

Boone County Vision Project: Report from the Study Circles

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www.boonecountyvision.missouri.edu

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Executive Summary

Preamble

Due to the quality of life and the rich mix of resources available to citizens, Boone County is experiencing a strong rate of growth. Elected officials from throughout the county have acknowledged that the quality of life enjoyed by Boone County residents would not continue without paying attention to key issues. These officials made a commitment to take a proactive approach to improving communication and collaboration between city and county governments. The leaders agreed that all communities would benefit from a structured vision process that engaged representative citizens as partners to address these three goals:

- Economic prosperity (job growth)
- Environmental stewardship
- Social well-being

The Wallace House Foundation (WHF) of Des Moines, Iowa, was contracted by the Boone County Commission to direct this countywide process to develop a shared vision of the future. WHF brought the experience of previously having conducted visioning projects in Iowa counties. To provide a local contact, and community knowledge, the Institute of Public Policy at the University of Missouri-Columbia (IPP), agreed to provide local staffing for the project.

This report summarizing the Vision Process, was compiled from group reports, notes from the study circle meetings, and notes from the Summit Meeting of August 31st. Group reports, and the Consultant's Report are available at the Boone County Planning and Building Department office (801 East Walnut in Columbia), at the Columbia Public Library and on the project web site.

Summary of Benefits of the Regional Dialogue Process:

- Meaningful involvement of representative citizens from all areas of the county
- Opportunity for extended dialogue and better understanding of issues, resources, and policy alternatives.
- Articulating a shared vision of the future of Boone County, including specific goals, objectives, and actions.
- Linkage to local and county government regarding land use, growth management, planning, and a range of other community issues important to quality of life.
- Building consensus on practices and policies based on shared community values.
- Valid, quality information and specific recommendations to city and county government.
- Building investment by citizens and other community organizations in doing their part to accomplish action steps and goals.

Positive Qualities to Maintain (Values, Assets, and Resources)

The members of the study circles were asked to list the attributes that attract and keep them in Boone County. The following were the most frequently mentioned positive qualities valued by the participants:

- The mix of rural amenities, including agriculture, open space and natural areas, with the services, culture and retail opportunities in the more urban environment of Columbia.
- A vibrant, diversified economy not dependant on smokestack industries.
- A healthy natural environment.
- Good infrastructure.
- The people of Boone County and their willingness to participate and be good stewards of the land and community.



Concerns and Priority Issues

While almost all of the concerns expressed by the citizen volunteers could be grouped under the general area of better planning, there were six main groups of concerns. The bulk of the concerns were either land use or physical infrastructure needs directly linked to land use planning. The following are the concerns and priority issues most frequently mentioned by the participants:

- There is a need for comprehensive planning that involves coordination among all the cities and the County.
 - ❖ Cooperation among the cities, special districts and the County needs improvement.
 - ❖ Urban growth into the traditionally rural areas causes the loss of productive agricultural land and leads to conflicting expectations for services and amenities.
 - ❖ Some types of growth pose a threat to natural areas and environmental quality.
- There are significant infrastructure needs.
 - ❖ There are concerns about all aspects of transportation including building and maintaining safe and adequate highways, roads, and other modes of transportation.
 - ❖ There are other infrastructure needs that tend to be focused in certain areas,

sewer in the South, water in the North, storm water in the Southwest.

- ❖ Currently the costs of development do not seem to be equitably distributed.
- The environmental quality of Boone County needs to be preserved, especially certain exceptional natural and cultural areas.
- There is a need and an obligation to protect private property rights, and provide just compensation when private lands are converted to public use.
- There are social service and equity concerns that need to be addressed.
 - ❖ There is a lack of services for the youth and elderly.
 - ❖ Racism and the pressures of growth are tearing at our social fabric.
 - ❖ There is a lack of affordable housing.
- There is concern about the structure of County government and its legal limitations, including the inherent lack of representation from having only three commissioners.

Solutions and Strategies

Study circle members were asked to think about the causes of the problems that concerned them and to describe what solutions to these problems might look like. The study circle participants offered the following solutions and strategies.

- Enhance comprehensive planning and coordination throughout Boone County.
 - ❖ Institute more effective governing vehicles, such as standing boards to improve cooperation between county, municipal, and other government bodies.
 - ❖ Develop a comprehensive plan for land use, transportation and services in Boone County and use it consistently in the decision making process about growth in Boone County.
 - ❖ Develop and implement strategies to identify, prioritize and preserve critical, unique natural and cultural resources.
 - ❖ Implement new zoning laws that could be more effective in preserving natural and historic features and use land more efficiently during development.
- Address the current and plan for the future infrastructure needs of Boone County.
 - ❖ Improve the safety and performance of highways, roads, transit and other modes of transportation.
 - ❖ Make improvements in sewer, water and other infrastructure.
 - ❖ The County needs to adopt methods, like impact fees, to better distribute the costs of development to those who benefit.
- Insure the protection of and respect for private property rights in any efforts that

convert private lands to public use, and adequately compensate landowners in these cases.

- Address the housing, social service and community needs in the County.
- Develop and pursue a legislative agenda at the State level or pursue a charter government to address inherent problems in the structure of county government.

Ideas for Future Action

The last section contains ideas generated at the Summit Meeting on August 31st, where participants from all groups met together to develop a coherent focus for the project. Toward the end of the Summit Meeting the participants broke into three groups to develop first steps toward putting some of these ideas into action. The topics selected for small group discussion were determined by the interest of the members present. The groups reported back to the group with actions to pursue.

- Assemble a committee to address the limitations on County government and make specific recommendations for legislation at the State level, or changes in the structure in County government.
- Develop strategies to acquire or regulate the use of productive farmland and exceptional natural areas including transfer or purchase of development rights.
- Find acceptable ways to balance private property rights with preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Educate and seek input from the public on the results and recommendations of the Vision Process including continued use of the project web site (www.boonecountyvvision.missouri.edu)

Next Steps

A concern of all of the groups has been that the work done here would be put on a shelf and ignored. In order to prevent that from happening some ideas were put forward to educate the public on the process and the product of the study circles. The Steering Committee also may have an important role in this part of the work, as well as shepherding the process from study circles through public scrutiny and onto the agendas of the County Commission and the various municipal governments.

Further public input will be needed to prioritize the ideas generated in this visioning process, but not to substitute for the careful deliberations captured by this process. There also will need to be data gathering and analysis by County staff and other partners to evaluate the concerns and develop policy alternatives. It should be clear that tangible results will follow this process as this visioning followed recommendations by the Master Plan Task Force that ended its work in 1996.

Introduction and Timeline

In the 1996 update of the Boone County Master Plan it was, “suggested that Boone County launch a long-term ‘visioning’ process, ‘Boone County 2020’” (Executive Summary Boone County Master Plan 1996, p.1). In the summer of 1999 the Boone County Commission looked for a partner to conduct this continuation of the ongoing land-use and community services planning effort. The Boone County Vision Project is both a demonstration of the continuation of the planning efforts of the 1996 revision and a fulfillment of the request to expand the process to more nearly reflect the opinions of Boone County citizens.

WHF submitted a proposal to develop and manage the Boone County Vision project, with staffing provided by a local partner organization (IPP). WHF is a neutral, nonpartisan resource center for improving civic participation and democratic dialogue about critical public issues. WHF sponsors and staffs community dialogue projects in Iowa, and provides resources and services to citizens, organizations and government to facilitate communication, build consensus, and develop collaborative partnerships for effective action. The National Association for Counties and its partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, The Center for Sustainable Communities, sponsored the initial trip by WHF Executive Director Kent Newman. At this first meeting elected officials from the County and from municipalities across Boone County met and agreed that a visioning process would benefit the citizens of Boone County.

A follow-up meeting of elected officials was held on January 18, 2000, to keep them informed about the evolution of the project. Elected officials made recommendations of individuals to serve on a Steering Committee to represent major organizations and interest groups in the County. Twenty-three people agreed to serve and the Steering Committee met on March 15, 2000, to discuss assets and priority issues in their communities. Steering Committee members also agreed on the need for citizen participation to help develop a comprehensive vision for the County. They nominated people to serve on six geographically distinct study circles.

Six regional groups of ten to fourteen county residents were recruited to discuss issues of land use, growth management, and planning. The study guide, "Smart Talk For Growing Communities: Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development," was designed for five discussion sessions of two hours each. Each study circle was led through the process by a trained facilitator to help a diverse group of citizens address a range of land use, growth management, and other important community issues. Key features included participation by elected officials and planning staff from the County and municipalities at the fourth meeting, a report from each group and pre-test and post test survey. For more about the methodology see Appendix A.

The survey assessed how participants and others in the community felt about the current planning efforts and how citizen input affects that process. (See Appendix C for Results). The survey was mailed to municipal elected officials and Planning and Zoning Commissioners from across the County, and also available on the web site.

This visioning process helped participants establish consensus on values of community life, discuss concerns, learn how other communities have addressed issues, examine options, meet with officials, and make recommendations for action. The process was used to facilitate citizen

input leading to the creation this report, which articulates specific qualities to maintain, concerns and priority issues, and potential strategies and solutions. While new ideas were developed and new solutions discussed, many of the same elements appear in the 1996 Master Plan. The visioning process has improved on that effort by linking the concerns and the solutions, reaching greater depth and diversity in the discussion, and by deriving consensus strategies.

The following timeline describes the main events in the visioning process that was endorsed by these public officials.

April 2000:

- Trained facilitators and recruited study circle participants.

May 2000:

- Completed recruitment and training.
- Selected and confirmed meeting locations, meals and refreshments.
- Finalized citizen recruitment and confirmed group schedules.

June 2000:

- Pre-test surveys completed prior to first meeting.
- Citizen groups met for the first time and a meal was served. Some groups held Meeting 2.
- Facilitators maintained notes, sent out by IPP following each meeting.

July 2000:

- Meetings 2 and 3 for groups are held.
- Surveys sent to elected officials, key County organizations, and additional citizens.

August 2000:

- Meetings 4 and 5 are held. At meeting 4 groups met with County commissioner, local elected officials and planning staff from the County and some cities.
- Participants completed post-test evaluation survey (see Appendix C).
- Reports were compiled from all groups.
- Planning and Zoning Commissioners from all the cities that have planning and from the County met on August 30th, possibly the first meeting of this kind ever in Boone County.
- Held Summit Conference of participants from all groups on August 31st to generate countywide report.

September 2000:

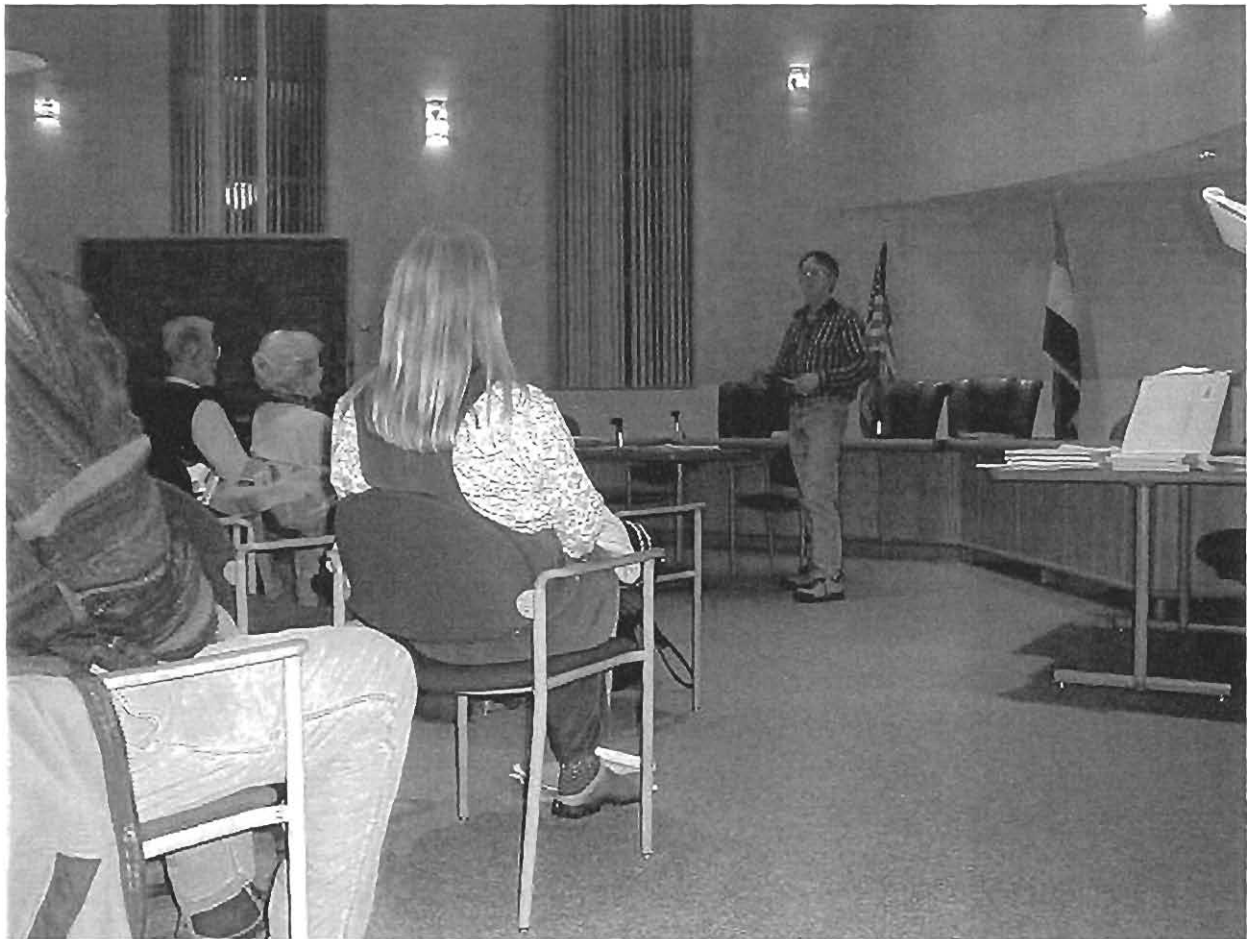
- The Steering Committee met on September 19th to reviewed the Draft Report from the Study Circles and discussed broad distribution, public review, and validation of the report.
- Planning and Zoning Commissioners from all the cities that have planning and from the County met on September 27th to review and discuss future steps.

October 2000:

- The County Commissioners and planning staff review the report. Revisions are requested to make the report more amenable to a staff response and to improve style points.

January 2001:

- *The Report from the Study Circles will be released to the public and sent to participants, and elected officials.*
- *Elected officials will reconvene on January 30th to discuss the results of the report and possible future steps to act on recommendations and to improve cooperation among jurisdictional boundaries.*



Positive Qualities To Maintain (Values, Assets, And Resources)

In describing the assets of Boone County it was clear that there was a great deal of agreement about the amenities and institutions that enhance the quality of life in Boone County. Every group complimented Boone County's rural amenities and the great deal of activities and opportunities in the City of Columbia. There was also agreement that preservation of the environment by community actions was noteworthy, with the wetlands sewage treatment area and the trails receiving the most attention. Every group mentioned the presence of good hospitals and medical care. The people of Boone County, their friendliness, their willingness to get involved, their level of education and their diversity, was another asset recognized by every group. Education also is very important issue to the people of Boone County who were involved in the study circles. The elementary and secondary school systems as well as the colleges and University were unanimously praised.

In general it was the mix of urban and rural, the variety of choices and activities in town so close to the open green spaces and farms, that people valued most. Juxtaposed with the range of entertainment, economic opportunities, services and diversity of city life in Columbia there are the neighborly towns and rural areas of Boone County.

The variety of assets, resources and community values that emerged in the study circle dialogue has been organized into distinct groups to make them easier to understand. The discussions were open-ended and so these categories were chosen after the fact based on common themes that emerged:

- The mix of rural amenities, and the more urban environment of Columbia.
- A vibrant, diversified economy not dependent on smokestack industries.
- A healthy natural environment.
- Good infrastructure and public services.
- The people of Boone County and their willingness to participate and be good stewards of the land and community.

The mix of rural and urban amenities

It was universally agreed that the open spaces and slower pace of rural life in such close proximity to the vibrant, mid-sized city of Columbia was one of Boone County's greatest assets. One woman in the County-wide group explained that she loved living in Centralia and close to Columbia.

In addition to an appreciation for the rural lifestyle, three of the groups mentioned that they were glad that agriculture was a part of Boone County. Combined with the unique fairs and festivals and historic



buildings, agriculture is an essential part of the heritage and identity of Boone County. Several people specifically mentioned that in Ashland, Centralia, Rocheport and other smaller communities people knew their neighbors and looked out for each other. The heritage and lifestyle of rural Boone County is something valued highly by the participants in the study circles.

The urban amenities listed by all the groups as key assets include shopping, entertainment, nightlife, and cultural opportunities, particularly in Columbia. The hospitals and general health care system were mentioned by all six groups as assets, as were the “K-12” schools. The higher education facilities at the University of Missouri and the colleges were likewise a plus in all six groups’ reports. Also mentioned was the vibrant downtown area in Columbia with its culture, nightlife and many restaurants.

Vibrant, diversified economy

The six groups were all aware that the vibrant economy of Boone County was an asset. Specifically, the ability to avoid smokestack industries and still have many good paying jobs was seen as a plus. The low unemployment rate combined with a low cost of living has made Boone County an excellent place to live and work. Part of the reason for the good economy, according to study circle participants, was the diversity of businesses in Boone County.

At the same time that people were appreciative of the good economy they also appreciated what they perceive to be a healthy environment. Specifically, people mentioned clean air and water.

A healthy natural environment

Although many of these assets are mentioned in one way or another in other categories, the environmental resources and stewardship of those resources by the citizens of Boone County were cited as key to the quality of life in Boone County. In addition to the parks, trails, scenic roads and open spaces, most groups listed among the County’s assets the streams and waterways of Boone County. These waterways are valued for their beauty, cleanliness and opportunities for recreation. In addition to the resources for beauty and recreation, the groups reported that the cleanliness of the air, and the potable water supply were further evidence of Boone County’s superior natural surroundings. People in several groups also mentioned the wetland sewage treatment plant, development of a trail system and environmental policies as matters of pride for the community.

Boone County also is blessed with certain physical assets. The natural beauty of the State Parks, open spaces, scenic byways and streams are collectively a rich asset, preserved by individual initiative and government action. Equally popular are the outdoor recreation opportunities on trails, at sporting events (to watch or participate) and in the city and State parks, the sewer service in most of the County and a temperate climate with four distinct seasons.

Good infrastructure and public services

The numerous services and infrastructure of Boone County were described as one of Boone County’s greatest assets. The strategic location of the County was frequently mentioned - proximity to an interstate highway (I-70) and a major US highway (US-63), the State Capitol, the Missouri River, the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City. The electric and water utilities got high marks for the improvements they have made in their service provision and working out cooperative agreements. The Sheriff’s Department, the Columbia Fire Department and the County Fire Protection Districts are not technically infrastructure, but they were mentioned along with infrastructure as being assets.

The people of Boone County

The groups almost unanimously complimented the willingness of people to get involved in civic life. Participants felt that Boone County communities are willing to step up and support their schools and develop innovative ways to protect the environment. The citizens who participated in the study circles felt that the higher educational attainment and higher standard of living of Boone County residents were important advantages. Most complimented local government for being open and accessible. Groups from across the County said that they feel safe in their community. In central Columbia participants specifically mentioned improvements in the cooperation of the police and other departments to eliminate problem housing and address problem tenants or property owners.

People appreciate the small things as well, for instance, the willingness of friends and neighbors to lend a hand when someone is in need. This seemed particularly important to residents of the smaller communities in and around Ashland and Centralia.

Summary

The people who participated in the study circles were proud and pleased with their communities. The Central Group wrote in their report, "If you live in Missouri, Columbia is the place to be." This is important to keep in mind throughout the rest of the report, which focuses on things that were reported as needing attention. In fact, the schools, the openness of government, and the natural amenities are some examples of things that appear both as assets and concerns. These items are interrelated and many are stressed by the growth attracted to Boone County.

It is noteworthy that Boone County is fortunate to have certain assets for which no one present in the community today can take credit. The location of the MU campus, I-70, US-63, the Missouri River and the Devil's Icebox Cave in Rock Bridge State Park were gifts to the current residents of Boone County. But preservation of many of the resources of Boone County are a result of policies designed to maintain or enhance these features. Moreover, many new businesses and other institutions that have added to Boone County's quality of life were the direct result of the creativity and work of its citizens. Taken together, these positive qualities were identified as the most important elements that make Boone County an excellent place to live, work, play and raise a family.



Concerns and Priority Issues

The participants in the six study circles reported many of the same concerns. The consensus issues, group priorities, minority opinions and concerns that are unique to certain parts of the County are included in this section. Their goal was to ensure that the positive qualities of Boone County were maintained as the region grows in population. The concerns identified by the six study circles were elicited in open discussions, no presupposed concerns were presented for reactions. Therefore the responses covered a variety of topics without clear boundaries. In order to facilitate understanding, and to highlight priority issues, they are grouped into six main categories:

- There is a need for **comprehensive planning** that involves **coordination** among all the cities and the County.
 - ❖ Cooperation among the cities, special districts and the County needs improvement.
 - ❖ Urban growth into the traditionally rural areas is a problem.
 - ❖ Some types of growth pose a threat to natural areas and environmental quality.
- There are significant **infrastructure needs**.
 - ❖ There are concerns about transportation.
 - ❖ There are other infrastructure needs.
 - ❖ Currently the costs of development do not seem to be equitably distributed.
- The **environmental quality of Boone County** is threatened by development, especially certain exceptional natural and cultural areas.
- There is a need and an obligation to protect **private property rights**, and provide just compensation when private lands are converted to public use.
- There are **social service and equity concerns** that need to be addressed.
 - ❖ There is a lack of services for the youth and elderly.
 - ❖ Racism and the pressures of growth are tearing at our social fabric.
 - ❖ There is a lack of affordable housing.
- There is concern about **the structure of County government** and its legal limitations, including the inherent lack of representation from having only three commissioners.

Comprehensive planning and coordination

More than anything else, the lack of comprehensive planning was cited as a priority for Boone County. The proliferation of five to ten acre tracts, the apparent lack of a coherent pattern for zoning changes, the apparent willingness to allow development ahead of adequate infrastructure and the lack of any plan to preserve open space for recreation or environmental protection were chief

concerns. Moreover, there was concern that following through with any plans to preserve agricultural land, open space or other amenities would be difficult. Some described the problem of subdivisions expanding into the County as urban sprawl, and were worried that this growth beyond the existing infrastructure has created a number of potential and actual problems.

Cooperation among the cities, special districts and the County needs improvement.

In addition, participants were concerned about the apparent lack of cooperation among the cities and the County. From their perspective it seemed that there was more competition than cooperation in the planning process. When study circle participants met with County officials in the fourth of five meetings, they learned that currently, planning officials contact municipal officials when new development is proposed near a city border. The groups felt that more needed to be done, and that what was being done needed to be communicated better. Annexation plans by the various cities of unincorporated areas similarly appeared as poorly coordinated with the County. It was clear, particularly at the fourth meeting when County planners, County Commissioners and municipal elected officials and staff attended, that planning efforts by the various cities were not all known by the County Planning office, let alone the other cities.

Of particular concern was cooperation between the City of Columbia and the County. This was mentioned by all of the groups. In particular, several groups expressed an unfavorable opinion about Columbia's current policy limiting connection to their wastewater treatment facility for property outside of the current city limits. Some participants felt that this policy actually promoted the creation of small "package plants" or lagoons and were more of a threat to the environment. Whether deserved or not, some Columbia policies, and the way those policies are carried out were perceived as unfavorable to the other municipalities and unincorporated areas.

In addition to better cooperation among the cities and the County, most groups expressed concern that cooperation between the County and some utilities could be better. Getting water, sewer, and roads planned and constructed in time to meet new demands was too slow for some, while too aggressive for others who wanted to see growth in some areas discouraged or prohibited. Some of these utility issues were specific to certain areas of the County.

Urban growth in traditionally rural areas is a problem.

The growth of subdivisions and isolated residential housing is one result of uncoordinated planning between the local government and service providers. This spreading out is the dream of some families, but cause for concern for others. Some people also expressed the opinion that growth should occur within the cities and annexation should be pursued to properly provide regulation and orderly service provision. Conversely, there was a strong voice that did not want further annexation in Southern Boone County and around Columbia. There was concern that there were too many houses being built on five-acre tracts outside of the cities and subdivisions being put in where the infrastructure did not exist. In some cases people felt infrastructure and development should never reach certain environmentally or culturally sensitive areas.

One of the consequences of the expansion of subdivisions and acreage or "farmette" development into the rural parts of Boone County is conflict at the urban-rural fringe. Participants, particularly those who were long-time residents of rural areas, were frustrated by people who have moved out into the country and then want all of the services and infrastructure of the city while lacking understanding of and tolerance for the agricultural activities that have existed there for generations. The urbanization of the countryside also brings more illegal dumping of garbage, and automobile

drivers who are impatient and sometimes reckless when passing farm machinery.

Some types of growth pose a threat to natural areas and environmental quality.

Most of the groups expressed concern that the County had no designated areas or plans to preserve green space as natural areas, recreation areas, or productive farmland. All of the groups expressed concern that loss of green space and threats to natural areas would result without some sort of plan. Moreover, the current County zoning laws seem to encourage this diffuse, “sprawl” type of growth. This is partially due to State laws concerning agriculturally zoned areas, but there was also a feeling that the other tools to preserve green space, streams, farmland and historic structures were lacking. These current legal gaps hamstringing efforts to encourage or require more efficient use of the land.

Although not mentioned as often, there were also concerns expressed about the loss of historic areas. Loss of the important and attractive buildings and sites in Boone County would diminish the quality of life.

Infrastructure needs

Although certain aspects of the existing infrastructure were listed as assets by the study circles, there was also a consensus that in many ways the County has fallen behind in its effort to provide services and is trying to play catches up. Of course part of the problem, and participants realized this, is that the County provides roads and some health care and the other utilities are provided by private or separate public entities. While transportation, roads and highways were mentioned most prominently, sewers and other infrastructure needs were identified as well.

There are concerns about transportation.

Concerns about roads in Boone County were generally about the lack of planning and timely construction that has created serious congestion and safety hazards. Of particular concern were the two major highways, (I-70 and US-63) and the interchange where they meet. These items are currently under study by MODOT (the Missouri Department of Transportation), and some groups had specific recommendations both for and against proposed changes to I-70. There were also concerns about the way Boone County prioritizes roads for construction and repair.

On a broader spectrum of transportation, many groups expressed concern at the complete lack of public transportation outside of Columbia, and the quality of service within Columbia. Planning and construction of pedestrian and bicycle paths were found lacking throughout the County, although several groups also listed available trails as assets as well.

There are other infrastructure needs.

Concerns about other infrastructure needs tended to be more specific to certain areas. Sewers and wastewater treatment were major concerns in Ashland and neighboring parts of Southern Boone County. Study circle participants also noted storm water runoff and the effects on the watershed in southwest Boone County and adequate water supply in Water District #10 in Northern Boone County as problems. However, most groups were worried that poor planning and the County’s inability to directly control the various utilities lead to development where the infrastructure was inadequate.

Currently the costs of development do not seem to be equitably distributed.

There was also a concern that the cost to extend that infrastructure was not being borne by those developers who stood to gain from expanding the urban environment. This resonates with concerns expressed in the 1996 public input phase.

One of the costs not borne by development was the cost of expanding schools. Almost all of the groups expressed concern that schools were being stretched to their limits to keep up with the growth. Moreover, outside of Columbia, the lack of industrial and commercial properties held down the property tax base, making it even more difficult to fund schools adequately and leading to tax increases.

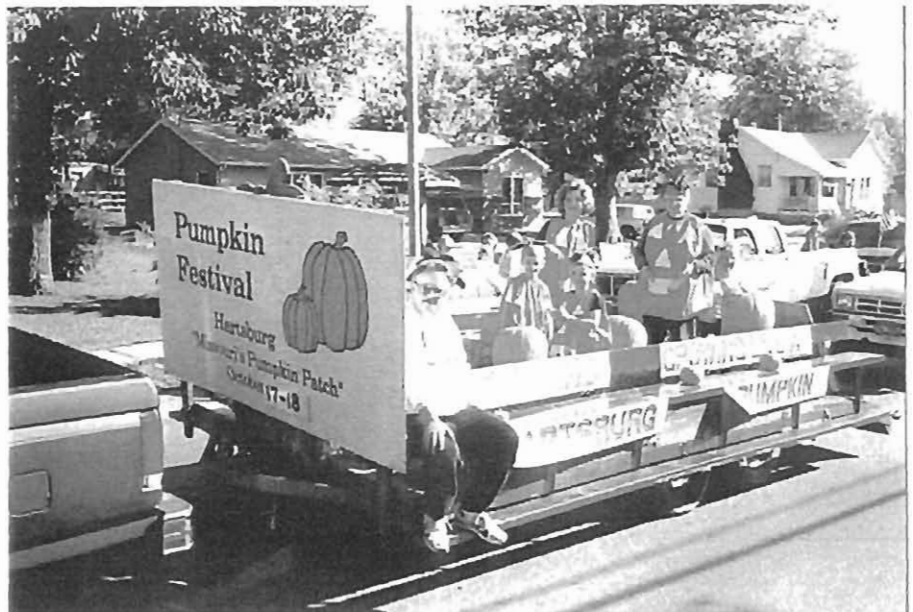
Environmental quality of Boone County

The combination of rural, small town America with access to all that a college town has to offer is a key element of what people like about Boone County. It stands to reason that the issues that threaten these qualities are priority concerns for the study circle participants. The attractive aspects that promote the growth and economic vitality of Boone County are to some extent threatened by the success they promote.

The potential loss of open space was mentioned by all of the groups. It was clear that preservation goals were not strictly for aesthetic purposes, although that was important, but for recreational opportunities, for the rural character and heritage, and simply to maintain the environmental quality. These elements differ in their perspective and may require different strategies, but they are closely linked. Preserving productive agriculture was a high priority for some groups for aesthetic and cultural reasons. Losing farmland to inefficient residential development on five-acre tracts is bad for farming, bad for transportation planning, stresses other infrastructure and can be damaging to the environment, especially if wastewater is not properly treated.

The loss of farmland has deeper effects, including the irreversible loss of food

production in Boone County that separates us from our connection to how our food is produced and eliminates a critical part of Boone County's heritage. It also has an effect on the economy, particularly in the smaller communities in Boone County, which in turn is a blow to the rural character that people love. Some participants saw the end of traditional family farming as inevitable, but whether anything could be done or not, this is a concern. All but the South group and Large Cities group specifically mentioned a desire to preserve farmland.



Most of the groups had concerns over particular elements of the natural environment, specifically, that these features were threatened by current development patterns. Streams, of which Boone county has several very pure ones, were considered threatened according to the County-wide group and the Central group. The North group and the Large Cities group were concerned about illegal dumping of garbage. The County-wide group was concerned about ecologically sensitive Karst areas, and in addition to streams they added the Missouri River. Wildlife was a concern. The Columbia group was worried about the loss of rare species like the Topeka shiner, while the Large Cities group mentioned the overpopulation of deer. Finally, the Columbia group expressed concerns for the quality of drinking water and air quality.

Private property rights

For some members of each group, there was a passionate concern that present laws and regulations as well as suggested future actions may be infringements on basic property rights guaranteed by the Constitution. As a whole most groups listed this either as a concern, or made it clear that suggested solutions and strategies should only be undertaken with an appreciation for these rights.

The risks to property owners took several different forms. There were concerns about the process of selecting areas to be preserved. Moreover, in cases where it is deemed that farmland or other green space is worthy of preservation, many participants expressed a concern that fair and adequate compensation is not always given to private property owners.

Farmers in particular were concerned that they would be asked to bear an inequitable share of the burden of efforts to preserve agricultural land. As one farmer in the Southern Boone County study circle put it, "the farmer has already made his donation to the community," so the community should pay the market rate for any land that is deemed necessary. The process of condemnation was also unpopular as many expressed the feeling that such proceedings rarely resulted in truly just compensation.

There were concerns about the ways that current laws and land use regulations were enforced, and the potential for further regulations. While this is not strictly speaking a property rights issue, it was frequently discussed side-by-side with issues of land purchase. Several groups reported that current regulations, particularly in Columbia and the County-regulated areas, were enforced unequally. Some deemed current regulations too onerous, or perhaps misguided. Examples given include that silt fences are required in some situations, but not others, for reasons not clear to the observer, and that building codes promoted the building of more duplexes rather than more dense and efficient multi-family housing. The general sentiment was that individual rights were compromised by what was perceived as unequal enforcement or over-regulation. Finally, there were basic issues of the rights of the landowner to determine the use of his or her land. Despite the constitutional support for zoning, and building and development codes, and the fact that voters in Boone County have supported zoning in multiple elections, there are those who have a visceral reaction to being told how they can or cannot use their own property.

Finally, a few participants felt that it did not matter what the greatest good is, or might be in most people's eyes, the basic value at stake is whether people can do what they want to do with the land they have purchased and maintained. One participant made the observation at the Summit Meeting that the largest landowners in Boone County (farmers and owners of farmland) would always be a small minority and therefore have little power over their land, a premise that was unsettling to her.

Social service and equity concerns

The provision of various services was not presented as being as pressing a concern as the land use issues, but that could have been due to a perception that the process was primarily concerned with land use, particularly since previous updates to the County Comprehensive Plan were largely land use planning efforts. The concerns expressed were primarily related to housing, law enforcement or the youth and elderly but other concerns were mentioned as well.

Many groups expressed a concern that law enforcement, especially the Sheriff's Department, was stretched way too thin, and that public safety suffered. In addition, groups expressed concern that there was inadequate enforcement of the speeding laws. This was particularly a concern on US-63 where the existing speed limit of 70 mile per hour and at grade crossings were made worse by people driving over the posted limit with little chance of being caught.

Services for youth and the elderly.

Beyond the concerns that the various school districts in Boone County were being pressed to keep up with the growth, most groups mentioned that more needed to be done to provide safe, positive activities for the youth of Boone County. There was a concern expressed that currently too few activities existed in all areas of the County, urban and rural. To a lesser extent, services for the elderly were a concern. Some participants suggested that this is less a problem in the rural parts of the County because people look out for each other there.

Racism and community relations in Boone County.

The Columbia group and the Central Boone groups listed race relations as a concern, and others spoke in general terms that some voices were heard louder than others, but racism did not rank as a high priority issue. Again this may be due to the land use emphasis of this study, or the make-up of the County and therefore the make-up of the study circles. Specifically, participants expressed the opinion that progress on racial issues was too slow and not given high enough priority. The influx of more Hispanics and other ethnic groups may bring this issue more to the forefront. Equity in distribution of community resources in the schools and in other areas was a concern. Some participants felt that even the availability, or lack thereof, of certain retail products for various ethnic and racial groups was a problem, even where there was a market.

At the same time that old issues have yet to be addressed, continued growth in population and the complexity of daily life threaten the better parts of Boone County tradition. The loss of the physical features of rural Boone County goes hand-in-hand with a sense that the small town feel of Boone County is being or could soon be eroded. Some expressed the opinion that it was harder to get people involved and to get people to participate in civic life. They also wanted to improve their connection with government. Although many felt that government in Boone County and the municipalities was receptive and open, many felt it needed to be improved. The Large Cities and South groups mentioned that it was a struggle to get people to participate these days.

Housing.

The quality of housing and availability of affordable housing were concerns of most groups as well. People from all parts of Boone County were particularly concerned that young families can no longer afford to buy their own home.

In the Columbia group and the Large Cities group, upkeep of houses and rental property was a concern, and part of the concern was over the level of local ownership. It was felt that certain existing economic conditions and regulations had the effect of promoting tearing down existing structures rather than fixing them up.

The structure of County government

One of the issues that evolved during the process was the concern that county governments in Missouri are so limited by statute that they lack some of the tools needed to properly address common issues and concerns. County governments, like municipal governments, are creations of the State and therefore only entitled to those powers given expressly to them by the Legislature or absolutely necessary to carry out those prime functions.

Since Boone County adopted zoning in 1973 many more possible avenues for directing and controlling growth are available, including limiting certain land uses to certain areas, the use of planned districts, and overlay zoning (to establish special rules for defined areas in addition to the basic zoning regulations). However, some of the suggested methods to charge developers the cost to install needed infrastructure, such as impact fees and special property tax assessments, are not available, generally speaking. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent it is legal to establish cooperative agreements for consultation on zoning issues among the incorporated areas and the County.

Finally, some citizens were concerned that a County Commission with only three representatives is not adequate for the size and diversity of Boone County. Each district commissioner has a constituency almost twice the size of a State Representative in Missouri. Moreover, whenever two commissioners are in the same room they effectively have a majority of the commission. By the laws of Missouri, in particular the so-called Sunshine Law, two commissioners constitute a majority of the Commission and therefore they are not allowed to discuss issues before the Commission without making it a posted public meeting.

Concerns specific to certain areas of Boone County

During the process of determining how to divide the volunteers into groups it was decided that the process that should bring out issues specific to regions of the County as well as Countywide issues. Indeed, there were issues expressed that were unique to each group, but these are issues that relate to only one portion of the County.

Members of both the Large Cities group from Centralia and the Northern Boone group suggested that growth in the north was sluggish. Unlike most of the rest of the discussion, North Boone County feels the need to promote growth and new jobs with tax incentives and other aggressive strategies in order to compete with Mexico and other surrounding counties and municipalities. Growth is further hampered by difficulties with the local water district's limited capacity.

Participants from North Boone County also were much more likely to express a concern that their voice was not heard as clearly in County matters. There was a feeling among some groups that Columbia and Southern Boone County received a disproportionate share of County time and attention.

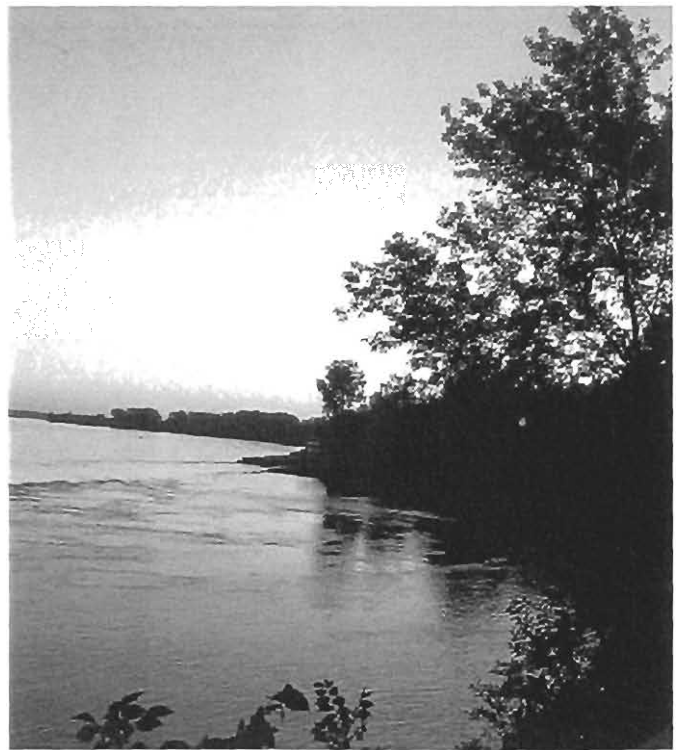
Sewer and wastewater treatment were critical issues in Southern Boone County. Participants from Southern Boone were a little more likely to be wary of efforts to preserve open space and natural

areas. They put more emphasis than other groups on the importance of protecting personal property rights, especially considering the presence of protected areas like Three Creeks State Forest, Rock Bridge State Park and Mark Twain National Forest that have already been converted to public use.

In Columbia's central city areas, there was a particular emphasis on the subjects discussed in social and community needs, particularly the public safety and property maintenance issues. The condition of housing and personal safety in the central city First Ward was a concern, but it was also seen to be improving more than declining.

Summary

While it is accepted that growth will continue in Boone County, and most participants saw this as a good thing, there is a danger that if these concerns are not addressed we will "kill the goose that laid the golden egg," as one participant put it. It is also clear that allowing development while trying to keep the positive qualities of Boone County requires balancing a comprehensive approach to planning and zoning, while maintaining cooperation with the cities and service providers and preserving the individual and economic freedoms of Boone County citizens. There is no doubt that this will be a difficult feat. Another element of realizing this future for Boone County is continuing to improve communication to and from average citizens and developing public-private partnerships to accomplish shared goals. This process has defined some problems seen by citizens across Boone County. It has also proposed a set of potential solutions, perhaps not defined clearly enough for implementation, but ones that have broad support. The study circle process has also developed an active group of concerned citizens who are eager to see their work put into action. The solutions suggested are described in the next section.



Solutions and Strategies

The solutions recommended by the six study circles were all developed independently, as they were meeting at about the same time and there was no direct communication between groups. Therefore the overlap and repetition of many of the suggestions should be seen as fairly significant indication that there was broad and diverse support for these ideas. Since the areas of the County represented on the study circles overlap, it is not possible to state that only people from one area, say Columbia, made the same proposal. For instance, since there are Columbians on four of the six groups, a concern unique to Columbia might appear to be of countywide concern because it is raised by Columbians on three or four separate groups. Similarly Ashland and Centralia had representatives on three different groups. The recommendations were presented by each study circle as a group decision (not necessarily full consensus), so themes that are repeated can accurately be said to have countywide support among the participants in the Vision Project study circles.

It is also difficult to put these proposed solutions in a prioritized list. The facilitators were not asked to produce a “top ten” list or to assign any quantifiable weight to the solutions presented, only to narrow down to solutions and strategies for the priority issues and concerns. The list of recommendations from the groups alone was four and a half pages long, but there were many items that appeared repeatedly. Those items that appeared frequently are noted in the following paragraphs. Those that were mentioned less frequently were included if they seemed to be a high priority to their group (based on the notes of the discussions, specific mention in the final report and consulting with the facilitators). Issues unique to one region of the County are specifically attributed.

- Enhance **comprehensive planning and coordination** throughout Boone County.
 - ❖ There needs to be more effective governing vehicles instituted.
 - ❖ Develop a comprehensive plan, and use it consistently in the decision making process about growth in Boone County.
 - ❖ Develop and implement strategies to identify, prioritize and preserve critical, unique natural and cultural resources.
 - ❖ Implement new zoning laws.
- Address the current **infrastructure needs** of Boone County and plan for the future needs.
 - ❖ Improve the safety and performance of highways, roads, transit and other modes of transportation.
 - ❖ Make improvements in sewer, water and other infrastructure.
 - ❖ The County needs to adopt methods, like impact fees, to better distribute the costs of development to those who benefit.
- **Preserving the environmental quality of Boone County** is vital, especially certain exceptional natural and cultural areas.
- Ensure the protection of and respect for **private property rights** in any efforts that convert private lands to public use, and adequately compensate landowners in these cases.

- Address the **housing, social and community service needs** in the County.
- Develop and pursue a legislative agenda at the State level or pursue a charter government to address inherent problems in **the structure of County government**.

Comprehensive planning and coordination

Coordination and cooperation were mentioned in one form or another more frequently than any other item, with improving planning close behind. The perception of many study circle participants was that the criteria for planning development in Boone County are not clear, not implemented consistently, and that the various cities and the County do not work well, or frequently, together. In many cases those who felt that growth was having undesirable effects tended to think that either nothing could be done, or that new zoning laws and strategies were needed.

All other issues, except perhaps racial tensions, hang on the efforts of government to either adequately plan and direct growth within the market forces, or react and respond to it. Clearly the perception is that the County is in a reactive mode too much of the time. If this process has identified areas in which this perception is accurate, then it could be extremely valuable in improving the process and zoning tools used in planning. Where it can be shown that concerns are unfounded, it will be necessary to communicate better with the citizens and officials of Boone County to improve the trust between citizens and their County government.

Institute more effective governing vehicles.

Not surprisingly, people were frustrated that governments seemed to be competing at times, even when, as with cities and the County, they serve the same people. Whether it is simply meetings between officials or a complete change in the structure of County government, all of the study circles felt that some concrete steps need to be taken to effect more coordination and cooperation between jurisdictions.

While people agreed that cooperation was critical, what cooperation would look like took on many forms. Some groups simply called for better cooperation among the cities, districts and the County, but other proposals were more specific. One group wanted a formal, elected governing body (referred to as a regional government) to give all the communities a better say in growth and development of Boone County. The South group hoped that the meeting of all the City Councils and the County Commissioners that started this process would become a regular event. The North group suggested that the County share more revenue with the smaller communities to assist with local needs under local decision making.

Three groups mentioned improved cooperation between the City of Columbia and the County specifically, whereas the Columbia group said that they needed to *continue* to work together. The Countywide group had a specific idea, suggesting that the County could contract with the City of Columbia for operations of a park system and use a combined sales tax similar to what has been suggested for law enforcement to pay for it. Clearly the sheer size and complexity of Columbia single it out when cooperation is discussed.

Participants wanted to see cooperation at many levels. The Large Cities group wanted to see neighborhood and civic groups take a more active role and three groups wanted to see more involvement of churches (especially in social service provision). Specific proposals to improve the

level of cooperation between the special districts and the County were not reported, but the South group did want to see everyone on the new “grid system” for addresses to aid emergency responders and utilities to find them more easily. This group also suggested that a guide to emergency services, civic organizations, schools, utilities, government offices, etc. put together by a collaborative effort to give to new residents, would be a helpful item. However, there was only one group that recommended more cooperation with neighboring counties.

Develop a comprehensive plan, and use it consistently in the decision making process about growth in Boone County.

The next most important priority would seem to be the development and careful implementation of a comprehensive plan for the County. In one way or another most of the groups alluded to this. Comments included, “such a plan goal oriented as to determine the kinds of growth and location for growth we want to promote;” and, “there [is] a need to plan ahead for access roads for housing development.” Two groups stated that it was their highest priority. A comprehensive plan has an impact on many of the other categories below. In addition to efforts to plan for land use, groups specified a need for plans to identify and preserve green space and critical natural features, provide sewer service, and build roads to new housing developments through planning efforts.

Groups also expressed concern that the zoning laws are not applied uniformly and correctly, and so planning efforts are undermined. Some participants feared that the resolve to stick to the plan under pressure has not been there in the past. The Countywide group supposed that this might be particularly difficult when the County is contemplating preserving natural areas, green space or cultural features. This is of course a consistent theme throughout the records of representative government, but some hoped that a clear vision developed in this process would be the glue that could hold Commissioners down to the community’s expressed desires. It might also be the evidence a Commissioner might need to demonstrate public support for a controversial position.

In the end, it was agreed that there was an important role that people outside of the government must take on to build the public support for change. There were very few people who felt that the current course of action would bring the best possible result for the future of Boone County. Moreover, it was agreed that the best way to plan for the best future was with public input and a consensus building approach, even though consensus could never completely be achieved. Data obtained by the County’s intern over the summer of 1999 suggested that this process where a shared vision was developed in the earliest phase enhanced the likelihood that plans would be followed. It stands to reason that if the public is aware of the critical elements of the County plans, then they will help enforce it by keeping a watchful eye on adherence to that document.

Develop and implement strategies to identify, prioritize and preserve critical, unique natural and cultural resources.

The reasons for preserving lands in Boone County is discussed below, but to ensure that anything is preserved it is critical that these endeavors are planned. Currently, Boone County does not have a Parks Department, does not have a plan to develop parkland, does not provide recreational activities and does not have areas designated as green or open space.

Three of the six groups expressly asked to have the County actively preserve green space in the County. One suggested a cooperative agreement whereby the County might buy parkland and then

hire the City to develop and maintain it. At the Summit meeting, there was a discussion to preserve farmland as farmland and not just open space. This echoed what some groups had expressed during the study circles.

Implement new zoning laws.

Most of the groups saw a need for new zoning tools or an updating of current zoning laws. These new regulations would be able to reduce the proliferation of 5-10 acre tract development or preserve farmland, natural areas, watersheds, scenic roadways, or historic features. It also was proposed by two groups that efforts should encourage “clustered” residential development where houses are built in a small area and large tracts of open space or farmland are preserved. The use of planned districts, currently allowed by law, might be one way to achieve some of these goals if used more extensively.

The current spreading of urban development and lifestyles, especially into middle size 2-10 acre tracts, into traditionally rural areas was identified as a critical problem to deal with. It was suggested that the rule that basically grants subdivision into five-acre tracts or larger as a matter of right should be reduced to 2.5 acres to reduce the waste of land. These lots, too small to be productive farms and too large to be efficiently served in typical residential subdivisions, were mentioned by almost every group and were almost uniformly criticized. Generally, participants from across the County were concerned about ways to encourage appropriate density and leave open space that could be publicly or privately owned. The use of “clustered housing” might allow families to have the rural feel but still provide the density needed for efficient service provision.

Infrastructure needs

Providing infrastructure for the future growth of Boone County in a timely and equitable way was a priority issue for study circle participants. A key concern mentioned above was that development was outstripping the extension or provision of necessary infrastructure or was unfairly distributing the costs. Whether it was a concern about overflowing schools, overburdened sewer systems, water systems unable to provide pressure enough for fire fighting or roads handling more cars than their designed capacity, participants were worried that infrastructure was lagging behind the need. Clearly the solution to this concern overlaps with the previous section as better planning and cooperation were recommended as part of the solution.

Improve the safety and performance of highways, roads, transit and other modes of transportation.

US-63 and I-70 highways are the top transportation priorities, but also beyond the control of County government. In particular, the dangerous at-grade access roads that connect to US-63 led participants to recommend that the posted and driven speeds must be reduced to improve traffic safety. One group also suggested that improved enforcement of speed limits would help achieve this goal. This is an area where cooperation among local and State law enforcement, as well as local and State transportation planners, is critical. Two study circles wanted to see mass transit provided through more of the County, but neither specified how it could or should be provided.

Additionally, the groups wanted to see improvements in the process for designating County roads for improvement. It was frequently unclear how priorities are currently developed. One group felt

that roads should be planned ahead to have access roads for housing developments built in a timely fashion.

Make improvements in sewer, water and other infrastructure improvements.

The other infrastructure concerns were specific to certain areas of the County. The North Group wanted to see better water service to allow for more growth. The South group wanted to see an area- or district-wide sewer plan developed to prepare for growth. The Central Boone County Group wanted to see the impacts of storm water runoff examined in areas experiencing growth.

The County needs to adopt methods, like impact fees, to better distribute the costs of development to those who benefit.

Four groups specifically recommended impact fees, which are designed to make developers pay directly for new infrastructure required by their building, and another suggested that, “If people want services, let them pay for it.” Participants wanted the costs of development to be passed on to those who were benefiting from the new construction, and presumably to the eventual purchasers of the buildings if the market will bear it. This sentiment was found in all six reports and was supported by discussion at the Summit Meeting.

It should be noted that current laws do not allow County government to charge impact fees. This was discussed in the 1996 revision to the Master Plan and it was suggested at the time that this could be addressed at the State level. So far these efforts have been unsuccessful.

Preserving the environmental quality of Boone County

Much of what people wanted to see happen to preserve the open space, farmland and other natural or historic features of the County involved planning. Since all of the groups wanted or at least accepted that growth would continue in Boone County, identifying and prioritizing what was critical to the future of the County was key. This concept was developed further at the Summit Meeting.

Generally speaking streams (riparian corridors) and farmland were top priorities. Streams, rivers, and water quality needed to be maintained. It is also hoped that farmland and farming could be preserved in Boone County, not just as open space, but as an important link to the history of Boone County. Suggestions to make this work included encouraging “clustered” development,



protection by overlay zoning, purchase by government or land trust outright, or purchase of development rights. A critical component of this was that landowners be treated fairly as described below. The first step is identifying and prioritizing the prime, pristine features based on the discussion at the Summit Meeting and the group reports.

This is one of the most critical and difficult parts of maintaining the quality of life in Boone County. Part of what makes Boone County thrive is the burgeoning economy and development and construction is a part of that. However, more than one participant indicated that if typical urban growth reached them, they would be ready to leave Boone County. There did seem to be close to consensus that some efforts to preserve the unique features of Boone County were necessary.

In addition to the natural features of Boone County, participants wanted to see historical and cultural features preserved as well. As mentioned briefly before, adopting a historic preservation regulation is one possibility. Additionally, people saw preserving farmland as a step toward preserving the culture and tradition of Boone County.

Another idea that surfaced during the Summit Meeting was a more aggressive strategy to pursue Federal, State and private foundation dollars to preserve these natural, historic and cultural features.

Private property rights

There were few strategies specific to protecting private property rights, but there were some general principles that were mentioned repeatedly. Property owners should be paid a fair amount for any property that is converted to public use. The South group proposed an alternate strategy, that dedication of land for public use be made a condition that must be met before development; a park land dedication or open space dedication requirement. Balancing the rights of property owners with the desires of the community to preserve these features essential to the quality of life is a challenge, but a critical step.

Since preservation of certain areas of the County for environmental or cultural reasons was high on the list of priorities for some study circles, a great deal of discussion was devoted to developing ways that were respectful of people's property rights. Three main themes developed:

- 1.) Participants wanted to prioritize the areas to be preserved.
- 2.) Landowners should be treated with respect and in a way that is economically just.
- 3.) Innovative solutions should be used over outright purchase or onerous restrictions whenever possible.

From the group reports and discussion during the breakout sessions at the Summit Meeting, it was clear that pressures to develop land would limit preservation efforts. Therefore it is important to consider natural, ecological, cultural, aesthetic and economic criteria when determining what areas are priorities for the community to remove from the market.

Farmers and other large landowners were very skeptical about efforts to preserve farmland and open space. While most would like to see farming continue, they felt that the economy would make that decision. They also felt that eliminating their potential nest egg for community and ecological concerns, no matter how valid, was unfair. Efforts to limit the use or purchase of the land should

have a good cause, a transparent process and pay the market rate for the land.

Both those most interested in taking some land out of the development market, and those resistant to the idea, to one extent or another felt that there are probably better alternatives than rigid zoning decisions and purchase by condemnation. During a breakout session, as well as in reports, the use of purchase or transfer of development rights (TDR) was recommended. In this process, the ownership of the land remains the same but by buying for cash or offering greater density or intensity of use on a different parcel of land the owner “sells” his or her right to develop the land targeted for preservation. Private entities including land trusts can act in this way too, thus reducing the concern that too much land is being held publicly or that the government has begun to grab land. Criteria such as Land Evaluation and Sight Assessment (LESA) could be used to evaluate and define the qualitative aspects of land, helping to determine how and where future growth should occur based on community priorities. Overlay zones (which the County is currently empowered to use) that add a more specific layer of use categories over the existing zoning could be used as well.

Participants also hoped that rules and regulations would be enforced more evenly. Again, perceptions of unequal treatment may be a lack of understanding of the applicable ordinances. The only specific example cited in the minutes or reports was a perceived inconsistency in applying the rules for when silt fences were required.

Finally, some expressed a desire that existing regulations be made more user friendly. Those laws that can be proved to be ineffective and overly burdensome should be altered or removed. There also is a desire to have complex laws explained more clearly. Several groups also wanted to see steps taken to make zoning laws and regulations more understandable and consistent. This is one of several suggestions that could fall under the general title of improving communication between citizens and government, with the goal of improving both process and outcomes for all. As mentioned in the section on Concerns and Priority Issues, this topic has been included here because participants perceived it to be linked to issues of respect for property rights.

Housing, social and community service needs

Housing.

The condition and availability of housing should be given more attention. The emphasis is not necessarily the same throughout the County, but most groups mentioned providing safe and decent housing. One group suggested that a County Housing Authority would be part of the solution. It was not indicated whether this should be separate or a cooperative effort with the Columbia Housing Authority. One group wanted better cooperation, especially by the City of Columbia with nonprofit housing providers.

For keeping the properties in good condition, there were two groups who wanted to see more rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and less demolition and replacement. Tax abatements or other incentives could be provided to encourage use of existing housing stock and commercial buildings. This preference for rehabilitation over replacement holds true for commercial as well as residential buildings.

Services for youth and the elderly.

Several groups expressed a desire that more things be provided for young people to do. One group

suggested a recreation center in North Boone County at the site of an old strip mine. Another group suggested that there should be a more mentoring programs and that there should be a safe place for kids to study late, especially during finals week.

The structure of county government

For most participants, the fourth meeting of their study circle was a chance to tell County Commissioners and other public officials how they saw Boone County and what they would like the future here to look like. It was also a learning experience both for what the County was already doing and for what the County could not do regarding specific strategies to help guide growth, due to current legal limitations. The inability to charge impact fees and assess special tax bills for improvements (except under special circumstances) severely limits the County's ability to do what was a high priority for several study circles: make developers pay more or most of the costs associated with that development.

Changing these restrictions requires either the County to adopt a charter or legislation at the State level. Three groups suggested that another attempt be made to adopt a County Charter. It was a high priority for all three groups that listed it. The remaining three groups all wanted impact fees but did not specify pursuing a County Charter. The County has unsuccessfully pursued legislation at the State level for the last several years to permit counties (or last first class counties) to charge impact fees.

It was also made clear that better communication (especially with Northern Boone County) was important. Decisions on roads, the purchase of the County Fairgrounds and other matters suffered from either a lack of quantity or quality of public input opportunities. Part of this may relate to the small number of elected county legislators.

It seems clear from the discussion that there are limitations to what Boone County can do to implement the suggestions of the study circles. Some of those limitations might be reduced with a County charter or a series of changes at the State level. During the Summit Meeting, the group seemed to believe that in the future a citizen-led effort to develop a County charter or constitution should focus on these limitations and not make such extensive changes to the number and duties of elected officials.

Summary

The strategies and solutions offered by study circle participants are the result of hours of discussion and earnest thought. It is not possible to rank the importance, set precisely weighted priorities or determine a sequence of events that should be started from these recommendations. It can be said, however, that study circle participants saw these suggestions as the rough outline of ways to maintain the high quality of life found in Boone County.

The participants in this process were almost to a person excited by and appreciative of the opportunity to have a direct effect on planning efforts for the County. They felt that getting more people involved would improve the process and implementation. Moreover, getting people involved in civic life in general was a way to maintain Boone County's high quality of life. Part of the responsibility for this was placed on County and city government, but participants recognized that individual citizens must take the steps to involve themselves.

One of the most frequently asked questions from citizens in the study circles was what would become of their work and their recommendations. Some of the participants (as well as some of the Steering Committee members) served on the Committee that reviewed the Master Plan in 1992-1996. One of the recommendations of that committee was to conduct a citizen-driven visioning process. This is an example of following through on that process, but there were comments that many other parts of the earlier process were not followed through.

The effort put forth by the study circle volunteers was tremendous. In addition to the five two-hour sessions, more than half of the members who were able to participate came for a follow-up two-hour Summit Meeting.

These same people also talked about the project with family, friends and neighbors and in that way included them in the project. Not only do the County Commission and City Councils have a document that asks thoughtful questions and makes well considered proposals for the future of Boone County, but there is also a dedicated group of nearly 100 study circle participants and Steering Committee members that can build support for those solutions that the elected officials determine are feasible and in the best interest of their community.



In order to help implement these ideas, the participants began to make recommendations for action, including some that could involve individual actions. These are described in the next section.

Ideas for Future Action

Many of the suggestions that have come out of the study circle process require government action at the County or municipal level. Some require steps at higher, or perhaps more accurately described as more distant levels of government. But some things are for average citizens to undertake, including study circle participants who have the greatest time investment in this process so far.

The following ideas are what the study circle participants have suggested as some of the first steps that they can take to make sure that the work they have done is not lost. This section also contains a list of possible actions that members of the Steering Committee, elected officials and other citizens of Boone County could take to begin implementing solutions to address the priority issues and concerns.

Ideas from the Summit Meeting break out groups

The first group worked on issues of environmental protection. The time allotted for this discussion was too small to develop any program plans, but it was clear that there was a great deal of distrust and a conflict of different values. It was decided that much work needed to be done on developing community consensus around the idea of preserving environmentally sensitive areas and farmland. Participants agreed that environmentally sensitive or valuable areas, parks, and greenbelts (flood plains) could and should be identified as a part of the County Comprehensive Plan. Before Boone County citizens, especially the farmers whose land is at stake, would want to remove land from speculation and development, their rights and economic future must be secured.

A second group worked on a similar topic, coming up with innovative strategies to preserve natural areas and farmland while protecting property rights. Many of the same strategies that had come up during the study circle discussions and a few new ones were suggested. Generally the ideas were designed to give tax abatements for keeping land in production, or incentives to promise not to develop parts of the land. It was decided that additional public education and discussion was needed to implement any of these successfully. One suggestion was to change the tax code to tax farmland even less in exchange for keeping it in production. If the land were developed, the tax abatement would have to be returned in full. Tax abatements could also be offered for agreeing to build homes on part of the land in relatively high density, but keeping the remainder in food production. This method of clustered development is possible now under planned districts, but no tax incentive is offered. Tax abatements strategies, however, are of limited use, one participant speculated, because the tax rate on agricultural land is so low already.

Transfer and purchase of development rights and other forms of direct compensation were discussed as well. It was important to the group that the compensation be adequate. Several Federal and State grant programs were discussed that might provide some of the necessary funding for compensation. Before any money was spent, however, it was agreed that critical areas needed to be identified and prioritized.

It is essential that part of this process would be public education and discussion. Moreover, assessing the availability of grant moneys and applicability to Boone County's situation would need to be done. Most importantly, there would have to be more widespread understanding and support for these plans, and that will require further public discussion beyond the Vision Project. The seminar on Ag Land Preservation held in Columbia on March 16, 2000, provided several strategies

to help guide planning and preservation of prime farmland. This and other seminars on community issues could be offered to raise awareness and support creative local responses to identified issues.

The third group discussed ways to improve the effectiveness of County government. The bulk of the discussion was about beginning a grassroots effort to draft a County Charter or Constitution, but the group stressed that efforts in the State General Assembly to grant counties the ability to charge impact fees and make special tax assessments for infrastructure improvements should not cease.

As for attempting to adopt a County Charter, the group felt that the failures of the past two attempts should serve as lessons but not deterrents. The elimination of many elected offices as well as the short time frame were specific problems found with the last effort. Eventually, the need for a more useful and representative form of government that dilutes the influence of Columbia will win out they felt.

The participants, both at the Summit Meeting and in their group reports recognized that their efforts were only the first steps in this process and that more public input and education would be necessary. To that end the Steering Committee, the P&Z Commissioners, and elected officials will all meet to review this document and the process behind it. Furthermore, the general public will have to be included. Volunteers will be solicited from among the study circle participants and Steering Committee to serve on a speakers bureau for the project. Public meetings will be held and the results presented to the City Councils and County Commission, potentially for adoption and implementation of those parts that require city or County government action.



Summary, Conclusions and Next Steps

Boone County, Missouri, residents enjoy a high quality of life in many ways. The County has abundant natural beauty, many communities with unique local character and history, and well-educated citizens with a sense of pride in and stewardship of their communities. The county seat, Columbia, is home to the University of Missouri and attendant educational and cultural resources. In addition to the university, other major components of a stable economy include health care, government, banking and insurance, tourism and service industries, manufacturing, and agriculture.

Due to the quality of life and the rich mix of resources available to citizens, Boone County is experiencing a strong rate of growth. A majority of the elected officials from throughout the County met to discuss the assets and priority issues of the County. These leaders acknowledged that the quality of life enjoyed by Boone County residents will not continue without paying attention to key issues, and made a commitment to take a proactive approach to improving communication and collaboration between city and County governments. The leaders agreed that all communities would benefit from a structured vision process that engages representative citizens as partners to address these three goals:

- Economic prosperity (job growth)
- Environmental stewardship
- Social well-being

Together, these three goals define sustainable communities – communities that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Boone County residents are united in the appreciation of their quality of life, and also their shared responsibility to work together to effectively address the critical issues that come along with growth. This became clear in how common themes developed across the County, and in how citizens with divergent viewpoints worked toward agreement, rather than toward winning an issue; consensus, rather than conquest.

It was powerful to see all the groups sharing a desire to see the natural beauty of Boone County preserved, but not at the expense of property owners. Likewise, it was very clear that Boone County participants wanted to see more and better cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries. Developing better infrastructure and distributing the costs were also common themes. These were the most apparent substantive lessons from the project.

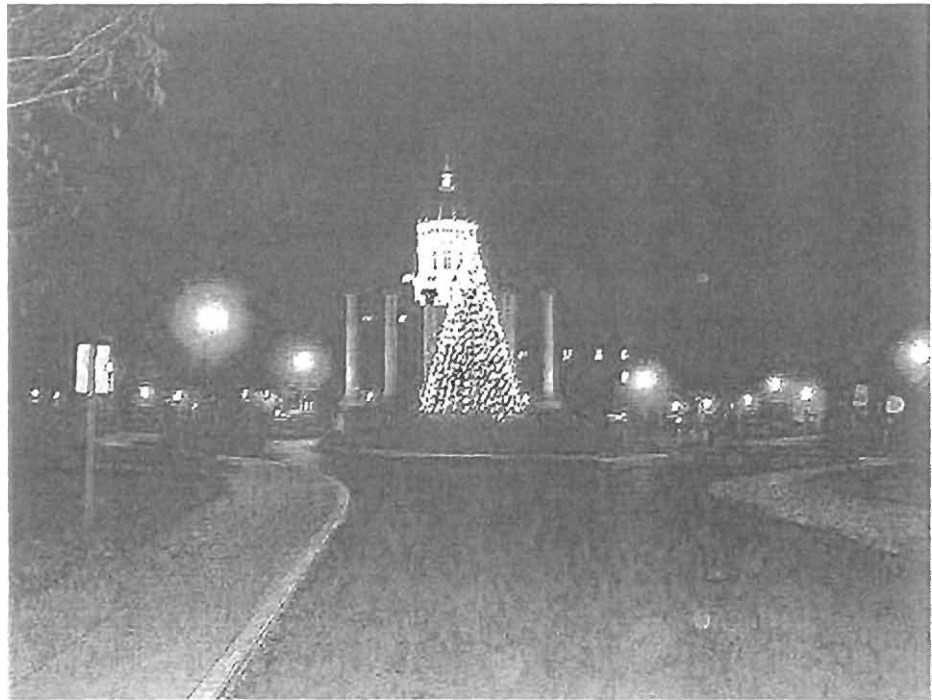
Readers of this report also should remember this about the results, that the categories into which the report is divided in each section were a product of the discussion, not a outline provided at the beginning. The similarities among the group reports indicates spontaneous, separate events where people from across the communities recognize the same patterns. The areas of broad agreement can fairly safely be said to be concerns across the County, if the participants are truly representative.

The fact that the issues were classified after the fact, also means categories overlap because they interrelate and complement each other. For instance, if Boone County was not a well-educated

community, there is a chance that the environmental quality and economy could both suffer. Likewise, any problems in communication and cooperation across jurisdictions are going to affect the level of services provided and the condition of the infrastructure. But these concepts were put in separate categories to make it easier for reader of this report to digest the information, not to create artificial boundaries. It is important to understand that both the status quo and efforts to change it involve a complex interaction of issues. More dialogue and less acrimonious debate would seem to be a good approach to understanding and approaching these linkages.

Beyond the issues raised, there was something else to be learned from the process. By holding these dialogues among the citizens of Boone County, they were able to get beyond debating positions; the participants were able to develop a more comprehensive view of the future of Boone County. An anecdote might provide the best example. One study circle participant from the Farm Bureau explained to Boone County District I (Southern) Commissioner Karen Miller that he learned during the process that he shared common values and interests in the future of Boone County with a participant from the Sierra Club. He wanted to go back to the Farm Bureau and encourage the groups to work together.

The Boone County Vision Project is based on building a functional partnership among citizens, public and private organizations, and local and county government. It will continue to be defined and carried out by citizens who carry out their responsibilities for civic participation; by businesses, public institutions, and private nonprofit agencies that are connected with



specific issues and can in turn help engage additional citizens; and by elected officials who trust the citizens who elect them, and work to develop and carry out effective policy.

Boone County will continue to grow – it's not a matter of if, but a matter of how and where the growth will occur. The participating citizens, organizations, and elected officials will continue to work together to build community and solve problems. This Vision Project is the beginning of a continuing partnership to ensure a good future for all residents of Boone County.

Appendix A: Methodology

Seventy-six Boone County residents were recruited to participate in six study circles to discuss the issues facing communities in the County. The study circles began meeting the week of June 12, 2000, and continued to meet during the summer, concluding in July and August. At least twelve participants were recruited for each group to obtain a range of ages, occupations, residence, and gender balance. Participants represent all areas of the County - towns, unincorporated areas, and farms, and were placed in the following six groups:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Columbia | 4. North |
| 2. Central Boone County | 5. South |
| 3. Larger cities
(Columbia, Ashland, Centralia, and Hallsville) | 6. County-wide |

A study circle is a group of ten to fifteen people who agree to come together for a sequence of facilitated meetings in order to discuss an issue of general concern. Study circles are democracy in action - citizens talking and listening to each other in order to develop a better understanding of public issues. Study circles provide an opportunity for extended dialogue about issues of common interest and concern, leading to better understanding and helping connect citizens with one another and with available resources.

The study circle model allows participants to establish consensus on values of community life, discuss concerns, learn how other communities have addressed similar issues, examine options, meet with public officials, and make recommendations for action. Community-wide study circle projects, like the Boone County Vision Project, bring representative citizens from throughout the County together to discuss common concerns. This process can help build better understanding of issues, improve connections between citizens, organizations, and government, as well as foster effective public/private partnerships for action to effectively address community issues.

The study circles in Boone County used the guide, "Smart Talk for Growing Communities: Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development," developed by the Congressional Exchange and available through the Study Circle Resource Center (Pomfret, Connecticut 06258, <http://www.studycircles.org/pages/scrc.html>). The guide called for five sessions of two hours each, and was used by trained facilitators as a guide for the dialogue process. Groups met at convenient locations throughout the County.

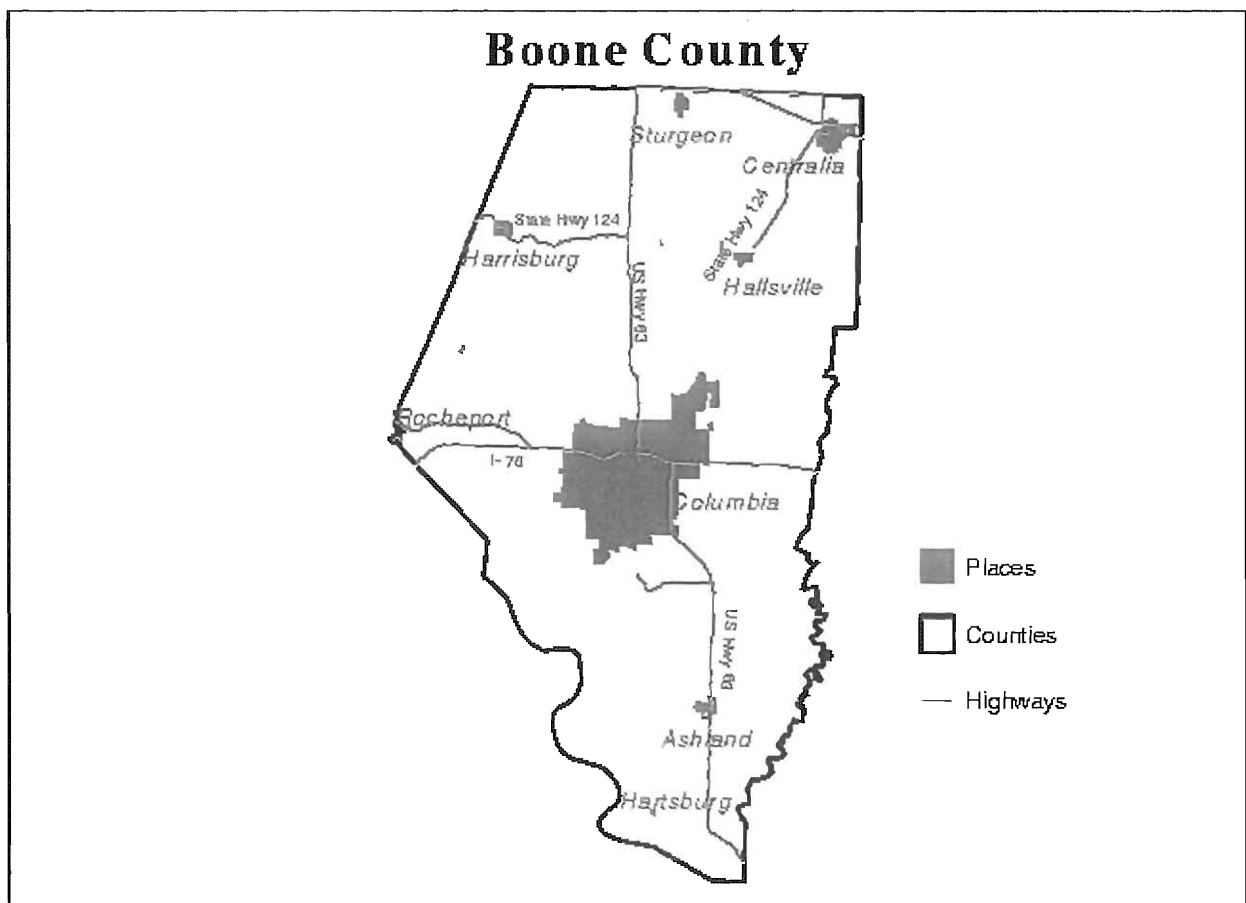
Each of the six groups scheduled five meetings within a ten-week period of time during June, July and August. (One meeting was later rescheduled outside of this period due to conflicts with the schedules of elected officials.) Meeting places varied for most groups, but the County Fire Protection district stations and administrative offices hosted many of the meetings, as well as the County Commission Chambers and satellite offices, and the City Halls in Ashland and Centralia and the Boone County Bank in Ashland. A list of the participants and facilitators is included in this report (Appendix B).

The facilitators worked with each group to keep discussion on track and produced meeting notes. The notes were sent out to participants following each meeting. The notes also allowed Kent Newman to follow the process from Iowa. Each group produced a final report that included,

community qualities to maintain, priority concerns, strategies to address concerns, and action steps. Representatives from each of the six groups came together for a Summit Conference in September. At this meeting they compared and merged results and produced a summary report that defined a common vision for the future of land use, growth management, comprehensive planning, and other issues important to the quality of life in Boone County.

The summary report was reviewed by the Steering Committee, city and County Planning and Zoning Commissioners, commission staff, and elected officials. The report was then publicized and presented for additional public review. This process was to help educate Boone County residents about land use, growth, and planning issues, examine alternative practices and policies, and create a shared interest in implementing the recommended practices and policies at the local and county levels. The citizen involvement is a supplement to the existing county Comprehensive Plan. It articulates specific goals and objectives, including the role of citizens, public and private organizations, and local/county government.

The following groups were defined: 1.) Residents of the City of Columbia; 2.) Residents of Central Boone County, including in Columbia, just outside of Columbia, Rocheport, Hallsville and the surrounding area; 3.) Residents of the largest cities in Boone County that included, Ashland, Centralia and Columbia; 4.) Residents of Northern Boone County including Centralia, Hallsville, Harrisburg, Sturgeon and the surrounding areas; 5.) Residents of Southern Boone County including Ashland, Hartsburg and the surrounding area; and 6.) an “at-large” or County-wide group.



Within the geographic area we tried to assemble study circles that were: gender balanced, had diversity of ages, place of residence, occupation and point of view. During phone interviews of the potential participants we asked them the following questions:

In terms of your age are you under 21, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 60?

Is your house in town, in a subdivision outside of incorporated limits, in a rural area, but not an active, on a farm?

What is your occupation and who is your employer?

What do you think are the top five issues (positive or negative) that are critical to Boone County's future?

In the rare cases when it was not obvious we would ask the interviewee his or her gender.

Appendix B: List of Study Circle Participants and Facilitators

Study Circle	Area	Gender	First Name	Last Name	Occupation
County-wide			Matt	Harline	Facilitator
County-wide	Columbia	F	Diane	Adams	Student
County-wide	Sturgeon	M	Richard	Beckfield	Fork Lift Technician
County-wide	Rocheport	F	Kisten	Heitkamp	Director of Info.-Project Life (MU)
County-wide	Centralia	F	Cindy	Hinspeter	General Mgr. Reinhardt Construction
County-wide	Columbia	M	Mike	Holden	Title Insurance Salesman and President of Company
County-wide	Rocheport	M	Eldon	Kreisel	Landscaper Farmer
County-wide	South Boone	F	Mary	Lottes	Recreation Therapist
County-wide	Rocheport/Harrisburg	M	Mike	Roell	Res. Biologist
County-wide	South/Central Boone	F	Stephanie	Smith	Self-Employed Consultant in Natural Resources
Countywide	Central Boone	F	Annette	Thornhill	Nurse
County-wide	Central Boone	M	Larry	Traxler	Excavating and Construction
County-wide	Columbia	M	Tom	Vernon	Retired
County-wide	SW Boone	M	John Sam	Williamson	Farmer and Developer
South			Vickie	Rightmyre	Facilitator
South	Hartsburg	M	Bill	Abrams	Budget Director State Court System
South	Hartsburg	M	Orion	Beckmeyer	Farmer
South	South Boone	F	Muriel	Crane	Retired
South	Ashland	M	Mitch	Holbrook	Superintendent
South	South Boone	F	Nancy	Jackson	Member Development Dir Girl Scouts
South	Ashland	M	Fred	Klippel	Handyman
South	South Boone	F	Phebe	Lauffer	Librarian, Secretary
South	SW Boone	M	Greg	Rennier	Consultant
South	South Boone	F	Shirley	Thomas	Executive Staff Assistant, Ellis Fischel
South	South Boone	M	Donnie	Wren	Retired MU Printer
North			Katleen	Anger	Facilitator
North	Hallsville	M	Tom	Baugh	Hallsville High School Principal
North	North Boone	M	Don	Bishop	Broker/manager Better Homes and Gardens-realtor
North	North Boone	M	Jim	Czarneski	Biologist
North	Centralia	F	Margaret	Doty	Library
North	Hallsville	M	Cecil	Douthitt	Minister
North	Sturgeon	M	Bill	Frazier	Asst. mgr Computer/Prod. Services Operations
North	Hallsville	F	Doris	Harlow	
North	Centralia	F	Lorry	Myers	Bank Manager
North	North Boone	M	Keith	Schnarre	Farmer Full-Time
North	North Boone	M	Andrew	Stanton	Farmer
Large Cities			Morgan	Mundell	Facilitator
Large Cities	Columbia	F	Leslye	Altemeier	Homemaker
Large Cities	Centralia	M	Tom	Ball	Mailman in Columbia, Previously Farmed
Large Cities	Columbia	M	David P.	Ballenger	Retired Pastor
Large Cities	Centralia	M	Donald	Bormann	Surveyor
Large Cities	Columbia	F	Nancy	Burnett	Supervisor--Computer User Service
Large Cities	Columbia	M	Don	Emery	Realtor
Large Cities	Columbia	F	Wilma	Grant	MU Buyer Assistant
Large Cities	Ashland	F	Monica	Harris	Operations Manager
Large Cities	Centralia	F	Ginny	Zoellers	Centralia Chamber of Commerce Director

Study Circle	Area	Gender	First Name	Last Name	Occupation
<i>Central</i>			<i>Andrea</i>	<i>Degenhart</i>	
Central	Columbia	M	Jeff	Barrow	Writer/Editor
Central	Rocheport	F	Karen	Brown	Boone Central Title Company, Manager
Central	Central Boone	M	Alan	Buchanan	Environmental Services biologist
Central	Columbia/Hallsville	F	Bonnie	Durk	Clerk and Office Manager
Central	Central Boone	M	Mark	Holsinger	Retired Superintendent, Shelter Gardens
Central	Central Boone	M	Nick	Peckham	Principal Architect
Central	Central Boone	M	Jay	Turner	Farmer
Central	Columbia	F	Lena	Warren	VA Hospital
<i>Columbia</i>			<i>Barbara</i>	<i>Ramsey</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>
Columbia	Columbia	F	Jane	Addison	Retired
Columbia	Columbia	M	Scott	Atkins	Developer
Columbia	Columbia	M	Preston	Bass	Coordinator of Safety & Security for CPS
Columbia	Columbia	F	Sue	Bruenderman	Aquatic Biologist
Columbia	Columbia	F	Doris	Chiles	Executive Director Columbia Housing Authority
Columbia	Columbia	M	Don	Laird	Columbia Chamber of Commerce Director
Columbia	Columbia	M	Tom	Moran	Research Specialist
Columbia	Columbia	F	Linda	Rootes	Utility Rate Analyst

Appendix C: Survey Results

Survey instrument

Kent Newman designed the questions for the survey with minor modifications by Dr. James Scott of IPP. The survey was mailed to study circle participants along with their packet for the first meeting. Of the 76 people invited to participate, and the 62 who did actively participate, 47 turned in surveys, or 75.8% of active participants. Only 45 were scored, as two were not coded. Only 20 post-test surveys were returned from study circle participants. Of these, only 18 completed both, so no analysis of individual choices could be done.

Results and discussion

All Respondents

Do you think land use, planning, and growth management in your community are generally going in the right direction?	43	Yes	
	21	No	
	19	Not Sure	
Do you think land use, planning and growth management in Boone County are generally going in the right direction?	20	Yes	
	27	No	
	34	Not Sure	
How well do you understand land use, planning, growth management, and other community issues in Boone County?	19	Very Well	
	48	Fairly Well	
	12	Not Well	
	4	Not Sure	
Boone County residents can have significant effects on land use, planning, growth management and other community issues.	32	Strongly Agree	
	37	Agree	
	10	Disagree	
	2	Strongly Disagree	
	1	Other	
	85.2%	69	Agree or Strongly Agree
	14.8%	12	Disagree or Strongly Disagree

The pre-test survey also was administered to the elected officials, P&Z officials and the Steering Committee members. At least one person who fit into multiple categories told us that she had completed multiple surveys. It is not possible to determine if there were others who completed multiple surveys. Of the 22 Steering Committee members, six returned surveys. Seven elected officials and ten P&Z officials also returned the survey.

Non-Study Circle Participants

Do you think land use, planning, and growth management in your community are generally going in the right direction?	22	Yes	
	10	No	
	5	Not Sure	
Do you think land use, planning and growth management in Boone County are generally going in the right direction?	10	Yes	
	15	No	
	11	Not Sure	
How well do you understand land use, planning, growth management, and other community issues in Boone County?	14	Very Well	
	16	Fairly Well	
	5	Not Well	
	2	Not Sure	
Boone County residents can have significant effects on land use, planning, growth management and other community issues.	15	Strongly Agree	
	15	Agree	
	5	Disagree	
	2	Strongly Disagree	
	0	Other	
	81.1%	30	Agree or Strongly Agree
	18.9%	7	Disagree or Strongly Disagree

In addition, the survey was sent to people who had indicated during the recruiting phase that they wanted to serve on a study circle, but could not be scheduled in a group. The same survey was available to the general public at the office of each City Clerk in the County and on the internet site: www.boonecountyvision.missouri.edu. Only four surveys were completed on line and ten from the general public. The survey was modified slightly to allow for the collection of demographic information, however, demographic information from the surveys of the general public was not analyzed, as there were too few responses to validate any trends.

Survey results indicate that, generally speaking, people feel more favorably about the direction of land use, planning, and growth management in their community than they do about the same issues in Boone County as a whole. Slightly over half indicated that things are headed in the right direction in their town, with the remaining half split between disapproval and “not sure.” Less than a quarter of respondents feel comfortable with planning decisions on the County level and the other $\frac{3}{4}$ are split between “not sure” and disapproval.

The vast majority of participants in the study circles felt that they understood planning issues “Fairly Well” (23 of 32). Respondents that were not in the study circles had a little more certainty about the process. Since the majority of the responses in non-participant groups were from elected official and P&Z officials, this is not surprising.

Participants were slightly more likely to believe in the efficacy of citizen participation, but all groups agreed or strongly agreed that Boone County residents can have significant effects on planning issues.

Study Circle Participants (Pre-Test)

Do you think land use, planning, and growth management in your community are generally going in the right direction?	20	Yes
	11	No
	13	Not Sure
Do you think land use, planning and growth management in Boone County are generally going in the right direction?	9	Yes
	12	No
	22	Not Sure
How well do you understand land use, planning, growth management, and other community issues in Boone County?	4	Very Well
	31	Fairly Well
	7	Not Well
	2	Not Sure
Boone County residents can have significant effects on land use, planning, growth management and other community issues.	17	Strongly Agree
	20	Agree
	5	Disagree
	0	Strongly Disagree
	1	Other
	88.1%	37 Agree or Strongly Agree
	11.9%	5 Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Study Circle Participants (Post-Test)

Do you think land use, planning, and growth management in your community are generally going in the right direction?	11	Yes
	6	No
	3	Not Sure
Do you think land use, planning and growth management in Boone County are generally going in the right direction?	6	Yes
	7	No
	7	Not Sure
How well do you understand land use, planning, growth management, and other community issues in Boone County?	4	Very Well
	12	Fairly Well
	2	Not Well
	1	Not Sure
Boone County residents can have significant effects on land use, planning, growth management and other community issues.	7	Strongly Agree
	13	Agree
	0	Disagree
	0	Strongly Disagree
	0	Other
	100.0%	20 Agree or Strongly Agree
	0.0%	0 Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Respondents also were asked to list what, in their opinion, were the three to five most important land use, planning, growth management and community issues facing Boone County. Containing urban sprawl, providing adequate infrastructure, especially roads, preserving green open space/agriculture, and cooperation were the most frequently mentioned categories. These results seem to support the findings of the study circle dialogue. If infrastructure, stormwater, sewers and roads are combined, fully 25 of the 81 number one concerns and 78 of all 310 concerns are infrastructure related.

Perhaps the most interesting change from pre-test to post-test is the emergence of improving communication and process as well as developing a charter for the County. Services for youth and proper planning also were mentioned with greater frequency. However, the low response rate on the post-test makes it impossible to draw any firm conclusions.

NUMBER ONE CONCERN	Pre-test All Respondents	Study Circle Pre-Test	Not on a Study Circle	Study Circle Post-Test
Urban Sprawl	10	3	7	2
Roads/Highways/Transportation	10	6	4	1
Appropriate Density and Uses of Land	5	2	3	0
Environmental Protection	5	2	3	2
Infrastructure	5	5	0	3
Stormwater	5	2	3	1
Sewer/Wastewater	5	4	1	1
Preservation of the Rural Character	4	3	1	0
Proper Planning	4	2	2	2
QOL	4	4	0	0
Ag Land Preservation	3	2	1	3
Annexation	3	1	2	0
Cooperation	3	1	2	0
Hospital	3	1	2	0
Protection of Property Rights	2	2	0	0
Water	2	2	0	0
Communication and Process	1	0	1	0
Economic Development	1	0	1	2
Green Space-Areas-Belts, Natural Areas	1	0	1	1
Growth	1	0	1	0
Housing	1	0	1	0
Other	1	0	1	2*
Aesthetics/Appearance	1	1	0	0
Airport	0	0	0	0
Crime	0	0	0	0
Fairgrounds	0	0	0	0
Parks	0	0	0	0
Rules and Regulations	0	0	0	0
Schools	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Total	81	44	37	20

* 1 for Charter, and one for Activities for Teens.

A TOP FIVE CONCERN	All Respondents	Study Circle Pre-Test	Not on a Study Circle	Study Circle Post-Test
Roads/Highways/Transportation	40	24	16	8
Green Space-Areas-Belts, Natural Areas	23	10	13	5
Urban Sprawl	21	8	13	6
Appropriate Density and Uses of Land	16	5	11	0
Proper Planning	16	8	8	6
Sewer/Wastewater	16	7	9	4
Environmental Protection	14	5	9	3
Cooperation	12	5	7	2
Infrastructure	12	8	4	6
Ag Land Preservation	11	8	3	4
Other	11	6	5	0
Stormwater	10	3	7	1
Protection of Property Rights	9	8	1	2
Communication and Process	8	4	4	6
Economic Development	8	2	6	3
Schools	8	6	2	2
Growth	7	5	2	1
Housing	7	3	4	2
Preservation of the Rural Character	7	6	1	1
Taxes	7	3	4	0
Aesthetics/Appearance	6	2	4	0
Hospital	6	2	4	0
Parks	6	4	2	0
Rules and Regulations	6	6	0	1
Annexation	5	2	3	0
Crime	4	3	1	0
QOL	4	4	0	4
Water	4	4	0	1
Airport	3	2	1	0
Fairgrounds	3	1	2	0
Activities for Teens	1	1	0	2
Charter	1	1	0	4
Total	310	166	144	74

