values rather than our differences; encourage local downtown development through incentive programs; encourage housing development through various incentives.
- Coordinate services to reduce duplication and work cooperatively to maximize limited resources (dollars, staff, goods, time)' Solicit additional input from residents to inform where they can "plug into" the process -- promote inclusion, leverages resources, builds community spirit; identify the barriers that currently exist and begin action steps to address them.
- Support families; grandparents etc with programs and resources; develop city/county vision and start plan if not already in existence; support local schools/education/levies
- Eliminate silo mentality; education/community awareness (knowledge is power); streamline services/processes; more recreation opportunities; more community forums -- people want opportunity to be heard; more restaurants.
- More non-formal education and community events on previous areas of concern to build: Awareness, ability, appreciation, community pride/identity.
- Youth (and all) are taught about the dangers of drug use -- and they listen; more land for housing developments are opened up; homeless are taught skills in order to get a job and thrive.
- Personal change: cell, TV; schools -- shop class; [make it] easier to hire young people; building regulations; local townhall meetings.
- More businesses; expand -- grow; rehab/detox; more houses, not just apartments

- Additional employers that offer higher paying jobs; adequate housing that would support the work force of additional employers; affordable education to create the work force that larger employers need.
- Create more parks/green space, neighborhood playgrounds; promote a neighbor-meeting-neighbor effort; create more citizen initiatives, commissions to get more involvement; develop a master plan for the city/county for job development, retail location; develop a kid plan; opioid task force -- make it known.
- Volunteer to see older people who are house bound; volunteer to clean up trash two times a year; encourage kids to stay in school; volunteer to help some people in jail, help them stay out of jail.
- Evaluate and work with public agencies to be more effective; improve foster care, coordination among agencies; communication between involved parties -- city county for preventive services; focus on neighborhoods, neighborhood events; transparency; community involvement, individual responsibility, volunteer; promote services available, racial bias training.
- Targeted approach to individuals with substance issues; connect individuals to existing services/providers; culture of accountability/responsibility for individuals (adults/children); increase sense of responsibility for success of community on entire community -- not just leaders -- inspire; cause adults to prioritize the needs of children above those of adults.
- Fix sidewalks, update street lighting; Housing: encourage interaction between landlords and renters, renters rights and landlord rights [additional words about housing not readable]; enforce laws that pertain to the tranquility and peace within the community, including ORC on car noise; civic minded, more sermons, education, have to learn engagement.
- Increase support for young families and single moms; pay people a living wage; better and more child care options; promote a safe stable nurturing relationship for children.
- Empower people to feel confident and secure so that they feel safe; encourage communication, especially listening
- Enhanced green space, more parks; incentives for local businesses; add a box at grocery store for people to donate food; more restaurants/stores/development; enhanced street scapes/visuals; spaces/housing for young people and children; collaboration between organizations and people; apartments/affordable 1-2 bedroom houses for rent.
- Increase community involvement at all levels; more mentoring of young people; provide social support for those in need (crisis).
- I would change people's mindset so they would embrace new ideas and diversity in thought processes; put a strong emphasis on the highest quality k-12 (if you graduate, kids who can think critically, question and problem-solve, they can lift up the whole community as adults). Look for what works in other communities and try those in Ashland.
- Better communication on what is needed in the community

What would you change about your community so that everyone could be happy and live a fulfilled life?

Report back captured on flip chart

- More land for housing
- Improve communication
- Help children and families
- Better reintegration
- More/bigger employers, more jobs
- Engage people with community
- Town hall meetings to engage with leadership
- Community center -- engage with teenagers/open recreation
- Zoning
- Makerspace
- Apprenticeships
- Coordinate and streamline services
- No food deserts/ community gardens
- Childcare for shift worker
- Liven it up
- Improve infrastructure
- Encourage inclusivity
- Create green space/parks
- Market existing services
- Inspire culture of accountability
- Create and promote neighborhood activities
- Care for seniors
- Draw students into community
- city/county master plan
- Cross-government collaboration



What are the community's strengths and assets that can be applied to change?

These were collected directly from participants.

- Farm community
- School system
- Redbird Resilient
- Community events
- Grow Ashland collaborative
- Community Foundation
- Small town feel
- Strong faith community
- First responders; safety forces
- Council on Aging
- Accessible public elected officials
- Brookside Park
- YMCA
- Low cost of living
- Samaritan Hospital Foundation
- Strong large employers
- Vocational school
- United community
- Fostering Families Ministries
- Military organizations
- Ashland Main Street
- Ashland Pregnancy Center
- Local news organizations
- County park district
- United Way
- Ashland Symphony
- Chamber of Commerce
- Access Program
- Board of Realtors
- Strong volunteer base
- Civic organizations: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions etc
- Mohican park
- Libraries
- Accessible location
- Rail system

- Mental health recovery board and mental health care
- Humane society
- Health department
- Natural resources

Participants voted on the changes they thought most likely to move the community in the direction of a place where all can be fulfilled and happy. Here are the results of that vote:

- 0 – Draw students into community
- 0 – Makerspace
- 0 – Apprenticeships
- 0 – No food deserts
- 1 – Cross-government collaboration, coordinate-streamline services
- 1 – City-county master plan
- 2 – Encourage inclusivity/re-entry programs for people leaving prison
- 2 – Care for seniors
- 2 – Community center for youth, green space, parks, create and promote activities
- 3 – Liven it up
- 3 – Inspire culture of accountability
- 5 – More, bigger employers
- 7 – Improve infrastructure
- 9 – Housing, more land, zoning
- 10 – Improve communication, engage with people and leadership, town hall meetings, market existing services
- 15 – Help children and families; mentor young people; child care for shift workers

Problem Solving Sessions

The top four changes were placed on separate tables. Participants migrated to the change of most interest, where they were asked to develop a list of possible actions, and to assign actions to leaders, people and journalists.

Help children and families; mentor young people; child care for shift workers – 15 votes

- Mentoring school children -- can be sponsored by members of churches and organized by them, adopt a grade, in school
- Build promote existing mentoring programs like Catholic Charities after school mentoring program
- Collective mentoring programs modeled on Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Life Skills mentoring to kids and young parents -- at school?
- Find a source to subsidize off-hours child care. Find out how many need it.

Improve communication, engage with people and leadership, town hall meetings, market existing services – 10 votes

- Leaders: communication by notification systems; reach all demographics; public meetings at different times
- Media: Distribute the information; independent, neutral reporting
- Community: Disburse info to family and friends

Housing, more land, zoning – 9 votes

- Enforce existing code
- Review laws, enact laws, program to maintain/develop community standards
- Corresponding programs for corrective action and funding
- Incorporate youth into physical development of housing
- Bank property earmarked for new construction with subsidized funding

Improve infrastructure – 7 votes

- Encourage citizens to financially support public infrastructure improvements such as street, sidewalk, water and sewer improvements
- Adopt a sidewalk -- citizen involvement
- Voters are supporting street improvements
- Journalists can educate citizens regarding how improvements are funded



Who in town is doing the work needed to bring the changes we desire?

- The mayor and council
- Our park districts are very strong for a county our size
- Ashland Parenting Plus
- Redbird Resilient (Loudonville-Perryville initiative addressing emotional health/addiction)
- Main Street Initiative
- Mental Health and Recovery Board
- Redbird Resilient
- Ashland Downtown
- Ashland City Government
- United Way
- Ashland United Way
- The Kroc Center is helping a lot (Ashland Salvation Army)
- Matt Miller (mayor)
- Mayor Matt, informs community and is accessible to voters in the community
- Ashland Main Street
- Ashland University (community service)
- Ashland Board of Realtors
- Redbird Resilient
- Rotary
- Mayor Matt Miller and council
- Council on Aging
- Mayor Miller; Fostering Families Ministry
- Gigi Oakley

What would you tell someone that you learned tonight?

- Collaboration is strong in Ashland
- Shared information/news doesn't always have to be negative
- Our young people k-12 really need help, even those we think do not – they need us.
- It was great to see so many different people come together, and thanks to the media for putting it together.
- There are several mentoring programs in our county
- I had not fully realized the effect of change that has revolutionized the NEWS!
- I learned that people care.
- Ashland County organizations are willing to work together
- Schedules, mentoring, public meetings, kids, information, notifications across governments, zoning laws, how sidewalks are paid for
- Ashland wants to focus on families and children; many people think Ashland has a lot of assets
- Communication is super-important in all our areas of life; if you want something known, tell someone.
- People can make a difference
- Ashland and Ashland County have more assets than I imagined.
- Communication is very important
- Mentor youth
- How much people are willing to help.
- A lot of ideas that are already in place but folks do not know.
- Learned number of people with the same concerns
- People want to help make a difference
- Tell someone to check on elderly people who can't get out
- Ashlanders care about their community!



Mansfield

Date: January 28, 2020
Location: Idea Works
Attendees: 70

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.

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Safety; education (elementary and university); recreation; welcoming neighborhoods; community outreach; business/financial sustainability; religious, spiritual support; reasonable cost of living; affordable housing; health care; alcohol and drug intervention.
- Citizens permitted to define happiness; high functional public education for kids k-12; safe neighborhoods, parks; vibrant downtown; acceptance/embrace diversity; attraction for tourism; responsible public officials' drug-free -- empathy; good roads/transportation for all; model United Way Day of Caring -- expand to community day of caring.
- Diverse; loving -- no judgment; caring, friendly; families and strangers supporting each other.
- Able to get where they need to go easily -- good public transportation; all kids have access to good schools; well-connected public and social services with centrally located offices so people without cars can get to them easily; cultural activities at multiple price points, Renaissance Theatre
- Cares for all members; holds each other accountable; strong families.
- A sense of connection; schools are flourishing
- Safe; clean; well-maintained; people out socializing and spending.
- Hope; moral community; common value system; people have earned that they have.
- Clean; well-maintained streets and sidewalks; variety of cultural options; parks; community building activities; jobs/income opportunities
- Lots of support for lower socioeconomic class, those struggling with addiction/illness/mental health; people are generous with those in need -- we take care of each other; fair, well-enforced laws; no racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ attitudes; people are respectful, tolerant of other faiths, political ideologies and other beliefs; lots of well paying jobs with paid time off.
- Faith and faith-based stories; transparency and trust in elected leaders; see something, say something; help with addiction; rule of law; love and trust coupled with compassion.
- Each owns dwelling -- ownership feel; feel part of community -- know your place; Intergenerational relations, including schools, not just teacher-students; walkable shopping hubs; enough food; constructive things to do for all, including parks and indoor; effective networking.

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Good jobs with sustainable family wages; good school system; low crime rate; accessible transportation system to and from; collaborative environment between government, business, colleges, community organizations; clean; social activities -- engaged citizens; affordable housing; happiness is mostly intrinsic.
- Affordable housing, utilities and taxes; low crime; access to health care; access to educational opportunities with good schools; proximity to the arts and recreation; reasonable traffic; acceptable employment opportunities; freedom to worship as we one chooses
- Clean, well-kept; bright and artistic; opportunities to improve one's self; sustainable food supply; opportunities for work to support self and family; opportunities to give to others
- Safe; good education (k-12 and post secondary); family oriented; things for kids to do (free or cheap); good employment opportunities; good relationship with law enforcement; walkable areas; green spaces; transportation; drug-free.
- Strong involvement from citizens in festivals, community events and organizations; spirit of giving; enthusiasm about our city; love or our history; lots of choices in where to shop, worship, work, volunteer etc; keeping it small and "homey" while having choices of big city.
- Safe; community activities; local shopping; well kept public parks and other areas; community engagement; transparent leadership; engaged and involved leadership; good schools; employment; transportation; walkability
- It would have accessible public transportation and general walkability; community events would be ones that everyone would feel welcomed at, there wouldn't be assumption that the end of town you live in determines your interest; the public spaces would be clean and inviting; safe schools that nurture kids' emotional health; we don't have to let go of the small town courtesy just because we are growing.
- Outdoor activities; family; employment; clean -- no trash, no graffiti, no abandoned buildings; visually pleasing -- bright colors, landscape; jogging trails, bike trails, workout paths, dog parks.
- Clean, litter-free; access to affordable/free social services; no blight; nice sidewalks/bike trails; citywide free recycling; beautification of parks.
- The return of strong capital: PTA, bowling leagues, neighborhood conversations, non-reciprocal actions, political school board candidates
- No crime; access to housing (apt and homes), work, play/entertainment; high-speed fiber internet; parks; theater; exercise walks, biking, running -- indoor outdoor.
- Clean and safe streets; affordable housing; fully functioning parks; booming industry and people capable of filling jobs; fiscally responsible government.
- Full employment; open and honest communication along with an open mind as it relates to others
- Vibrant, safe downtown; aesthetically inviting/pleasing downtown; everyone regardless of race, color or religion welcome; affordable housing; public transportation available; school district that is welcoming, meeting needs of all; diversity; pride.
- Safe, walkable communities, streets and neighborhoods; housing upkeep, painting, mowing, gardening etc; engaging more people in volunteering to assist all of the above; improved education, kids want to learn with family support; healthy families.
- Economy is strong and diverse; people have the opportunity to move ahead; they feel safe every day; feel welcome and included; have stability and support during times of trial; they can be healthy and active.
- Lower crime rate; more stuff for kids and family to do; safe drinking water; better cable company; cleaner neighborhoods; better jobs; better education; all kids getting breakfast and lunch at school;
- Safe and healthy neighborhoods; parks for kids to play; sense of community; public services that are effective and affordable.
- Employment is at a high level; schools are excelling; storefronts are full; wages are fair; housing is affordable; new business is a constant and our economy grows

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

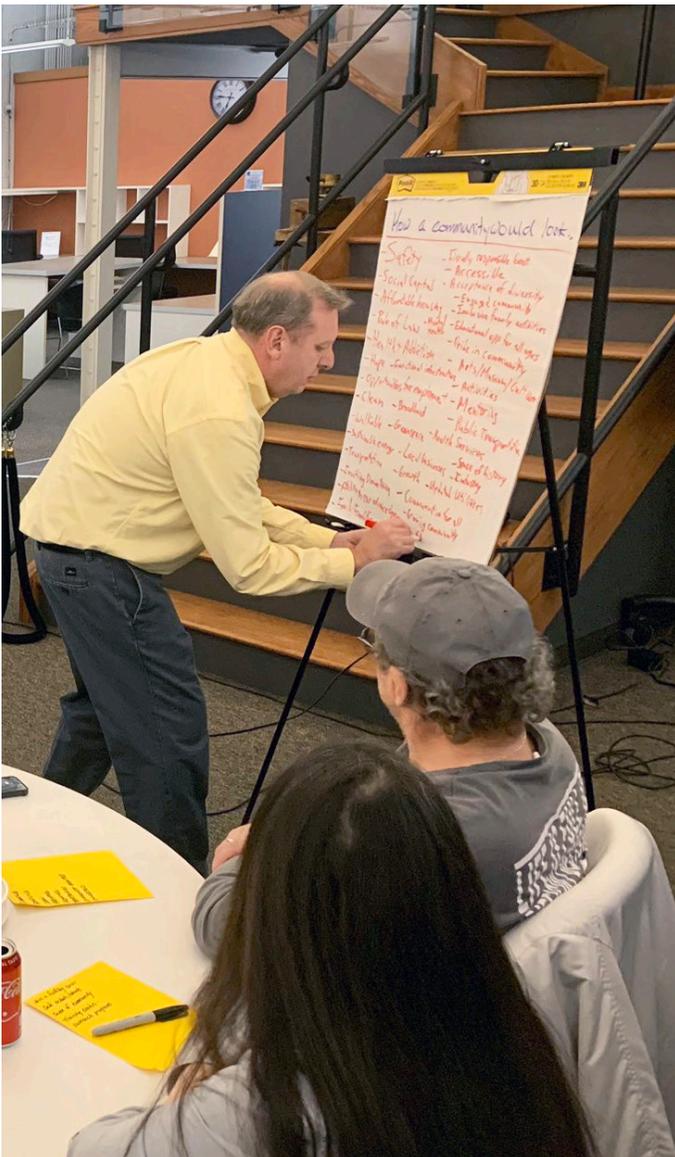
- Safe neighborhoods, schools, community and safety forces efficient; clean streets, little blight; good schools; good jobs; arts, museums, dance, theater; diverse population; ethnic choices -- food and entertainment; positive -- proud of community; resources: medical and educational; fresh food choices, meats produce affordable.
- Everyone who wants or needs a job is able to do so at a livable wage; those who are unable to work have opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the community; neighbors and communities focus on what unites us as humans rather than what divides us; clean areas that are safe for living, working and relaxing.
- Low crime; prosperous; streets are plowed in one day; residents are proud to be there; an abundance of recreation and entertainment; it has a responsible government (city and county levels); growing economy; higher than average educational level; clean; people care and help each other; is a place people want to visit.
- Good paying jobs, white and blue collar; good public transportation; good housing options for low, middle, high incomes; assistance programs for all; mentorship programs; education programs; childcare in evenings too.
- Supportive; well resourced; amenities to support working class; diverse and inclusive; collaborative across municipal boundaries; adequate, affordable educational opportunities; intentional about supporting home-grown businesses; accessible and affordable early childcare and education
- Loneliness partners; extensive recycling; municipal utilities; time banking; prison work training; litter patrols; extended bus times; church drives (open house day); restored historic homes; no homelessness; small houses redeveloped into right-sized communities.
- Affordable housing; access to transportation to get to jobs; walker-friendly and bicycles; empty buildings filled, restored or torn down; city-wide spring cleaning pick-up day.
- Accessible walkways and bike paths connect people and neighborhoods; families earn good wage so they can pay their bills, raise their kids, have a little left over to take vacation and save for retirement;
- Clean and safe streets and alleys where people walk their dogs and greet each other; equitable distribution of wealth; excellent schools that teach life skills and promote civic responsibility; public wifi in city and country.
- A place that is eminently walkable for health, networking, community; healthy and sustainable; social capital; affordable housing; opportunities for employment; diversity/
- Inclusive: lots of different types of people and ideas are accepted and encouraged; economic: everyone has access to meaningful work and education; participation: everyone is involved in the community through civic, religions, or clubs that make the community better; interaction: organizations actively working together on projects and people interacting in meaningful ways with people that aren't like them. Healthy.
- Inclusive/supportive; healthy; giving; communicative; long-lasting (older ages)
- Inclusive, i.e. all ages; community/senior center east side Mansfield for all citizens to use and enjoy. This involves renovating buildings at Liberty Park for acquiring buildings for that purpose, resulting in eliminating isolation affecting seniors.
- Activities for all ages (for everyone); exercise, roller skating all year long; arts; gathering places; community/senior center; thought-provoking examples: euchre; things that make people feel good, warding off loneliness and getting to know others and become friends
- Community needs to have resources available to everyone. Some of the resources can pertain to basic necessities: food, health, housing and transportation; reference loop for resources, electronically connected.
- Earn a living/raise a family; good health system; trust in government; faith; crime free; safe environment; things (activities) to do; good educational system.
- Have a fulfilling career; safe schools/streets; sense of community; training centers; outreach programs
- Affordable housing; reliable transportation; true pride in our shared community, emphasizing our unity and common goals; gainful employment; excellent education; neighborhoods would support each other.

What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Diverse; bustling; clean; thriving; growing; prosperous; community oriented; connected.
- Economic viability; connectivity among people; supports for those in need; strong communications through efficient methods; nature/environment -- clean, attractive, welcoming; religious communities; arts opportunities; education opportunities; healthy; medical professional hospitals/clinics

Report back captured on flip chart

- Safety
- Social capital
- Affordable housing
- Rule of law
- Mental health/addiction services
- Hope
- Functional infrastructure
- Opportunities for employment
- Clean
- Broadband
- Walkable
- Greenspace
- Sustainable energy
- Public transportation
- Local businesses
- An inviting downtown
- People with advanced degrees
- Family foundation
- Fiscally responsible government
- Day care for all shifts
- Accessible to people with disabilities
- Acceptance of diversity
- Inclusive family activities
- Educational opportunities for all ages
- Pride in community
- Arts, museums, culture
- Mentoring
- Health services
- Sense of history
- Industry
- Updated utilities
- Communications that reach everyone
- Attracts business



What would your community look like if everyone were happy and able to live a fulfilled life?

- Everyone represented in money spending decisions. Mansfield Rising Plan by design has omitted people over 40 in their millions of dollar plans.
- Clean up properties; educate; more police contact; rehab instead of removal; offer tax incentives after trial period.
- Revitalization projects; community center, i.e. educational sponsorship for classes for all ages; after school programs for youth; healthy meals program, all ages; beautification team; hire outside physical look at city budget and plan ways to capture income we are missing that could be used for city infrastructure, etc.
- Community center that offers opportunities to network, socialize and learn; that is safe to spend time in and helps eliminate isolation due to loneliness, addiction, poverty.
- Find a solution to expand public transportation to cover full county coverage for 18-20-hour shifts; identify the housing needs/gaps and barriers to households being able to stay housed; hold community engagement sessions across all sectors of the county to elicit wider input.
- Improve quality of local education; emphasize positive elements of this community; actively recruit young people and young families back to the area; explore and adjust business opportunities in a global economy; expand recreational opportunities for all age groups.
- Incentivise entrepreneurship with taxes/grants to help grow a diverse economy that is less vulnerable to recession; prioritize a return to more proactive community policing, increasing public safety; public private partnerships to accomplish community goals for things like better parks, infrastructure, education etc.
- Our community has great resources but they don't talk to each other. Communication is key between organizations and with community members. Having some kind of closed loop referral which is web based.
- Expand the ability of the Land Bank to acquire properties; attract more downtown migration for living and social life.
- Continue America in Bloom; expand low-moderate housing, accessible; improve infrastructure -- wireless; increase opportunities for young children -- literacy; continue/grow support local small business; recognition of good things and people.
- Better access to public transportation; improved curb appeal; improved communication between leadership and citizens -- communication in general; improvements to parks and city-wide recreation; integrate technology; walkability; business incentives
- More opportunities for our different cultures to learn about each other; require sidewalks to be usable all over town for elderly and wheelchairs; programs to promote unity; spring cleanup.
- Engage with city officials; eliminate white privilege so all ethnic groups would feel entitled; have more conversations like this; encourage others to participate in community building; work to research different cities who have done similar community building; support and invite blacks to share ideas.
- Focus positive stories on our many non-profits; positive social media sharing committee; meet people where they are for polling-style questions like we are doing here tonight; turn the D in pride funds into development; raise income levels for social program qualifications; community pride prizes and awards; underground wires to protect tree canopy and reduce storm damage; rebuild lost historic apartments and hotel; timebank; art as community service; traditional building skills in tech school -- slate roof, masonry repair, stained glass, lead abatement, window restoration.
- More positive promotion about what is good here, our assets; improve school system; help and support for people living in poverty; have more community activities that bring together people of all neighborhoods, income levels etc; keep a positive business climate.
- Improve sidewalks by cleaning and repairing; create better connections between job opportunities and those needing jobs; celebrate our accomplishments
- Hold business/building owners downtown for building upkeep, front and back; open more volunteer opportunities and broadcast; incentivize only livable wage jobs, not working poor; limit community in-fighting.

- Need to attract a few “big” businesses to help raise dollars for all things we wish to accomplish; might need to change/refocus our efforts on the county budget; help low-income communities to make improvements to their houses and properties through volunteers; form active committees with people who are action-oriented, with goals and due dates.
- Less political motivation, more collaboration for common goals to bring in resources; less bureaucracy; strong, inclusive, visionary leadership; find common ground for people in all stages of life, such as community picnics, family friendly networking activities.
- New leaders; build better, safer parks and accessible; more grants for education, homes, job training and daycare; more neighborhood watch programs; more pride in downtown area; buses that run all three shifts.
- Clean up/develop neighborhoods; grow/invest in higher professional jobs; create a vision to work towards; recruit/elect public officials who will be good leaders, set some examples; make government more efficient.
- New business with fair wages; people in government that put Mansfield #1; support the business that we have now.
- Get the community focused on a common solution to everyday living; teamwork and creative thinking from people with the power to make these happen (i.e. military)
- Encourage new business, living wage; affordable higher education; instill community pride to reduce blight; support systems for families, daycare, health centers, resources
- Increase career/trade education in schools; add a downtown green space/garden -- expand central park; add second and third shift bus lines; free career/trade education for those receiving benefits; arts, culture center downtown
- Opportunity; increase per capita income with job training, education, people working
- Create a common vision with input from all; then divide and conquer to ensure we're all working together; employers understand how to move employees up the ranks; public infrastructure investment; people need to know their neighbors
- Community/neighborhood pride; common goals/consensus; being more friendly/helpful; clean up properties; involve community in education; support local businesses
- Downtown housing -- apartments and owner occupied, tax abatement for relocating to downtown; changing people's attitudes; schools become somewhere where I want my kids to be; parks -- safe for all kids; grooming future leaders; common vision/common strategies plan
- More affordable housing; jobs; make people aware of the good school system we have; cleaner neighborhoods
- Citywide recycling/trash pickup; community center; community involvement with parks; programs implemented between police and community
- Employers pay a good wage like Ohio Healthy so employees don't need social services; Community members pledge one hour per week for civic engagement; discover an end use for all the tires laying around, attract new businesses that revolutionize tire recycling, bring good jobs; invest in sidewalks, bike paths and healthy-living infrastructure; improve ADA accessibility and market our town as a great place to retire; invest in our children, good schools, day care; build wifi network we all can access; more first-time home-buyer funds; a community strategic plan
- Pride tax for recycling; community trash pickups; more diverse police officers; funding for addiction as illness vs our failing corrections non-solution; fewer small parks, more funds for the larger parks
- Boundary-less school district; local journalism; understanding of cultural competency; who leads defined public-private partnerships
- Volunteer program to clean up trash and remove graffiti -- sports teams, inmates, churches, businesses; donations in exchange for advertisements or fine reduction; build fitness trail, walking paths, adopting parks by churches nearby
- Walking/bicycle system; revamp garbage collection; varied parks -- playground, walk-run paths, art, woods/nature, picnic pavilions; indoor entertainment -- pool, community centers
- Create and implement better parks system that is tied in with public transportation and connection to downtown.

- Create and enforce a waste program that is cost effective and efficient, picking up both waste and providing more access to recycling (In mind is the waste in streets); budget for sidewalk replacements -- work with the bike path and library bike loan to make them easy to connect with
- Require xx hours of volunteering, social and neighborhoods; include residents in processes; spring cleanup; support causes and businesses
- Clean up blight in neighborhoods, tear down or incentivise renovation; encourage occupation of downtown historic buildings (financial, tax incentives); keep our youth from leaving the area (jobs, education, safety for young families); 13 corridor
- Bring new companies to the area while keeping existing ones; raise education and skill levels; revitalize downtown; build newer housing, renovate existing ones
- Instill a greater appreciation for what we already have; greater match between skills taught and skills needed in the marketplace, need more masons, plumbers, machinists, sewers, road work, manual labor
- Get the right people involved to preserve the town, not just the downtown but the residential part, take care of the buildings and houses so we don't tear down to make green spaces; common-sense sports places
- Define accountability for all; changing the funding model for education at all levels in the county; affordable healthcare for all using a work/grant-based model; create neighborhood community that cares for each other.
- Tiny house neighborhoods with community gardens; larger employers in walking distance; ways to get rid of excess; grants for local neighborhood hubs, fixups, gardens; neighborhoods/groups responsible for areas besides roadside cleanup; resource/hub for needs -- rides, friends, support; each student assigned a mentor
- Beautify downtown; be more involved with community; clean up a park; start a business; show up to government meetings to get as pulse on our city; inspire others and be supportive; low taxes/ incentives for business
- Municipalize trash collection to ensure all trash gets picked up; change neighborhood watch into a more functional, useful way for neighbors to connect with each other (current system is terrible); modernize the city's web presence and have city departments embrace apps for things like reporting potholes; encourage non-profits to hire volunteer coordinators
- Be open-minded; don't be afraid of change; look at what other communities are doing; vote -- elect those willing to do what you want to have done
- Make attempt to create and foster open communication
- More safety forces (invest); local investment (more); better education investment
- Community-building activities; more walkways and pathways; more music venues, more museums/ culture
- Minimize enabling citizens to get things without earning them -- not incentivize; encourage community charity; build glide path to individual self-sustainability to improve self-worth
- More opportunities to interact with people that aren't like you; deeper self awareness to know what work we want, why we are addicted, why we belittle others, driving towards change in all of these where we fall short
- Better transportation -- aging drivers need buses, trains, Uber; high school prepares for living-wage jobs, allows all to do physical job, mental job; healthier entertainment for single and younger adults.

What would you change about your community so that everyone could be happy and live a fulfilled life?

Report back captured on flip chart

After sharing ideas with the large group, participants voted on the changes they thought most likely to move the community in the direction of a place where all can be fulfilled and happy. Here are the results of that vote:

- 10 – Jobs with livable wages
- 8 – Common vision for community
- 8 – Invest in education
- 8 – Strong visionary leadership, accountability
- 7 – Affordable housing
- 6 – Community center for seniors and children
- 5 – Create a better parks system
- 5 – Encouraging charity
- 5 – High-tech apps and website for the city
- 5 – Skills that match marketplace
- 5 – Business incentives
- 5 – Recruiting next generation of leaders
- 5 – Holding building owners accountable
- 4 – Understanding of different cultures
- 3 – Engagement across all sectors
- 3 – Communication
- 3 – Racial equity
- 2 – Learn from other communities
- 2 – Invest in public infrastructure
- 2 – Support for historic preservation
- 1 – Effective public transportation for all shifts
- 1 – Healthy entertainment for adults
- 1 – Residential spring cleanup
- 1 – Celebrate assets
- 1 – Personal growth improvement, pride, self-worth
- 1 – Civic engagement for young
- 0 – Proactive neighborhood watches



Problem Solving Sessions

Six changes were placed on separate tables. Participants migrated to the change of most interest, where they were asked to develop a list of possible actions, and to assign actions to leaders, people and journalists.

Jobs with livable wages – 10 votes

- Individuals: Shop local; boycott places that don't have livable wages; build skills/apprenticeships; reposting good things; instagram such as #Mansfieldrocks
- Leaders: Job coordination; soft skill development; trade programs; livability of the job/benefits; continuing education; incentive to attract with tax abatements -- within parameters; remove obstacles
- Journalists: Capitalize on hope; showcase businesses; improve online presence; more google photo uploads of positive attributes; billboards/ radio spots; showcase nonprofits; branding; more series like The Tigers

Common vision for community – 8 votes

- For all: regular forums for people to talk
- Leaders; build relationships with others, raise dollars to hire facilitator
- Public: Build relationships with neighbors; show up for forums; spread the work
- Journalists: Solutions stories on communities who have had success with that, investigate where there are gaps, what are dollars spent in comparable cities

Invest in education – 8 votes

- Have paths other than college – based on a skill

Strong visionary, accountable leadership, grow new leaders – 8 votes

- Summary: know the community, be creative and responsive to the needs while engaging the citizens and economic development organizations to move the city forward
- Leaders: Know the community and be responsible to their needs; think outside the box; have vision and act on it; be charismatic and relay information to citizens; build a great team and leverage them

- Citizens: Vote, be educated, speak up, civic education
- Journalists:
- Community resources/assets: grant writers, citizens/volunteers; media and social media; utilize economic development organizations; collaboration.

Understand different cultures, racial equity – 7 votes

- Leadership: organize and support international cultural events; intentionality; embrace cultural competency and commit to implementing it
- People: Create curriculum on social and racial justice issues; identify grant/scholarship opportunities; feel proud of cultures
- Media: Raise awareness of events' series on different cultures and issues
- Community assets: library, SCORE, OSU/NCTC, NECIS, Richland Source, Richland Foundation, NAACP, Gay Pride, Greek

Community center for youth and seniors – 6 votes

- Pride tax monies
- Journalists: public comments at open meetings, can visit neighboring area centers and publish activities observed
- Groups interacting with other groups example open houses
- Public forums -- brainstorming
- We need more involvement from council and public leaders, such as hands on experience, travel outside area centers for first hand knowledge of importance
- Venue for music, pool, euchre, bingo, groups/clubs

What question would you like to have answered by a journalist?

- How does our city spending by department compare with other cities?
- How can we hold owners responsible for unkempt properties?
- What are the concerns of our local government?
- Have other communities created a common vision for the community, and if so, how did they do it? (process)
- How are Mansfield and Richland County reaching their goals, and changing them along the way?
- What can the community do to make this a better place?
- The availability and function of 2-1-1 services
- Why aren't public comments mentioned when covering an open meeting?
- Would like to ask for more input and ask for more print on the need for community/senior center
- Listen to people and pass on the good and the bad
- What can we do to develop a senior center in Mansfield?
- Why is there no toy time in Mansfield anymore?
- Why did the senior center close?
- How can we get good leaders engaged in the public sector?
- How do we engage and include the African American population in community engagement meetings?
- Look into ways to improve diversity of events .. poll for suggestions?
- What is holding up creating downtown residences?
- How can we enforce codes and permits to upgrade housing stock so it won't be torn down?
- Why aren't there more "good works" articles or stories about what good things people are doing in their communities?
- How can individuals invest in their community?
- How can we localize this conversation across Mansfield?
- Where is the faith community in this conversation?
- Where can we get funds?
- Follow up on cultural diversity of Richland County
- How does our city budget compare with other cities?
- How do we get citizen entrepreneurs to take on projects instead of government -- housing, roller rink, pool?
- Why aren't communities using apps and the web for reporting items?
- What would you like an ideal community to look like?
- What are the requirements that come with public assistance?
- How does the media -- all professional media -- address their reputation as being very biased/How to be effective?
- Why isn't the city using apps to: report issues with roads, pay bills, find community events, etc?
- Look into ways of recruiting new and next generation of leaders.
- What can we do to incentivise people to get more involved?

What would you want to tell someone that you learned tonight?

- We all have a common goal, which is a safe, happy community
- People shared save view of vision and leadership
- Mansfield residents all want the city to be the best
- Learned more about the Richland Source. All good!
- The changes people in the room want are so numerous! So many changes wanted!
- There is more uniting us than dividing us.
- Community vision.
- Learned so many cowboy trash collectors all days of the week and times.
- The city has common goals
- There is a lack of senior options
- Leaders came out and joined the conversation.
- There are a lot of common issues throughout the community
- Need more information for starting a business
- There are issues around trash pickup
- We have more in common than we think.
- We can agree to disagree and find solutions to our community problems
- I learned about the “Mansfield Rising” group, I want to learn more and tell others about it.
- I learned that so many others are interested in cultural activities/exchanges in our town, too. How can we expand on this?
- Not all groups feel equally invited to the discussion.
- I would like people to know how many of our elected officials were here tonight!
- I learned the term “social capital.”
- We can work together even when we disagree.
- There is no busing for the third shift. Small senior groups meet all places around town.
- Learned there is no senior center in Mansfield, but surrounding communities have senior centers.
- I want to tell people that there are ideas being brought up and hopefully acted on.
- Learned public participation is very helpful.
- Learned how the Richland Source is able to convene a diverse group of people for input
- The amazing format of brainstorming.
- We have a diverse community with people interested in seeing our community improve.
- Learned that when a community comes together for a common goal, we can move forward and our voice matters in the future.
- People are interested.
- I learned there are a lot of people who care about making our community better. Ok, I already knew that (=



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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