STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS REPORT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Goals and Objectives of Project

The New Packard Plan is a City-sponsored community planning process that invites neighborhood residents, businesses, and organizations in the Packard area to work together to create a vision and plan for the future. The Packard area has changed significantly since the previous plan was adopted in 2005. Changes include the addition of participating neighborhoods, a larger population, and the addition of several new businesses and institutions. The New Packard Plan is providing community members with a variety of opportunities to participate in the creation of a strategic plan that reflects the community's most important values and priorities. Opportunities include:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community-Wide Survey
- Packard Plan Committee
- Community Workshops

Specific objectives are:

- Develop strategies that address current neighborhood challenges.
- Improve neighborhood assets.
- Incorporate community benefits, such as strategies for housing, transportation, economic development, public safety, and historic preservation.
- Create a stronger community for the people who live, work, and play here: parents, children, commuters, homeowners, tenants, local businesses, and organizations.
- Provide a comprehensive neighborhood strategy focused on long-range improvements.
- Identify mechanisms and phasing recommendations to implement neighborhood and public improvements.

1.2 Purpose and Format of Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews are one of the tools by which the Packard planning team used to obtain input from members of the community about existing challenges and goals for the future. As a part of the community engagement task of the planning process, the City of Fort Wayne Planning & Policy staff interviewed 30 stakeholders between May 4, 2020, and May 22, 2020. The interviews were conducted one-on-one, either by telephone or video conference, with one hour allotted for each interview session. The structure of the interviews enabled individuals to be more candid and in-depth that they otherwise might be in open community forums. Stakeholders included business owners and representatives, property owners, neighborhood activists, local officials, educators, and non-profit organization leaders.

Interviewees were asked several questions regarding their relationship to the neighborhood, their perception of significant changes, and the quality of physical and social infrastructure. They were also asked what types of businesses and organizations are vital to them and what they would like to see occur in the way of future development and redevelopment strategies. In addition to these topics, interviewees were allowed to discuss issues of significance to them.

The full list of discussion questions and prompts are included in this document. The list of participants is also included. The following summary presents that range of responses coded by topic, without attributing any remarks to specific individuals.

It is essential to recognize that the issues or comments represented in this report may not necessarily describe the community at large. While the stakeholders represented a diverse spectrum of the neighborhoods, no sampling techniques were employed in selecting the stakeholders, and consequently, the results cannot be generalized as the sentiments of the community. It is also essential to recognize that the information presented in this report were the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders and not necessarily policy. Nonetheless, the valuable insight shared during these interviews much inform the planning process.

1.3 Stakeholder Analysis Methodology

Each interview was carefully coded, which allowed the themes that emerge to be determined by analyzing interview notes. All interview notes were reviewed in digital format, and issue or theme statements were copied directly from notes into a spreadsheet. Each statement was assigned one or more codes that categorized the statement. A record of all the coded statements grouped by theme is provided later in the document. The sections below first list key themes that emerged in the analysis and then went into more detail for each question.

2 Stakeholder Comments

2.1 Key Themes

During the stakeholder interviews, several themes were identified. Those mentioned by many stakeholders are summarized below for quick reference. The following sections provide the varying individual perspectives on these topics as well as additional issues that were raised.

- Many of the neighborhoods boast historic homes and beautiful architecture that are important to retain the unique character of the area and secure home values.
- Growing diversity and a sense of culture are essential factors in the vitality of the neighborhood.
- A generational shift is occurring with new residents bringing in younger families.
- While the neighborhood density promotes walkability, the mobility of most residents would be improved once sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic calming efforts are considered.
- Several new businesses have opened in the area providing more options for dining and shopping that are within walking and biking distance. These investments have also encouraged additional private investments in owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood.
- Southern neighborhoods have begun restricting covenants, not allowing properties to be converted to rentals, although rental units remain important to the majority of the stakeholders.

2.2 Tenure

Ensuring a wide variety of stakeholders who represented the neighborhoods in their various capacities, tenure was an essential element to understand. The average stakeholder was in the area for 17 years, and the largest block was 11 to 20 years, which indicates many of them moved into the neighborhood near the time the last plan was created.

2	1 to 5 Years
8	6 to 10 Years
10	11 to 20 Years
3	21 to 40 Years
4	41+ Years

2.3 Neighborhood Selection

Stakeholders were asked why they selected the Packard area to locate when they were in search of a place to live. Generally, there was a connection between the neighborhood's historic buildings and homes, proximity to parks, and downtown and an overarching theme of diversity and culture. Many stakeholders shared that they had received recommendations from friends, family, and colleagues, which helped sell them on the value of the area. Many others moved to the area because of existing relationships with neighborhood assets such as a church or organization they had already been involved in.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on why they chose to locate in the neighborhood are below:

- Foster Park was the "hook" that made us commit to the neighborhood
- The diversity of Southside High School
- Proximity to Saint John the Baptist
- Fairfield manor is a beautiful historic building

- We're close to downtown
- Good friends and neighborhood residents sold me on the benefits of the neighborhood
- Historic homes
- Character and strength of the community
- The vast diversity in the neighborhood
- Our house was close to Redeemer Lutheran

2.4 Unique Neighborhoods

In a city with over 500 neighborhood associations and active quadrants, each with several dozen active organizations, we wanted to understand what makes the Packard area unique. Stakeholders were each asked to provide one thing that made their neighborhood stand out when compared to others across the city. The historic assets mentioned in their neighborhood selection became a common theme, including a concentration of specific architectural types, historic boulevards, and homes and neighborhood history. Other emerging items were the experience of a real community feel, where people look after one another, and neighborhood residents are working together to improve the quality of life for all.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on what they believe makes their neighborhoods and the Packard area unique are below:

- Rudisill offers a front-row view of culture for the entire area
- It's a neighborhood where you still see many company trucks
- The largest concentration of Joel Roberts Ninde homes in the city
- Tree canopy, historic homes, beautiful architecture
- We have a significant number of artists
- There is a real community feel
- It's in an interesting location
- The layout of the boulevards and neighborhood streets
- Character in all the homes, but with a newer and modern feel
- Foster Park, Lutheran Park, Kettler Park, and Packard Park within walking distance
- Beautiful neighborhood churches and historic buildings

2.5 Three Words

One of the hardest questions to answer is what three words describe your neighborhood. This question often remains hard for stakeholders as narrowing down your thoughts, emotions, and feelings of either frustration or admiration is hard to simplify in three words, but as you can see, it provides valuable insight into what remains the core values. The overall theme was historic, followed by diversity, community, and friendliness.

A total of 32 words were used; the percentages below show the amount each of the terms was used:

34% Historic
22% Diverse
16% Pride/Ownership
13% Neighborly/Friendly
9% Community
9% Connected

Other words used include:

- Integrated
- Emerging
- Growing
- Unique
- Hip
- Interactive
- Engaged
- Creative
- Active
- Distinctive
- Inviting
- Humble
- Deserving
- Beautiful
- Hard-Working
- Caring
- Loyal
- Vibrant
- Charming

2.6 Neighborhood Changes

Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on changes they have experienced in the neighborhood since they located in the area. They were encouraged to provide both a positive difference and something that they felt concerned them, although a majority of stakeholders had more positives than negatives to share. Overall, the most prominent common theme is that there has been a change in the demographics of the neighborhood, with younger and more diverse families moving into the area, which is experienced in the existing conditions analysis provided in the report. Other topics included the addition of several new businesses in the last decade, and an increase in property values, mostly stemming from the rising economy since the prior economic recession and affordable housing prices, which have allowed individuals to invest in their property. The most significant concerns come in the form of crime, or the perception of crime. Stakeholders shared that increased crime is primarily due to the deteriorating of neighborhood homes that are often owned by absentee landlords.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on what they feel has changed below:

- Younger and more diverse families are moving into the neighborhood
- Increased perception of neighborhood involvement
- Property values have increased
- There are some crime, some deterioration and lack of upkeep on homes, but it's not everywhere
- Pride has risen in the neighborhood
- There have been a lot of physical improvements especially along Fairfield and Rudisill streets
- Changes in the area were due to the economic recession which caused many negatives in long-term homeownership, but on the positive side, some new younger families were able to move in and afford homes for the first time
- The '07 is now a cool place, ten years ago people were concerned that we had moved "south," but that perception has changed
- New business additions in the last decade, including Trubble Brewing, Modern Mill, Clyde Theater, Wunderkammer, Bravas, Antanuccio's Italian Market and the '07 Pub
- Some of the long-term residents are aging out of the neighborhoods
- There seems to be much hope for the future of the neighborhoods

2.7 Neighborhood Transportation

Each stakeholder was asked to comment on a variety of infrastructure topics to understand the access to community wellness, including walkability and bikeability. We also wanted to understand the condition of alleys and streets and how that shapes their perception of mobility. The overall feeling about sidewalks and walkways as they are in okay shape but could use some improvements. A serious concern by many was the lack of connectivity for passive and active bike riding to and from downtown, and while alleys are being improved, many remain in rough shape. Reliable neighborhood infrastructure is essential to increasing the health and wellbeing of neighborhood residents. Further research on potential improvements is needed.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on the existing neighborhood infrastructure are below:

- Sidewalks are in okay shape
- Walkability is good, but some of the sidewalk sections need to be looked at
- Highly accessible, there is immediate access to the trails and parks which is positive
- There are no great connections into downtown for people riding bikes, and that hurts the neighborhood
- We need bike lanes connecting the northern neighborhoods to Rudisill
- It's minimally bikeable, the streets are busy, and cars are parked everywhere making it dangerous
- You can only really ride to Foster Park; we need more connections to downtown
- Alleys are in rough shape and need to be repaired
- We need more traffic calming
- Most landlords don't want to pay for sidewalk improvements, the landlords are trying to find a way to help, but many are cash strapped
- People speed down the street making it feel unsafe
- More people are using the streets rather than the sidewalks because some of them are in terrible shape
- When alleys are improved (like the one behind my house), it makes people want to keep their yards in better shape, and it can go a long way in improving the housing stock

We also asked stakeholders what specific infrastructure improvements would they like to see the plan focus on and what projects we should consider?

- The corridors don't feel like they're a part of the neighborhoods because traffic goes so fast
- The walk between Creighton and the Ballpark is unsafe; there is broken glass, burned out lights, failing pieces of concrete under the railroad overpass
- Improve the walkability to neighborhood schools like Fairfield, Harrison Hill, and South Wayne
- We need to reimagine Creighton as a beautiful street like it once was
- Traffic calming on Rudisill
- Curbs need to be looked at; many are spotty in areas
- More decorative lights along Fairfield, especially in no-mans land
- Find opportunities for people to cross Rudisill at intersections without a traffic light safely. It would allow people to connect to their neighbors and bridge the divide between north and south Rudisill
- The narrow streets lead to sideswiping, easy to get in and out of neighborhoods but dangerous for kids
- Add lighting to the trails at Foster Park with emergency stations to improve safety
- Saving and restoring the tree canopy can improve the walkability of the neighborhood

2.8 Neighborhood Housing

Stakeholders were asked their opinions on the housing concerns and needs in the neighborhoods across the Packard area. (INSERT FINDINGS FROM PACKARD HOUSING STUDY). The most significant theme was the lack of opportunity for residents to age in their neighborhood. Housing options for families remain abundant, but as individuals age, there is a concern that the houses or properties are too large. A second theme was the need to diversify the styles of homes available while ensuring historic character is maintained.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on what they feel are housing needs in the neighborhood is below:

- There isn't enough senior housing in the area
- Housing options for the elderly who want to age in place
- Private spaces for artists who want to live and practice in the neighborhood

- It's mostly single-family homes; we need more duplexes to be available
- Diversity of homes helps keep the neighborhoods affordable
- A healthy mixture of renters and homeowners is important
- Historic preservation should be the first option when it comes to improvement or development of a property
- Some of the new infill houses lack character, and that will hurt the neighborhood over the long-term
- Smaller homes on smaller lots will provide a variety of housing options
- It would be nice to see more mixed-use housing options north of Creighton
- Single-family homeownership is becoming a bigger problem in keeping the neighborhoods affordable

We also encouraged stakeholders to identify important characteristics of resident types (homeowner and tenant) to create a more equitable residential environment.

Homeowners:

- Have pride in your homeownership
- Be respectful neighbors and take care of your property
- Become members of the neighborhood association
- Provide a helping hand for those homeowners that may struggle
- Success is not noticing if the house is owned and occupied or rented and owned by a landlord, all homes should have pride

Tenants:

- People are not anti-renter; people are concerned with the domino-effect of having many renters in a concentrated area
- Neighborhood associations and tenants should work together; they can be an important way to bond them to the community
- Renters don't have enough skin in the game to participate in the neighborhood
- When people argue against renters, they're arguing against bad landlords

2.9 Neighborhood Businesses

Economic success for neighborhood businesses requires a significant amount of support from residents and partners in the community. Stakeholders were asked what businesses they interact with the most and what types they would like to see more. Restaurants continued to show enormous support, but the new Antanuccio's Italian Market made a surprising third place after being open less than a year at the time of the Stakeholder interviews. While there was some support for Kroger, there was an overall request to incorporate a neighborhood grocery that carried fresh and organic foods.

A total of 63 businesses were mentioned by name; the percentages below show the amount of recognition each of the businesses received:

13% Bravas
13% Friendly Fox
11% Antanuccio's Italian Market
8% The '07 Pub
8% The Clyde (Club Room & Quimby Village included)
5% CVS/Walgreens
5% Health Hut
5% Kroger
5% Wunderkammer
3% Georges
3% Halls

Stakeholders were asked what businesses they would like to see the most, ones that they feel would increase the quality of life for their neighborhood, and those are listed below:

- Neighborhood grocery
- Expanded medical services at the new Clinic
- Park and community space in multiple neighborhoods
- Fresh produce availability
- Bakery and Coffee Shop
- Opportunities for artists

2.10 Redevelopment Priorities

Stakeholders were asked to imagine a map of the Packard area and point out one or two specific places they would like to see redeveloped. The most considerable focus of stakeholders was to improve the corridors connecting the neighborhoods to downtown. Respondents felt this area provided much promise for investment, including new business, mixed-use development, and additional housing along with streetscape enhancements. A secondary priority is to enhance access to green space and the Saint Mary's River.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on where they believe redevelopment efforts should be deployed are listed below:

- Fairfield and Harrison between the neighborhoods and downtown, the viaduct is a hard barrier, and this area is our gateway and first impression. The area has never been realized for its full potential
- Calhoun near the Rialto Theater
- The north campus of Taylor University (The Summit)
- The Broad River neighborhood
- The viaduct is a hard barrier; we need to improve the area around it
- The blocks around Wunderkammer
- Kettler Park and South gateway
- Northern edges of PAPA are critical
- A place to access the St. Mary's River near Quimby Village

2.11 Neighborhood Assets

Neighborhood institutions that have long served the community for generations remain important staples for stakeholders. With prior efforts to increase the number of artists in the city, Wunderkammer and supporting cultural assets have seen significant growth. Additionally, the neighborhood churches, most notably St. John the Baptist, Redeemer Lutheran, and Pine Hills City Church, were all recognized as significant assets in which the community can use to build.

Some of the specific comments from stakeholders on what they believe are essential neighborhood assets are listed below:

- The neighborhood churches
- The little library at the corner of South Wayne and Packard, its kept in good shape and well-stocked by the neighborhood
- The Summit should be a healthy and vibrant place for non-profits and organizations
- Wunderkammer and other cultural organizations
- Boys and Girls Club
- Neighborhood and social relationships
- Fort Wayne Trails

2.12 Neighborhood Associations

Stakeholder summary on neighborhood associations

- If there wasn't strong leadership in place, the neighborhood could be taking a much different direction
- The association is really important; they're standing on the shoulders of giants, people who invested their own time and money and energy in saving the neighborhood decades ago
- Neighborhood associations are critical for keeping neighborhood residents active and involved with what is going on in surrounding areas and around the city
- Neighborhood associations should help residents realize the importance that they play on a resident's wellbeing, and even more critical for the residents who don't have the financial means by giving them a voice

- The neighborhood association is everything. The things get done in the neighborhood have only been possible because of people being active
- Neighborhoods are always doing much positive work in the area, loaning out tools and helping put up streetlights and trees and providing dirt day and garbage cleanup day

2.13 Packard Area Planning Alliance

Stakeholder summary on the Packard Area Planning Alliance

- It's a cohesive voice for the area, and they are good at coordinating priorities for the different neighborhood groups to have better representation with the City
- PAPA could work to support the more vulnerable neighborhoods
- Bring people together and encourage quality of life, engage, empower and inform
- More beneficial than the average resident realizes. PAPA has a significant voice with the City, and it gives neighborhoods another platform to partner with City departments and improves our community
- When neighborhoods work together, there is a level in which to approach valuable things
- PAPA should be the convener of ideas and provide leadership to struggling neighborhoods

3 Next Steps

3.1 What's Next

Findings in this report will be shared with committee members and decision-makers in the Packard community. The New Packard Plan will be informed by the candid responses and insights shared by the stakeholders during these interviews, as well as by the feedback provided during public meetings, neighborhood walks, steering committee meetings, and an online survey. As potential recommendations are developed, stakeholders may be consulted again to solicit reactions and feedback.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 Stakeholder Coordination

The Packard planning team created the Stakeholder list in March and April 2020 by asking each planning committee member to list at least five individuals whom they felt best represented their neighborhood and the greater Packard area. The final list was compiled, and communication with potential stakeholders began the week of April 20, 2020, between the City of Fort Wayne Planning & Policy team and neighborhood stakeholders. The following e-mail is what was sent to each stakeholder:

Good Morning (name) –

My name is (name), a neighborhood planner with the City of Fort Wayne in the Community Development division. Our department has been asked by the Packard Area Planning Alliance to create a new neighborhood plan. The new plan will build on the current efforts of the City and strengthen the connectivity of the neighborhoods, and ensure future development in the area is in alignment with the goals and values of the community. Topics of the plan will include Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Historic Preservation, and Transportation. We are reaching out to you because you have been identified as a stakeholder by members of the Packard Planning Committee. We believe that your knowledge of the Packard Area and your role of significance in the neighborhood are beneficial in assisting the Plan writing efforts.

We are scheduling one-on-one stakeholder interviews, and due to the current COVID concerns, meetings will be held either on the phone or video conferencing software when available. Please take a moment and select a date and time that works best for your schedule so we can arrange an interview (link).

We expect this to be a conversation with a few essential questions to help us learn more about the area. Items could include “how walk or bike-friendly is your neighborhood,” “what areas of investment would you like to see in the future,” and “why is your area unique.”

Please let us know if you have any questions we look forward to connecting with you.

4.2 Stakeholder Interview Guidance and Questions

Guidance to the Interviewer:

Introduce yourself to the stakeholder and share that the interview is to support the New Packard Plan. Share that all residents, business owners, and community members will be allowed to participate in the creation of the plan through future community engagement efforts. The resulting plan will then be used to help guide city and neighborhood leaders in making the right decision that aligns with the community's beliefs and values. Explain that you have one hour with them to ask some very open-ended questions about their concerns, perceptions, and hopes for the neighborhood and that they are free to ask questions or provide additional feedback as they wish.

Stakeholder Interview Questions:

1. What neighborhood are you a part of?
2. How long have you lived in your home/neighborhood?
3. Do you rent or own your home?
4. How many people live in your home?
5. When you moved to the neighborhood, what factors contributed to your decision to locate there?
6. Since moving to the neighborhood, what, if anything, has changed, and how?
7. How walkable/bikeable would you say your neighborhood is?
8. What types of housing would you support in the neighborhood?
9. What would you consider successful in the form of a homeowner, landlord, and tenant?
10. What neighborhood businesses are essential to you?
11. What types of neighborhood businesses are missing that you would support if they located in the area?
12. Where would you like to see redevelopment efforts in the area?
13. What assets and organizations in your neighborhood are valuable to you?
14. What value do you place on your neighborhood association?
15. What do you consider the role of the Packard Area Planning Alliance?
16. If you could only pick three words to describe your neighborhood and the Packard area, what would they be?
17. Is there one other person in your neighborhood that you think we should reach out to?

4.3 Stakeholder List

The Packard planning team created the list of stakeholders, and additional names were added by suggestion after each interview.

- Fr. Andrew Budzinski – St. John the Baptist Church
- Andrew Hoffman – Neighborlink
- Joe Jordan – Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fort Wayne
- Jonathan Morales – Allstate Insurance
- Nathaniel Pullmann – Redeemer Classical School
- Steve Shine – Shine & Hardin LLP
- Marcus Spillson – The ’07 Pub
- Brenda West – South Wayne Elementary School
- Ned Edington – Historic Fairmont Neighborhood Association President
- Charlie Fritz – Williams Woodland Neighborhood Association President
- Dawn Parnin – Creighton Home Neighborhood Association President
- Jim Sack – West Rudisill Neighborhood Association President
- Tom Tiernon – Historic Oakdale Neighborhood Association President
- Sierah Barnhart
- Jane Casey
- Sara Castillo
- Amy Cooper McComas
- Steve Corona
- Melissa Dessaigne
- Katie Jo Dilling
- Brian Greiner
- Angie Harrison
- Luke Holliger
- Melissa Kurten

- Susan Mol
- Chris Nusbaum
- Matthew Plett
- Steven Putt
- Cornelia Schulz
- Josh Spencer
- Connie Haas Zuber