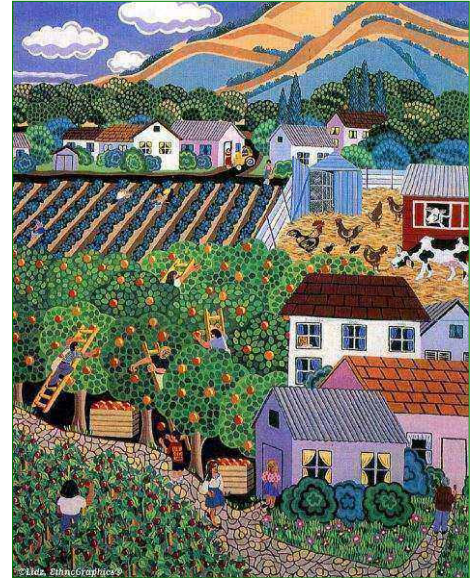


CHAPTER 2: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

The Issues and Opportunities Element is the background information on the local government unit(s) and the overall visions to guide future development and redevelopment of the area. The Issues and Opportunities Element must include population, household and employment forecasts, demographic trends, age distributions, education levels, income levels and employment characteristics.



This chapter presents the overall vision for Black Creek, including a complete assessment of local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The community characteristics and general background information that form the basis for the Issues & Opportunities Element, is included in Chapter 3 Community Profile.

Visioning Process

To identify community issues and opportunities, a three-step process was employed, which resulted in the development of individual vision statements for each of the nine required Smart Growth planning elements. This process included: community SWOT meetings, cognitive mapping, and element vision development. The Town took the additional step of conducting a community survey of its residents to better understand their desires and visions for the future. What follows is a description of the activities and the major issues and opportunities identified through the issues and opportunities visioning process.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT is a planning exercise used to get communities thinking about where they are, where they've been, where they want to be in the future, and how they want to get there.

On **Wednesday, April 30, 2003**, the Town of Black Creek Plan Commission and resident participated in a SWOT exercise. The objective of the exercise was to find out how the Plan Commission members viewed various aspects of the Town. This could include their feelings on physical things such as roads, utilities, etc., and "quality of life" issues.

At the meeting, participants were asked to share what he or she To begin the SWOT, everyone was given a few minutes to write down their own ideas about the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strength

Something that makes a community stand out when compared to other communities. Something that makes you proud to call the community home. A strength can be a physical asset, a program, or an environmental condition (i.e. friendly community atmosphere).

Weakness

Opposite of strength. Problem that needs to be addressed

Opportunity

Something that could be done to improve the community. A potential.

Threat

A threat may be internal or external. A threat can be anything that could jeopardize the future success of a community.

After everyone had recorded their own ideas, participants worked in groups to discuss their answers and decide on the most important Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat facing the Town. After all groups were finished with these tasks, each group was asked to share its consensus answers. Finally, everyone was asked to vote for the most important Strengths and Weaknesses facing the Town. The table on the previous page summarizes the results. The numbers represent the number of votes received for particular ideas. Even though not all items on each list received votes, all items listed below will be addressed through the planning process.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good farmland ▪ Location ▪ Very good school system ▪ “Small Town” atmosphere ▪ Good rating for Fire & Rescue ▪ Low crime rate ▪ Involved local government ▪ Available Housing 	<p>11</p> <p>2</p> <p>7</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wetlands being filled ▪ Lack of opportunities for various groups of young people ▪ Lack of job opportunities ▪ Ponds being created ▪ Wells being drilled ▪ Water quality ▪ Weekend traffic jams ▪ Town vs. County vs. State Road maintenance and construction discrepancies ▪ Farmland loss to development ▪ No Town parks 	<p>7</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>8</p>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning to avoid farm and housing conflicts ▪ Availability of good well water ▪ Business development at STH 47/CTH A interchange and along potential by-pass around Village ▪ Alternative use of farmland ▪ Farming – quality farming areas ▪ Preservation of natural areas, including swamps ▪ Development of a trail ▪ Wind energy 	

Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unplanned Development ▪ Water Quality ▪ Expansion of Highway 47 to 4-lanes with Interchange at CTH A ▪ Poor Agricultural Economy ▪ Over development ▪ Rural sprawl/scattered housing development ▪ Over-regulation ▪ Lack of operating dairy farms
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On **Thursday, June 5, 2003**, the members of the Village of Black Creek Plan Commission, Board, the Village Clerk and other interested residents had the opportunity to participate in a SWOT exercise. The objective of the exercise was to understand how residents view various aspects of the Village. OMNNI Associates, the Village’s comprehensive planning consultant, facilitated the exercise. The format of the Village SWOT meeting was virtually identical to the Town’s SWOT, except all participants worked together in a single group. Below is a table summarizing the results of the Village SWOT.

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highways ▪ Schools ▪ Local Medical Services – Doctor, Dentist, Chiropractor ▪ Close to Appleton/Green Bay – Central Location ▪ Various Businesses and Churches to Choose From ▪ Opportunity for Growth ▪ Parks ▪ Good Police and Fire Departments ▪ People ▪ Variety of Housing ▪ Decent Infrastructure – streets, etc. 	 1 1 6
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of Industries ▪ Lack of Community Involvement ▪ STH 47 By-Pass ▪ Housing- Need for more Multiple Family and Low Income Apartments ▪ Retaining Businesses 	 5 3

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To Establish More Industry ▪ Possibly the STH 47 Bypass ▪ Room for Residential Growth ▪ TIF Development ▪ Strengthen the Downtown Business Community
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of the STH 47 Bypass on Downtown Businesses ▪ Not Growing/Changing with the Times ▪ State and County Budget Cuts

COGNITIVE MAPPING

A cognitive map, or mental map, is a map drawn by a person that geographically locates his or her memories, ideas and thoughts of a particular place. Since cognitive maps are based on individual’s preferences and opinions there are no “right” or “wrong” maps. Cognitive maps are used to delineate geographic areas of a community people like, dislike, frequently visit, feel are important, travel through regularly, feel safe, etc.

As part of the **Mid-Course Meeting**, participants were provided two maps of the Town and Village of Black Creek. On the first map, participants were asked to delineate important travel routes and aesthetically pleasing areas. The most attractive places were colored in one shade, less attractive another, not attractive in yet another color.

On the second map, participants outlined those areas where they would like to see new commercial/industrial development, new residential development, new recreation areas and open space in Black Creek.

These maps were used extensively in the development of the *Future Land Use Maps* presented later in this plan. This approach helped to ensure that the *Future Land Use Maps* accurately reflect community concerns and priorities for the future.

VISION DEVELOPMENT

A **Town visioning exercise** was held at the Town Hall on **May 6, 2003**. The **Village visioning exercise** was held on **June 12, 2003**. The exercise involved completing a series of statements related to what the Town and Village would look like in 20 years. The statements related to each of

DEFINITIONS

Vision: An overall statement related to each of the nine required elements expressing the Town’s expectations for the future. These statements provide a framework and context to consider when making future land use decisions.

Goal: A statement that describes, usually in general terms, a desired future condition. Goals will usually only addresses one specific aspect of the vision.

Objective: A statement that describes a specific action or condition that is to be attained within a stated period of time. Objectives include ordinances changes, new programs, and other tasks. The objectives serve as a “to do” list to implement the plan. To be effective, objectives must be evaluated regularly and updated as necessary.

Policy: A course of action, or rule of conduct, used to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. Policies are based on specific research. Therefore, they are developed after vision statements. In some cases, the policies relate closely to the vision, but provide more refined, specific actions.

the nine (9) required plan elements. For example, Town participants were asked to complete the following statement, “*In 20 years, looking down from an airplane at the Town of Black Creek, one would see...*” Similarly, Village participants were asked to complete this statement, “*In 20 years, looking down from an airplane at the Village, one would see...*” OMNNI Associates used the responses to develop draft vision statements, which the Town and Village reviewed together at their first joint planning meeting in July 2003.

TOWN RESIDENT COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Town of Black Creek conducted a resident survey as a part of the planning process. A total of 435 surveys were mailed to Town households in the summer of 2004. Forty percent (40%) or 175 surveys were returned. The results from the Town’s survey are highlighted throughout the plan when relevant. For example, in the Housing Element, Town resident opinion is highlighted with respect to desired housing choices. Information about desired recreation facilities is highlighted in the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter. The complete survey results are provided in the Appendix. Of general interest, the Town survey results revealed:

- 85% of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with the Town as a place to live.
- Nearly half of the survey respondents (48%) have lived in the Town for more than 20 years.
- 94% of respondents believe a sense of safety or security is important or very important part of living in the Town.
- 86% of survey respondents believe the rural character/country atmosphere is an important or very important part of living in the Town.
- 79% of survey respondents believe the small-town atmosphere is an important or very important part of living in the Town.

In general, respondents were not interested in seeing additional business or development within the Town. Respondents generally felt that most of these types of uses should occur in nearby communities (e.g. Village). Residents did support additional/continued recreational choices (e.g. Town park, playground, sports fields, hunting areas, trails). The survey information provided a general means of understanding Town resident desires and opinions, which was helpful in preparing the visions and Future Land Use Maps.

Visions

Rather than rely solely on a series of policy statements, the Town and Village participated in an extensive visioning process to establish a framework from which to make future planning decisions for the area.

Working together on a plan was a tremendous commitment for both communities. To ease concerns and establish a focus for the planning program, the visioning process was held at the on-set of the planning program. This process was critical to establish a unified vision for both the Town and Village and provide a direction and focus for the planning effort.

The result of this process was a vision statement for each of the nine required plan elements, including an overall vision statement. The visions statements appear at the beginning of each corresponding element chapter. Below is the overall vision statement. Supporting goals, objectives and program initiatives are described in Chapter 12 of this plan.

OVERALL VISION

In 2025, Black Creek is a community that links the future with its past by recognizing the importance of its farming history and traditions, natural resources, and associated rural character when accommodating growth and development.

In 2025, the Town of Black Creek continues to take pride in its rural community atmosphere. Farming remains an integral part of the landscape and an important economic activity. Wildlife habitat areas (i.e. swamps) are also an important rural ambiance – protecting the community from development pressures on three sides. Residents enjoy year-round access to a recreation trail that spans throughout the region. Commercial development is concentrated near the Village and STH 47 and STH 54. Profitable development options are available to farmers and large landowners that effectively retain the rural character of the area. The Town continues to ensure residents have access to quality services and community facilities.

In 2025, development in the Village has expanded to the west. The downtown has expanded to include additional businesses catering to passing motorists and area residents. The Village takes great pride in its small town feel while maintaining many “big city” services.

Efficient municipal services and opportunities for residential, commercial, industrial and agri-business growth continue to be achieved through mutual efforts of the Town and Village.