



Walkerville Community Assessment

November 30, 2023

**Conducted by Julie Hales-Smith, North Coast Community Consultants
Sponsored by the Community Foundation for Oceana County partnering with
the Lake-Osceola State Bank and local Walkerville leaders**

“Let’s get going!”

A community assessment and visioning process creates a shared community vision that is aspirational and forward-thinking. It is a collaborative process of giving the people who live, work, and play in a place the opportunity to have a say in what they want their community to be like in the future. The Community Foundation for Oceana County initiated the community assessment for Walkerville following the Foundation’s strategic plan to reach out more broadly across Oceana County and learn of the needs and aspirations of its many small, rural communities. In the past several years, the Foundation has sponsored assessments in Shelby, Hesperia, and Pentwater which have proven to be valuable. Walkerville in particular was chosen for this year because of the sense of readiness for this work. The assessment serves multiple purposes including resident engagement that results in shared goals, team building, and a shared vision. The process also informs government master plans and helps to build relationships and trust. Finally, it gives the community a starting point and road map to assess progress toward the goals they have identified.

The assessment included a series of small group meetings with key stakeholders during the day and an evening Town Hall meeting. The small groups functioned as focus groups in five specific areas: businesses and economic development leaders; nonprofits, churches, and schools; Village and Township staff and elected officials; youth; and seasonal residents. Participation in both the focus groups and the Town Hall meeting was impressive – both the numbers of folks and their forthright, active discussion about a community they love.

TOUR

The assessment kicked off with a tour of Walkerville and surrounding areas/townships conducted by Maggie Payne and Cecelia Hopkins both of the Oceana Community Foundation. The tour began on E. Main Street toward the town center, where two Dollar Stores are prominent, as well as the Kwik Mart on the corner. We drove around the well-kept school buildings and the amazing new playground built by volunteers and helped with donations from the community. The school/community library is adjacent. In the center of the village are the Post Office, fire station, and Village offices. Also of note, is the quaint Pioneer House museum, which showcases the history of the area, and the relatively new addition of the Lake-Osceola State Bank. Unfortunately, the businesses/buildings surrounding these community amenities are vacant and a bit tattered. We sadly noted the village bar which had quite literally collapsed due to lack of care.



The tour continued north through agricultural lands to the sprawling Arbre Farms operation, with housing for employees on site developed in 2017. Traveling back toward the village through the townships, we saw the new Colfax Township Hall. Upon re-entering the village we drove down several neighborhood streets. Many of the properties, the homes, and their yards, show evidence of neglect. According to the 2021 American Community Survey,¹ 54% of the 94 housing units in Walkerville are mobile homes and 99% are owner-occupied. Further, the median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$48,300, about 40% of the amount in Oceana County (\$131,800).

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK²

Focus Group #1: High School Youth

Fifteen giggling, excitable yet engaged youth clustered around the table for this focus group. When asked about problems they had with the community first there were multiple eye rolls and then a range of answers – general community appearance; lack of things to do; no opportunity (no jobs); need for a grocery store and other retail; lack of decent, affordable housing; and how they felt their education was compromised by so many substitute teachers who were not credentialed. One student said, “I don’t feel like my learning experience is important to them; it seems like there is a lack of commitment to the student.”

When asked about the strengths of the community, the discussion was not as robust. A few mentioned the school and other amenities – gas station, churches, post office – but it seemed a half-hearted attempt.

However, when asked what they wanted to accomplish the tempo picked up. They truly want a better library that is bigger and staffed more regularly. Also, a restaurant, grocery store, and common area for community events.

The lightning round included answers from each student. Most of these centered around improving the school – “quality and everything,” as one student observed - a track, better food options, and a school band. They also wanted a recreation/community center, jobs for teens, and more of a neighborhood feel in Walkerville – they are interested in building community by building relationships.

Focus Group #2: Business Owners

Not surprisingly, a top concern for business owners was jobs and the workforce. Folks lucky enough to have jobs can’t make enough to support their family, let alone pay for daycare. Businesses looking for employees can’t find them. This group emphasized the lack of decent, affordable rental housing in the area and/or housing in general. Participants had personal experiences to report about people who were forced to leave the area because they couldn’t find housing. They

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Walkerville, MI
<<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US2683020-walkerville-mi/>>

² See Appendix 1: Community Feedback Tables for detailed listing of comments.



explained that one reason the housing situation is abysmal is due to the limited public services and oversight. They suggested the Village take an active role to, as one participant commented, “Explore zoning and rental unit regulations; not to stop development but to support development.”

As for strengths/assets of the community, they mentioned new capacity, including existing business owners who are realizing they want to be involved in building up the community, and also new capacity found in folks from the lakes – who might have been seasonal but now are putting down roots and working to become part of the community. They often bring a wealth of knowledge and experience.

When asked what they want to accomplish, affordable housing topped the list along with improving the infrastructure situation and developing a community center – someplace to bring the community together. As one participant noted, “There is nowhere in the community for us to come together and talk, like we are doing here today.” They want to build capacity and get everyone involved in improving the Village including seasonal residents and the large farm operations. They also gave a nod to the wonderful natural resources in the area, wanting to bring more attention and take better care of what we have.

Focus Group #3: Elected/Appointed Officials

This group of officials zeroed in on the challenges in the community that we hope and expect our elected/appointed officials to tackle – infrastructure, high-speed internet, and blight. But they also touched on something less concrete that surfaced in a myriad of ways in all of the focus groups – the need to rebuild community.

The top strengths/assets were the school, the amazing agriculture, and the natural resources including the beautiful lakes and national forests.

These officials were both pragmatic and hopeful when discussing what they wanted to accomplish. There was overall agreement about the importance of intentionally re-building community pride and supporting their three top assets – the school, the amazing agricultural opportunities, and the natural resources in the area.

Focus Group #4 – Seasonal Residents

A very robust group, these folks wanted to make it clear at the beginning that they didn’t consider themselves “seasonal residents”. Although situations varied, most had been a part of the community for generations and several have now made Walkerville their permanent residence.

Echoing the sentiments of the groups who went before them, when asked about the challenges of living in Walkerville these folks decried the lack of basic retail and public services. “You have to drive out of town to get almost EVERYTHING you need.” Plus if an emergency arises, how long would it take to get an ambulance? They worried that the school missed out on quality educators because the wages were so low. Also, they complained of the blight – trash, dilapidated mobile homes, and the like.



When asked about the strengths of Walkerville, they agreed that the beauty and soul of a small community like Walkerville are that people “step up”. They are there when people need them. And, of course, they loved the lakes and felt lucky to live there.

This group has high hopes for Walkerville. They want to improve the schools, build affordable housing, and establish a thriving business district, with a restaurant! They dream about a community center with a library and more human services for families in need. They want to revive community events and clean up the entire community. Plus, they want to capitalize on the natural resources – better signage, and more marketing. And finally, universal high-speed internet, “I can’t even work from home while we are here; I don’t have high-speed internet.”

Focus Group #5 – Service Providers

The group zeroed directly in on housing as a top problem in Walkerville. There is not enough, what is here is dilapidated and unaffordable. As with the Business Owner’s group, the service providers associated lack of public utilities with lack of housing – how do you build new affordable housing if you don’t have the utilities to support it? They also acknowledged that Walkerville suffers as a “service providers dessert”; very few human services are provided directly in the community and that includes day care. There are few day care providers and typically the ones who operate in the area are not regulated.

Just as with the previous group, when asked about “what is working in Walkerville”, this group immediately said, “The community! People love Walkerville and we take care of each other.” They also appreciate the school and the role it plays in instilling community pride, and the wonderful outdoor recreation opportunities.

They want to accomplish a beautiful downtown in Walkerville, with stores, a restaurant, and places for the community to gather. They want housing and the utilities to support new housing. They want good quality, affordable childcare. “If we had more good jobs, coupled with affordable housing and daycare, we could attract families and/or bring families back.”

Town Hall1

Vision: In the first portion of the meeting, the participants were asked to close their eyes and envision the very best Walkerville 5 years into the future. In summary, this is the ideal future for Walkerville they envisioned:

The ideal future for Walkerville will be a bustling, noisy little downtown with a compelling mix of businesses – most importantly a RESTAURANT with tables filled with families chattering away, excited to be downtown and able to watch the parade that is planned for later that morning. Surrounding the downtown will be new and restored housing of all kinds – apartments, condos, and single-family homes. Some of these will be occupied by young families – many who are the 3rd and 4th generation in Walkerville, ecstatic to be back home. A cornerstone and gathering place is the new library on the edge of the beautiful park that is accessible to folks of all abilities where families lounge as rascally kids chase each other. And when those rascally kids become Walkerville Wildcats they will have a state-of-the-art track and sports field at the school where they will teach those Pentwater Falcons a thing or two!



Future Challenges: There will always be threats to this ideal future. The Town Hall participants called them out – the economy, the high poverty rate, losing population, dilapidated housing, blight and lack of effective zoning, wastewater limitations, lack of confidence and pride, and more.

Want to Change: Participants were assembled into small groups for the next portion of the agenda. They were asked to work together to produce a list of what they wanted to change about Walkerville and then to report the highlights. They were cautioned that change will inevitably occur in Walkerville and reminded that as a community, they have the power to affect that change.

Walkerville wants to re-ignite the sense of community that their parents felt. They would like to do that by communicating better and more often, and by developing a place where the community can BE a community. It can gather, celebrate, and re-learn what it means to be a community. They want to bring more resources to the community – more jobs, human services, and housing. And they want to spruce things up so they can all feel pride in their community.

Want to Preserve: Still in their small groups, participants were asked what they would like to preserve about Walkerville.

Walkerville has deep roots. Its history and the generations of families who have labored in and loved Walkerville make it sturdy and strong. Folks want to preserve that history and the pride of living in Walkerville. They also want to preserve the school. It serves as a central focus of hope and opportunity for their kids. They want to preserve the “heart” of Walkerville – they want to have events and festivals to bring Walkerville together and find the “heart” of Walkerville again. Finally, they want to preserve the precious assets they currently have – the few businesses, the churches, the post office, Pioneer House, and of course the amazing natural resources that surround it all.

OBSERVATIONS

Reliability: Walkerville is a town of approximately 246, although Leavitt Township where it is located has 845 people. On that wintry November day, in the focus groups and the Town Hall meeting we heard from approximately **61 different people** - 6% of the combined population of the Village and Township, or **25%** of the Village population! We heard from high school students, teachers, parents and grandparents, business owners, ministers, service providers, retirees, and elected and appointed officials. We feel confident that we heard from a representative cross-section of Walkerville community residents.

Values: The people of Walkerville love their town. And so do their parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. It’s a family thing. But you get the sense that this big ole family feels like they have been left behind and they are ready to start waving their arms and grabbing some attention. One focus group member captured it in three words: “LET’S GET GOING.” They want to regain their ground and what they need is direction and confidence. Working together as a community to regain their community will rekindle the pride that all those generations before them felt in Walkerville. These are practical, hardworking folks. Give them a job and they’ll do it. Tell them someone in their community is in need and they will be there to help. The deep, sturdy roots that Walkerville has in its history and generations of families will be the base that Walkerville can build from.

The Bottom Line: To address the priority areas identified in this report Walkerville needs a realistic plan and additional capacity. The passion that folks feel for Walkerville needs to be re-ignited and spread to emerging leaders and then transformed into action. Walkerville has a history of tackling hard issues. In the past



the Village has garnered housing rehabilitation grants, installed a waste water system, funded street improvement and won an award for broadband internet. Walkerville leaders need to regain confidence in the value of the community and to reach out boldly to partners. The bottom line is that everyone needs to work together to rehabilitate the community **and** the sense of community, brick by brick, person by person.

Priority Areas: Through the assessment process, five themes or priority areas emerged:

- **Business and Retail:** Currently the village is served by a gas station and two Dollar stores. There is a lot of room for improvement. The community members have dreams of (at the very least) a restaurant and access to fresh foods. There are vacant buildings with potential. There was interest from community business/building owners but they ran into roadblocks. Maybe a group of dedicated community leaders with a thoughtful, realistic plan can help bust through those roadblocks.
- **Community Center:** An underlying theme that ran through all of the focus groups and Town Hall was, “How do we rebuild community when we have nowhere to gather as a community?” Flowing from this theme were various suggestions like a community/recreation center. This type of facility might be a heavy lift, especially in the short term. However, with community partners such as churches, the school and other community stakeholders perhaps this goal of having a place for folks to gather might be achieved through other, creative means, and could be incrementally visioned out once a location is secured.
- **Basic Human Services and Daycare:** There are no human services providers with offices in Walkerville. According to the 2020 Census, the poverty rate is 37%³ compared to Oceana County’s rate of 12.9%. This means that one out of every three families live below the poverty level yet they are expected to travel to other communities to seek services. This issue might be addressed by outreach services, one day a week for example, possibly located in the community center envisioned by the community.
The primary form of daycare is in private homes and is unregulated. All potential avenues to provide quality, affordable daycare need to be explored with human service partners, including the possible re-opening of the daycare center at Arbre Farms or a collaboration with an existing organization (such as a church). Businesses need employees and families need income – but this can’t happen without daycare.
- **Re-build Community:** Even the giggly, high school kids get serious when they talk about how they feel they don’t have a “community”. They don’t feel a sense of pride, nor do they feel it in the broader community. And they don’t think they, or the school, get enough support. The school is a tangible, obvious place to focus energy and resources to build the confidence, morale and spirit of the community. School and community leadership can work together to garner support and develop an action plan.

³ https://data.census.gov/profile/Walkerville_village,_Michigan?g=160XX00US2683020



Festivals and events are another way to re-build community, build pride, and bring people together. Longtime generational residents woefully remember a bustling village center, and family fun activities/events. They seem somewhat disheartened by memories of the past but hopefully, once marshalled, those feelings will motivate instead of demoralize.

As Mark Twain famously said, “The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” Or as one Walkerville resident (also famously) said, “LETS GET GOING!”

- Housing and Infrastructure:** The community wants many things that could be made possible by improving housing. They want to clean up and beautify Walkerville. They want to attract new young families to populate their school, and to add an infusion of fresh enthusiasm and energy to community events and activities. They want to attract good teachers and other employees with decent, affordable rental and homeowner housing options. One problem that hinders progress in housing is the need for upgraded infrastructure. Infrastructure and housing improvement/development are certainly stretch goals, however the community wants and needs them badly. These issues must be priority and on the radar of community leaders; even incremental steps could make a big difference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the assessment process was to gather feedback from a cross-section of Walkerville stakeholders, summarize what we heard, share our observations, and make recommendations for areas of focus that the community, partnering with the Community Foundation for Oceana County, Lake-Osceola State Bank, the Right Place, the Oceana County Economic Alliance and hopefully many others might pursue.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
Business and Retail	Consider a volunteer-led approach (similar to the Main Street model) to business district revitalization by forming a central planning group, developing a plan, and identifying action committees (e.g. beautification, special events/festivals, etc.) based on the plan. Each of these action committees creates a simple	Village Council, Business/ Building owners	Michigan Downtown Association: Founded in 1980, the Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) is a state-wide, non-profit organization and a driving force in the interest and growth of downtowns and communities throughout Michigan. The MDA encourages the development, redevelopment, and continuing improvement of Michigan communities and downtowns. Home - Michigan Downtown Association (michigandowntowns.com) Placemaking:

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
	work plan and strategies for achieving their goals.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of citizen-driven creative placemaking in small rural communities • These Four Rural Towns Are Using Creative Placemaking to Thrive (dailyonder.com) <p>Creative Uses for Downtown Buildings/Case Studies: Creative Uses for Downtown Buildings in Small Towns: A Sample of Ideas to Bring People Back Downtown – Community Economic Development (wisc.edu)</p>
	Build capacity to attract grant dollars	Community Foundation, local fundraising	Generate funding for a grant writing corps of trained staff who can work with multiple local units of government throughout the county as they apply for competitive state and federal grants.
	Create a “benchmarking” committee to contact and visit other villages to bring back ideas.	Village Council, Business owners/leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Era is a community with a very active Chamber of Commerce that plans six different major events each year to highlight the community and the downtown. New Era Michigan Chamber of Commerce and Village Council. • New Era also received assistance with their Master and Recreation plans from WMSRDC Planning Assistance to the Village of New Era « West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (wmsrdc.org) • Scottville has Wi-Fi, a heated pool, shuffleboard, basketball, volleyball, horseshoe pits, a playground, an off-site boat ramp, marked hiking trails, quality trout and salmon fishing, and a disc golf course. Home - City of Scottville
	Organize a cross-county meeting of cities (Hart), villages, and townships	Community Foundation’ County	Provide funding and administrative support for a peer-to-peer learning engagement or series of engagements so that communities can learn best practices from one another while growing new relationships that could lead to collaboration

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
	Focus on re-opening (or opening) a restaurant/coffee shop in “downtown”	Village Council, Curtis Burdette, business leaders	Read about how a small town (pop. 167) in rural Wyoming created community Don't Give Up on Your Small Town (strongtowns.org)
COMMUNITY CENTER	Form an ad hoc group to brainstorm creative solutions for developing and sustaining a community center.	Village Council, School, Churches, United Way, local donors	The Relief Zone: In far western New York, children and teens in the small town of Frewsburg (pop. 1900) had few options for free and safe entertainment and community-bonding. To address this, in 2000, parents gathered together to create The Relief Zone Community Youth Center, a volunteer led effort to turn an unused church into a location for youth to gather for activities on weekends. Two decades later, the old church-turned-youth center has become the heart of the community for families with children, offering before and after school day care, after school tutoring, and summer daycamp. The Relief Zone Inc Home
	Check out the Ladder in Shelby, a faith-based community center supported through private donations and volunteers	Village Council, Churches	The Ladder Community Center - Home Brian Beckman, Director (231) 259 – 0211 info@theladdercommunitycenter.com 67 N. State St, Shelby, MI 49455
BASIC HUMAN SERVICES AND CHILDCARE	Strategy to attract human services to Walkerville	Community Foundation, United Way	Basic Needs: Call a meeting of county-wide service providers and local leaders to identify possibilities for services to be provided in Walkerville (satellite offices, rotating onsite services, etc.) United Way and the Community Foundation for Oceana County could take the lead. This meeting could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muskegon/Oceana Community Action Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to Muskegon - Oceana Community Action Partnership Muskegon – Oceana Community Action Partnership (mocup1.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy Assistance

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food Assistance ○ Rent Assistance and Water ○ Homeowners/Homebuyers ● TrueNorth Community Services TrueNorth Community Services (truenorthservices.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family support ○ Food Pantry ○ Housing Support (Emergency Rental Assistance) ○ Youth programming ○ Homeless services ● Love Inc: Contact Us - Love INC Newaygo ● District Health Department #10 Oceana County – District Health Department 10 (dhd10.org) ● West Michigan Community Mental Health West Michigan Community Mental Health: A Person-First Approach West Michigan CMH (wcmchs.org) <p>Approach the Human Services Collaborative body for Oceana County to get on the agenda for one of their meetings to discuss the issue.</p>
	Quality, affordable childcare	United Way, Community Foundation	Focus on working with Arbre Farms leadership to explore the re-opening of Arbre Farms daycare center
RE-BUILD COMMUNITY	School Improvements	Schools, Community Foundation, Churches, local donors	<p>Lubec Community Outreach Center</p> <p>In downeast Maine, the Lubec Community Outreach Center fulfilled a similar role to The Relief Zone. Two of Lubec, Maine’s (pop. 1287) long-running summer youth programs had been closed for several years, leaving few opportunities for children and youth to gather. In 2011, leadership and a core group of volunteers brought the</p>

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
			<p>shuttered programs back to life, creating a Summer Recreation Program and After School Program that offer enriching educational opportunities and critical child care. As the programs expanded, the organization focused on identifying, developing, and implementing effective sustainable programs that were responsive to the strengths, needs, and desires of local families. Today, the organization has expanded to host a food pantry, is a site for the USDA Summer Meals Food Service Program, and now provides services for seniors and veterans. Lubec Community Outreach Center (lubecoutreach.org)</p>
	Creative Placemaking	Village Council, township leaders	<p>Explore creating community through tools of creative placemaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These Four Rural Towns Are Using Creative Placemaking to Thrive (dailyyonder.com)
	Plan a festival/event for 2024	Village Council, township leaders	<p>Gather some of the Walkerville “old timers” and talk through events/festivals of the past. Decide if an old one should be revived or a brand new one planned.</p>
	Capacity building and technical assistance	Village Council, township leaders	<p>“Recognize that local government is not the lowest form of government in an ecosystem of governments, but the highest form of coordination and advocacy for the community.”⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a member of MML (Home - Michigan Municipal League (mml.org)) Walkerville can access a variety of resources including custom on-site training covering topics such as strengths-based leadership and creative problem-solving. On-site Training Programs - Michigan Municipal League (mml.org) • Michigan Townships Association also has a wide range of resources including Township Governance

⁴ Strong Towns, “A Plan for Building Strong Rural Communities”, Charles Marohn, November 30, 2020. [A Plan for Building Strong Rural Communities \(strongtowns.org\)](http://strongtowns.org)

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
			Academy and many other virtual training opportunities. About MTA – Michigan Townships Association
ATTAINABLE HOUSING	Learn about how other small rural communities have garnered the support and capacity to develop and/or rehabilitate housing in their communities.	Village Council	<p>Community members spoke of the need for workforce housing, starter homes for young families, and rehabilitation of existing housing. Although different types and price points, the common barriers to developing this housing in Walkerville include (but are not limited to): lack of capacity; lack of funding; lack of a strategy/ability to attract developers; and insufficient public utilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate case studies of small rural communities and housing development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check out the Village of Middleville website page that advertises potential development sites https://www.villageofmiddleville.org/develop-redevelop-in-middleville/ ○ Or Shelby https://shelbyvillage.com/commercial-listings • Urge Council Members to attend conferences such as the Small Towns and Rural Development Conference (2024 conference website is not published yet) to learn about what other communities are doing in housing and economic development.
	Explore steps necessary to plan for and upgrade infrastructure.	Village Council, Township leaders, West Mi Shoreline Regional	Contact local USDA RD office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Rapids Area Office 3200 Eagle Park Dr., Suite 100 B Grand Rapids, MI 49525 616-942-4111 Ext. 6

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
		Development Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. • Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program in Michigan Rural Development (usda.gov) <p>Contact Michigan Infrastructure Office Technical Assistance Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the Michigan Infrastructure Office Technical Assistance Center (TAC) is to provide technical assistance, planning, and matching grants to local units of government, planning organizations, and federally recognized Tribal nations to help draw federal infrastructure money to Michigan’s communities. • MIO Technical Assistance Center (michigan.gov)
	In order to get technical assistance and possibly even funding, the Village must become formally engaged in the Redevelopment Ready Communities program. (Hart is Certified; Hesperia and Shelby are formally engaged.)	Village Council, Township leaders	<p>Redevelopment Ready Certification: Formal Engagement Introduction to the RRC program: Summary – RRC 2024 Winter Virtual Academy for Local Officials (cventevents.com)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEARN Attend Best Practices Training— A community must complete training on all 6 best practices. RRC offers this training in several forms: online self-directed, online live instructor (next cohort starts September 7 – click here for more info), and, when conditions allow, in-person over two days.

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROVE Pass a Resolution of Intent—The community’s governing body must pass a Resolution of Intent outlining the value the community sees in engaging in the process. Check out an example. • CONNECT Reach out to your RRC Planner, Julia Turnbull 517.599.1752 turnbullj2@michigan.org notify them of your intended engagement in RRC, and attach the Resolution of Intent in the outreach email. Your RRC Planner will review training records and get the community formally engaged in RRC. • COMMIT The MEDC legal team will send an RRC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the community point of contact. The MOU should be signed by a municipal executive and sent back to the contact on the MEDC legal team.
	Partner with the County and other stakeholders to address housing issues and needs.	County officials, Dogwood Community Development	<p>The Housing Needs Assessment for Oceana County, 2023⁵ recommends the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set realistic/attainable short-term housing goals, outline long-term objectives, and monitor progress. • Consider capacity building that will expand the base of participants and resources that can be utilized to address housing issues. • Develop strategies to attract people who currently commute into Oceana County to live in Oceana County.

⁵ Retrieved January 2, 2024. [Housing-Needs-Assessment-Oceana-County-2023.pdf \(oceanafoundation.org\)](#)

FOCUS AREA	ACTIVITIES	FACILITATOR	RESOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider implementing/modifying policies to encourage or support the development of new residential units, particularly housing that is affordable to lower-income households. • Support efforts to develop residential units within or near walkable communities to accommodate the housing needs of seniors and to appeal to younger households. • Preservation and renovation of existing housing should be an area of focus. • Educate the public on housing challenges and opportunities within the county. • Market Oceana County’s housing needs and opportunities to potential residential development partners and develop a centralized housing resource center.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS⁶ Lessons Learned from Successful Rural Community Initiatives	
Build strong relationships	Successful projects were founded by building strong, community-wide, diverse partnerships that facilitated collaboration, not competition.
Celebrate incremental wins	To keep momentum going for larger projects, organizations must celebrate all the incremental wins along the way.
Communicate and share out often	Frequent, timely, clear and direct communication is vital to the success of projects.
Be adaptable and listen to what the community is saying	Listen to what they say their need is and adapt to what they say.
Learn from other communities.	Speak with other communities, utilize technical assistance and keep these lines of communication open.

⁶ The New Ruralism Initiative Grant Report: *Lessons in New Ruralism, Fall 2020*. American Planning Association Northern New England Chapter. [APA Northern New England Chapter \(planning.org\)](https://www.planning.org/Chapter)

<p>Look for the ripple effects and play the long game.</p>	<p>Positive changes in rural communities often lead to positive ripple effects. For efforts to truly light a community-wide spark, there must be dedication and an attitude of playing the long game for deep, sustainable change.</p>
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Appendix 1
Walkerville Community Assessment Feedback
November 30, 2023

FOCUS GROUPS	Youth	Business Owners & Bank	Elected/Appointed Officials	Seasonal Residents	Human Service Providers
<p>PROBLEMS CHALLENGES</p>	<p>Roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The road commission because the roads during the winter are very slippery • Teachers are not able to get to school and able to teach students <p>Community Appearance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The atmosphere, garbage being on the side of the roads • Rebuilding the run-down houses • Parks are run down 	<p>Workforce/Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of workers • Transportation - Getting them to work – lack of population and the talent pool is limited • Hiring H2A workers (a person on the visa) raises the wage of everything we do and then drives all the cost up – a pound of green beans is over \$1 • Most of the jobs around here do not make sense for people with households • We don't have daycare options in this area, the biggest thing is that it's not 	<p>Infrastructure/High Speed Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think some infrastructure problems – Colfax township is still struggling to get high-speed internet north of Van Buren Road • The roads of course which is a revenue issue that will have to be dealt with at the state level because we don't have the tax dollars to do so locally • We don't have the tax base to garner enough funding on our own to do 	<p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to drive out of town for any needs like food, hardware – so you have to plan when you come down here for the season • No restaurant • Lack of retail • Can't even get fresh food here • The dollar stores harm/discourage other business <p>Public Services</p>	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, there is not enough and lots of it is dilapidated • It's not that we don't have affordable housing; it's that we don't have ANY housing • Those who are in the apartment complexes have nowhere to go • The apartments that are here are tiny

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of the school, the community doesn't look nice <p>Retail/Restaurants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No grocery stores, so if we want vegetables or fruit, we don't have that or if we do its artificial – we have to drive out of the community to get fresh vegetables and fruits • There is no opportunity, there is nothing to do, no restaurants <p>Jobs/opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing to do or hate because there is just nothing • There is nothing to do in the summer • There is no jobs around here, and if you do try to get a job you have to be 18 <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of teachers do not have degrees, like 	<p>affordable (\$500 is not feasible) -- we have one daycare center in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No daycare for workers • There has been a shift in the pig farms, a lot of the employees from this area have left because they sold out to a different company that was offering less benefits and wage • Can't support giving employees healthcare and high wages • a lot of people give a bad name to Aubre Farms because of the H2A workers but there are a lot of year-around jobs for people • Wish there was a career tech center somewhere closer to Walkerville rather than just West Shore • If there is not transportation for the kids or someone able to drive them, the kids just won't go to the tech center • A lot of the potential workforce comes out of the justice system; but they 	<p>some of the projects we want to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transfer station does not really serve this side of the county <p>Blight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our blight issues – people use our forest and ditches as a trash dump • There is a general lack of respect to national forest and public land due to the trash and vandalism • There is not a lot of respect in this area for a lot of things – we have had vandalism at the village building <p>Community Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of respect, understanding, and education for artifacts in the museum • There is not a lot of history shared about Walkerville due to the lack of places where the community can come together • There needs to be a lot more pride for the students and the school <p>Lack of Volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't think the fire protection and law enforcement protection is adequate • Fire authority may act in the best interest of the community • The fire authority has four voices to listen to (the Village, Leavitt Colfax, and Elbridge) • Not even sure what the services are for this community • The first responders are coming from Walkerville and the ambulance is coming from Muskegon • What covers us at School Section lake might be based in Mason county <p>Poverty</p>	<p>Infrastructure/Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have public water and limited sewer, so we can't support housing development • The waste water field is too small so we can't put in a housing complex because it can't handle the waste water • Utilities are very high <p>High Speed Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet is so bad I can't even work at home right now • Students couldn't even do homework during covid because there was not any internet <p>Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seems to be a lot of nonprofit services in
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	<p>there is a lot of substitute teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not feel like their learning experience is being prioritized and there is lack of commitment Walkerville library is the worse library in the county <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of affordable housing 	<p>don't have a place to live or work</p> <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are not a lot of rentals – leaving people to take a job somewhere else and leave The quality of the rentals that are here are not fair for people to live in There is no land for people to purchase and build on <p>Building Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something for the kids and the community like a community center or something to bring the community together to keep them out of trouble Trying to bring attention and passion back to the families We want our kids to stay in the area, right now a kid graduates and the first thing they ask is 'how do I get out of this area?' There is not anywhere for the community to just come together and talk like this We need to clean everything up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has been doing so much to try and improve, the staff is great but there seems to be a weird lack of parental involvement. There seems to be the same 20 parents there all the time and they burn-out. Where is everybody? Nobody wants to step-up and help out <p>Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People do not realize how many people are homeless in this area People think because homeless are not in the streets like in Chicago or Detroit that we don't have them but if you look up in the woods and stuff they are out there <p>Drugs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meth is a very huge problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't think there is affordable housing for people and there are no employment opportunities that are non-agricultural It seems to me that the whole community is just low-income <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The educational system is something that has holes in it, partly because of the poverty there its not enough staff to bring in to support the school Is it hard to draw educators to this area We hardly have enough kids for school sports teams <p>Communication</p>	<p>Oceana that only serve the west side, and then Walkerville is left out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The problem is not the lack of help that is out there but the lack of where that help is placed Although another problem is that Walkerville folks will not ask for help, people want to do it themselves not get handouts <p>Childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of childcare, the typical childcare around here is in a house and not regulated <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation, there is no public transportation <p>Hunger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food deprivation is very very high <p>Drugs</p>
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		<p>Water/Sewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have sewer with the village but from my understanding it cannot expand anymore • There is no public water, it is all well's • A lot of people in town cannot drink their water, sometimes it comes out looking orange <p>Lack of Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of elderly people that move out of the area because there is no healthcare in the area • This town needs a restaurant really bad <p>No Police Presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have a police presence around here and there is a lot of things going on around here at like 3am • You call the police and then ask 'well what do you want us to do about it, well I don't know there is people in the parking lot smoking meth, come and do something about it <p>Support for local business</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, it is hard to get information about what's there • If you don't do Facebook then how do you get your information • Communication that needs to be multi-pronged <p>Blight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The junk, you go around the township and look around to see junk and old dilapidated mobile homes • There is no zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a big drug problem <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are so many tourism attractions on the West side of the county but there is not much in Walkerville
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of support from the community for Aubre Farms and the pig farms • The community does not have money for food and other things so the businesses have to use the money received from the summer to push them through the winter • It is very hard to offer and support the community as a small business when you have the dollar stores and customers come in talking about price gouging because the dollar stores have it for less <p>Drug Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug use is another thing that hampers our community, there are a lot of people going downhill with the use of meth and stuff • The smell of drugs stays in businesses 			
STRENGTHS/ ASSETS	<p>Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loves dollar general • We got stores, a gas station 	<p>Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dollar stores are working out really well – to 	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school, its an oasis when you come into town 	<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, because it is a small community, 	<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, people love Walkerville and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a bank – the bank sponsors a lot of stuff <p>Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a school We have two churches We have a post office We have our own fire department Teachers can teach you but still have fun with it 	<p>have enough to keep both businesses going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers and owners of businesses that are realizing that they have to be involved <p>New Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The surrounding area of the community like School Section lake and Campbell Lake, you start to see more people get involved and that brings more people into the community We have a new assistant pastor and she has a real heart for the youth here and she has put together a youth group for the church and has about 12 youth in there Building relationships with Michigan agriculture department to get information about grants for Aubre Farms <p>Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a lot of great areas here but we just need to build it up and clean it up We have outdoor opportunities like the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You got a solid school going on here and a good space for the students to go to school <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazing climate and farmland <p>Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is good space around Walkerville for hunting and fishing National Forest Lakes are very popular and beautiful 	<p>so I think we step-up</p> <p>Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bank, they support the school and their needs and just have a good footprint in the community <p>The Lakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lakes, because if you didn't have the folks living there it would limit the tax base 	<p>we take care of each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are very kind and giving <p>Beautification and Special Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The easter egg hunt was a blast I think they have done just a fabulous job decorating the village park <p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has two very nice basketball courts The school, it builds up the whole community <p>Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkerville Wesleyan Church website will soon have a webpage of links to resources that people can go to if they need help with heating or other things <p>Recreation</p>
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		campgrounds – the amount of different outdoor opportunities that you can do in your free time is actually pretty good			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are so many opportunities around here for outdoor recreation
<p>WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH?</p>	<p>Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better library, the library we have here is open to the public, but the librarian is not even in the library – she gets there at 2:15 but that’s the end of the school day and so the students cannot go to the library <p>Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More food resources in the community so we don’t have to leave to get food • Restaurants <p>MISC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A common area to have community events or parties (a town center) • Bring some of the events that happen in Hart to Walkerville 	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable quality housing • Find funding for private home upgrades to comply with Building Codes and site improvement regulations. Help find funding sources for all levels of home income • Help find funding so lower income people can upgrade their homes • Zoning and rental units regulations; not to stop development but to support development <p>Support for Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of the work force – we have a lot of folks that do drugs and crime but that does not mean there is not a second chance, we need to build something up where 	<p>Dealing with Blight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sort of recycling in this area that is convenient • A trash pick-up • Colfax reinstated their trash day <p>Community Events and Pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community festivals create a sense of pride • A rebranding of what is Walkerville – do things that help people love this community and bring more people into the community • If we can do something to keep young people from going away as soon as they graduate, keep them from thinking how they can get out of here • I would like more community involvement and for people to want to be here 	<p>Fire Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to write a new fire authority agreement <p>Improve Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, because a family is not going to move here if there is not good education <p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing, maybe we can have townhomes or a subdivision <p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need a business district 	<p>Downtown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’d like for Walkerville to be clean and welcoming, with businesses open, and maybe some gardens in the downtown • There are other villages and places that have a group of volunteers that work on beautification of their downtown • Would love to see the resources come back to Walkerville, would be nice to have a grocery store, a restaurant people

		<p>people can get that (a second chance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the legal system <p>Bring Attention/Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health department coming to the community to offer the services they already offer other places in the county • Get Whitmer here and have her see the community because they forget about most of us here in West Michigan • Urge Village elected officials and/or community members to take part in all county and other groups that involved or could involve the Village of Walkerville. Keep the Village and surrounding area involved in what is happening and let the rest of the county know there is Walkerville on the East Side of Oceana County. <p>Village Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Village Town Hall for meetings and village offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just to have the community to be a community would be great <p>Agribusiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the farmers and the processors <p>Improve the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe continue improvement at the school – figure out a way to build a track or a football field, I feel like we lose students due to the athletics • Having handicapped equipment at the park for the school <p>Tax Base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a tax base might be one problem to look at 		<p>can grab a quick bite to eat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be a gathering place outside of the school that the community can be together • You need a downtown – a central place for businesses, everything is so far a part • And then you need to promote the businesses and support them <p>Retaining our Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting young people to stay • Giving young people that stay here things to do
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street and sidewalk upgrades • Full time village maintenance person to properly manage and operate the sewer system; maintain and plow the street system and sidewalks; mow and maintain Village property and general repairs in the village and advise the Council of Village needs. <p>Build Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop program for better Ethnic relations and get these groups involved in the community and local government at the Village and in surrounding townships. The Walkerville School system has done a lot with different groups • Develop programs and groups to involve recreation and second home families in the community. Help build the communities to better serve their needs. 			
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the large food processors and large farm operations involved to help build a better surrounding community that they can also be proud of and be able to serve and support their special needs <p>Re-build Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair and rebuild the Historical House inside and out and get groups to continue to collect historical items important to the Village and surrounding area. Can't let the area history die. 			
<p>IF YOU WERE GOING TO DO ONE THING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?</p>	<p>Gym/Rec Center/Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workout gym and weights that are open to the public • A recreation center • A basketball court open to the public <p>School Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the school better – like the quality and everything • More tracks for sports and stuff like football 	<p>Affordable Housing/Housing Rehab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An affordable apartment building or a complex • Housing, like a subdivision that is more affordable and incorporates a pool or a basketball court for the youth; so we can get more people in the community • Ordinance upgrade and enforcement to improve properties in the Village; 	<p>Business Revitalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see some type of business revitalization in the Walkerville area • A local grocery store would be nice • Increasing the tax base, because everything else will find in line with a larger tax base 	<p>Community Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/town or center • A community center where the youth could go for a safe space • A community center because we can touch up on a lot of issues within the community 	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would build houses • Housing • Central utilities so we can build the houses • Adequate housing to attract young families <p>Youth Activities/Community Space</p>

	<p>– have to travel to practice and games – can never play an at home game (overall improvements to the sports program)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the school - - Boys school bathroom is breaking apart • Better food options at the school – food that allows people with dietary restrictions to eat (a lot of dairy and cheese) • A school band <p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A restaurant because it provides a place to hangout and jobs for high school kids • More business/more work opportunities for high schoolers • An arcade or a casino that attracts more people • A grocery store in town with fresh food <p>Water</p>	<p>make the Village LOOK alive and not DYING</p> <p>Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More businesses in town • We need a restaurant, hardware store, repair shop, farm to table food source and service companies <p>Community Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community center to get the community a spot to talk like this. To have a community where people walk in and say they want to live here • A community center would be nice, big enough for people to have wedding receptions or something <p>Education/Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A promise for the school so the kids can go and get free college and it would be an incentive to draw more families into the community <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the waste water so things like car washes, 	<p>Increase Wages/Attract Talent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s make Walkerville so desirable that people are bidding to stay here • I would like to see us be able to pay our public servants; our teachers, law enforcements, public officials, a competitive wage so that the retainment of those positions is high and talent of people is high • Being able to pay all school staff a competitive wage , even more than the other schools in the area so that the staff is proud to be here • Make a point of hiring retirees <p>Church Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to encourage the churches to make a difference in peoples’ lives, there is “brokenness” around us and so there needs to be a relationship with the Lord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community center with a library, and a gaming center <p>High Speed Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-speed internet area where people can come and work • The high-speed internet is a joke – gotta improve on that <p>Human Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some type of resource network where people can get donations • Love Inc. Having a satellite office • A better library; seasonal residents can’t use the library system <p>Community Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We used to have parades and community events and we need to get those things up and running again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaming café/ community space • A space for the younger kids to come and hangout, or something with like a coffee shop in it so other people can come to the space too <p>Childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality childcare is essential • Quality childcare so people can work • We need to invest in the young families and those that grew up here in Walkerville that want to raise their families here in Walkerville. They need adequate childcare and affordable housing <p>Restaurant</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean water – the water in the community tastes bad (The water comes from wells) <p>Build Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More of a neighborhood – it could be more pleasing to other people, it is more of just a main road with houses on it, building a community by building a relationships • Everyone lives far out 	<p>laundromats can be set in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running a natural gas line up to Aubre farms that could lead to more housing availability • It would be a good deal because it would lower the cost for Walkerville residents <p>Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs, kind of going to be the base of getting more people and energy here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches could offer parenting classes for the community. Kids need to learn normal stuff (life-skills), they don't learn from their parents, get an education. We need Parenting classes, teach parents how to make those boundaries <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see some affordable housing for the working people that are struggling to pay their rent which requires decent paying jobs • Reduce poverty <p>Forest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the forest had more destination sites they might draw more people into the area 	<p>Blight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole community cleaned up • Would love to see the mobile homes to be cleaned up <p>Trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More tourism; we have trails but when you go online to find them, they are not marked it's a maze. • We need markers on our trails • Groomed bike trails <p>Business/Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail, a downtown/main street kind of feel • Industrial parks with someone that is going to promote it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would wish that the restaurant was opened again • A superstar donor who will build out the restaurants, a childcare center, and beatification projects.
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TOWN HALL

<p>IT'S 5 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE. WHAT DO YOU SEE, HEAR, FEEL? WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL FUTURE FOR WALKERVILLE?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalized downtown with businesses • Housing – apartments, condos, small single-family homes • A thriving park • Community joy • Community events • A traditional library – not one shared with the school • Active school – bands, plays, sports fields, track • Beautification to the entire community but especially the downtown
<p>FUTURE CHALLENGES THAT COULD THREATEN THAT IDEAL FUTURE?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • No money in the community; poverty • Not enough of a population base • Buildings beyond repair • Need capacity to seek and knowledge of resources – grants/funding • Waste water limitations • Inability to communicate across the community • No community center • Youth leaving for Hart/Shelby schools • Mentality of youth – feel they have been left behind • Lack of effective zoning • Blight – zoning not enforced
<p>WHAT ABOUT WALKERVILLE DO YOU WANT TO SEE CHANGED (AND MAYBE PARTICIPATE IN CHANGING)</p>	<p>Beautification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything just needs to be spruced up; the downtown, the neighborhoods <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing – there is not housing in Walkerville; much of what exists is in need of repair and there are few if any places for sale or rent • More housing, not just repairing old housing that is already here but new housing • Housing situation is dire

	<p>Sense of Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community – there are so few community events to bring folks together and celebrate Walkerville; there are no places to “be” community • We want Walkerville to be this place that is accepting and people feeling like they belong • We need a mind shift to change of the way people think about Walkerville; we need to bring back the sense of community • Attitude/pride – some people are hopeless about our community; you see that in some of the students at school <p>Retail/Downtown/Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery store • Hardware store • No where for the youth to work, they are collecting pop cans to get gas to go somewhere or paying their parent to get them to work <p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More kids in the school, we have a lot of families with kids in this area but we don’t see them in the schools because they go to Hart and Shelby • We need a school band <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better means of communication, tonight people are saying we “have not seen or heard from our neighbors in years” but Walkerville is small. We just don’t get together; don’t communicate <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources like a food bank, a lot of resources are on the west side of the county but we need more resources here in Walkerville
<p>WHAT ABOUT WALKERVILLE DO YOU WANT TO PRESERVE?</p>	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school; we are lucky to have it still • The school, the sense of sports because there are still sports there that bring people together • The school, because it’s a pretty big employer of people that do live here <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pioneer house; rich history of the area • The history and the quiet, rural atmosphere <p>Sense of Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of residents that are long-time residents and a lot of pride of being in Walkerville • The community heart and festivities, the community events that we do have that bring the community together

- The 2 churches because they contribute to that sense of community

Business/Services

- The business that are still here, like the postal office and the bank
- The fire Dept, because they show-up and volunteer

Natural Resources

- Natural resources, this is a great place for camping and hunting
- Our parks because there are great parks here in Walkerville
- Our natural resources; we have wonderful national forests and lakes