

MEMORANDUM

To: Stillwater Route 4 Corridor Study Advisory Committee

From: Michael Welti, AICP and Thomas Oldenburg

Date: February 1, 2006

Re: Notes from Public Workshop 1 – January 26, 2006

Job #: 90574.00

The first public workshop for the Stillwater Route 4 Corridor Study was held on Thursday, January 26th at 7:00 PM in the Stillwater Community Center. There were 40-50 people who attended this workshop (43 signed in). The agenda used to organize the meeting is attached.

Welcome

Town Supervisor Greg Connors welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Introductory Presentation

The background and purpose of the study, and existing conditions in the Corridor were the subject of an introductory presentation by Michael Welti, Project Manager for the Chazen Companies.

Facilitated Discussion – Issues Identification

Following the preliminary presentation, the public was asked to answer two questions about the Route 4 Corridor:

What are some of the positive attributes of the Route 4 Corridor?

What are the issues and concerns that you have regarding the Route 4 Corridor?

Mr. Welte facilitated this discussion, asking participants to help generate a list of responses to the first question, and then a list responding to the second.

Positives

Residents view the beauty and potential of the Hudson River and its diverse landscape and ecosystem as positive elements existing in the Corridor. Also, the National Historic Park and the natural wildlife associated with its conservation are viewed as a positive. The local history, including the replica Blockhouse and the rich history associated with the Native American culture and Revolutionary War is important to the Corridor. Residents also view the local agricultural industry and the area's small town feel as positive characteristics of the Village and Town of Stillwater.

Issues of Concern

Two main themes of concern were expressed. The first was traffic and parking issues in the Village and road conditions throughout the Corridor. Residents were concerned about pedestrian safety due to the lack of sidewalks and crosswalks in certain areas, narrow shoulders, poor sight distances at particular intersections, and speed. The impact of large trucks on safety and quality of life was also mentioned as an issue. Some were concerned about the adequacy of public parking in the Village. Poor road infrastructure and its effect on stormwater, flooding, and drainage issues along the Corridor were also expressed as concerns.

The second major theme of concern among residents centered on land ownership and the relationship between public/private lands throughout the Corridor. Providing more options for public access to the river, open space initiatives, and conservation/recreational easements were important concerns that were raised among residents. Also, the preservation of individual property rights remains important to residents along the Corridor.

Image Preference Exercise

Mr. Welte showed a series of images to the audience. These showed different forms / designs of village commercial, rural commercial, village residential, pedestrian space, signs, village development patterns, rural development patterns, and public buildings. For each, he asked participants by show of hands to rate the image as very positive, very negative, or somewhere in the middle. He followed up with questions about why people responded to the image as they did. Specific comments

for each image are shown below, following the summary of design preferences indicated by the exercise.

Summary of design preferences

Based on comments received from members of the public that participated in this exercise, one of the community's design goals is to provide for green space and landscaped areas throughout the Village commercial and residential areas. Many residents agreed that trees, sidewalks, and an active-streetscape are desirable design features for areas in and around the Village. The overall goal of the public was to balance an efficient flow of traffic with a safe and attractive pedestrian environment in the Village. In terms of residential images for the Village, respondents reacted positively to images of diverse dwelling types (with some separation between units), understatement of garages, and shallow setbacks that keep residential buildings near the street.

In areas outside the Village, residents liked design patterns which provided for more open space, less impervious surface, and larger setbacks from the road. Safer roadways and shoulders were also a concern for residents throughout the Corridor. Residents responded positively to designs that kept a rural appearance for residential and commercial uses outside of the Village.

Comments about individual images



**Village
Commercial**

Image #1: A majority found the image negative:

- too much pavement, no green space or landscaping
- not consistent with surrounding uses
- visible telephone wires are unpleasant



Image #2: A majority found the image positive:

- enjoyed the green space and planting strip
- landscaping is appealing
- clear definition of pedestrian and vehicular areas
- unobtrusive building



Image #3: A few negative reactions, but the majority were impartial to the image:

- façade is boring
- flat roof and building contains no articulation
- inappropriate structure for Village type setting



Image #4: A few negative reactions, but the majority were impartial to the image:

- setback and the greenery appealing
- found sign obtrusive



Image #5: A majority were impartial to the image:

- architecture is distinct and good use of diverse building materials of Walgreens.
- citizens did not enjoy all the impervious services relating to parking
- lack of green space and landscaping was negative



Image #6: A majority were impartial to the image. Positives were:

- brick pattern on sidewalk
- façade of the building
- trees and landscaping
- historic feel
- architecture
- building up close to street



Image #7: A majority found the image positive:

- trees, plants, and landscaping (awnings)
- wide sidewalks
- activity on the street



Image #8: A majority found the image positive:

- trees, plantings, and overall streetscape
- outdoor merchandise (potential for activity on the street)
- wide sidewalks



Image #9: A majority found the image positive:

- active streetscape
- trees, landscaping
- "wide" sidewalks



Image #10: A majority found the image positive:

- mixed-use
- historic architecture
- understated signage
- conducive to foot traffic



**Rural
Commercial**

Image #11: majority found image positive because:

- safe parking
- depicts a residence or dwelling
- design is in good taste



Image #12: A majority were impartial to the image:

- pedestrian friendly
- façade
- grass and greenery



**Village
Residential**

Image #13: majority found image mostly negative:

- “cookie cutter” appearance
- garage extends out too far



Image #14: A majority found the image positive:

- enjoyed variation of colors
- walkable community
- sense of separation



Image #15: A majority found the image positive:

- unique and clean
- trees and greenery



Image #16: A majority were impartial to the image:

- enjoyed setback
- garage design not appealing (garage is overstated in appearance)



Image #17: A majority found image positive:

- diversity of housing
- trees, sidewalk, and landscaping
- narrow road, conducive to traffic calming
- good setback



Image #18: A majority were impartial to the image:

- enjoy green separation between sidewalk and road
- trees and landscaping are nice
- houses are too close
- setback is too close to road



Image #19: a majority found image on the right more desirable:

- separation of green between road and sidewalk
- desire safe walkable areas

**Pedestrian
Space**



Image #20: A majority found the image negative:

- no streetscape or landscaping
- unsafe for pedestrians



Image #21: A majority found the image positive:

- streetscape, sidewalk, and landscaping



Image #22: A majority found the image positive:

- sidewalk, landscaping, plantings
- defined edge of buildings
- separation between street and sidewalk



Image #23: A majority found the image positive:

- well-defined parking in the lot and on-street
- sidewalk



Image #24: "Crosswalk Preference," majority found crosswalk on left more positive:

- more visible space
- appearance of traffic calming measures



Signs

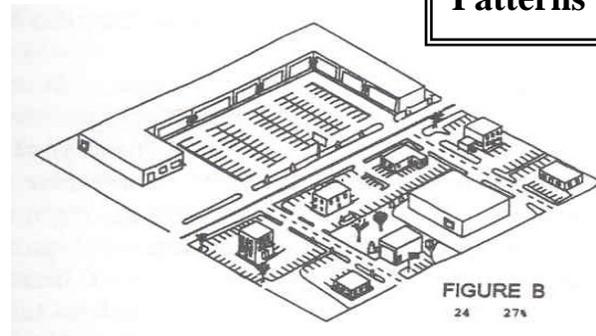
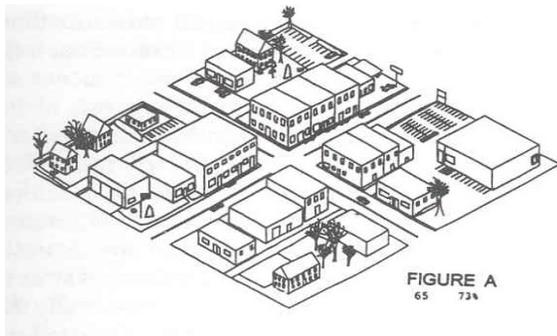
Image #25: "Signs," A majority found the image (sign) on the left more desirable:

- contains greenery and landscaping, more presentable



Image #26 "Signs," A majority found the image (sign) on the right more desirable:

- sign contains more character and is more unique
- sign is more understated than other choice
- dissatisfaction with neon signs (existing in Village) was expressed



**Village
Development
Patterns**

Illustrations from a visual preference survey conducted by the Livingston County (Michigan) Planning Department. From Randall Arendt's, *Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*, APA Planners Press, 1994.

Image #27: A majority found the drawing on the left more desirable:

- smaller, more clustered form of a development
- compartmentalized, variety of buildings
- parking does not dominate

**Rural
Development
Patterns**



Image #28: majority found image on the right more desirable:

- less crowded of a pattern
- enjoyed greenspace and setbacks
- more options presented with a more open space pattern
- less impervious surface with pattern on the right



**Public
Building**

Image #29: A majority found the Post Office (image) on the left more desirable:

- adequate signage
- appealing architecture

Planning Break-Out Groups

All comments and potential ideas from the break-out groups are illustrated on the aerial map that follows.