MEMO

To:	Dave Efland, Director of Planning & Community Development	November 7, 2018
From:	Sarah Kelly and Emily Long, planning NEXT	
Re:	Round 1 of Public Engagement, Delaware Together, Comprehensive Plan	
cc:	Delaware Together Steering Committee	

This memorandum summarizes the first round of public engagement for the City of Delaware including:

- a Citizen's Academy workshop (5/24)
- input gathered at a Delaware Together Steering Committee meeting (7/16)
- a staffed First Friday booth with an interactive activity (9/7)
- a staffed Delaware County Fair booth with an interactive activity (9/15)
- five Focus on the Future workshops held on four evenings (9/13, 9/25, 9/26, 9/27)
- online public input (9/13 – 10/21)
- a self-directed YMCA booth (approx. 10/12 – 10/23)
- a self-directed Mingo Park booth (approx. 10/12 – 10/23)

The memo includes the following:

1. Purpose
2. Approach
   a. Greatest Opportunities
   b. Mapping Exercise
3. Who participated

1. Purpose

The City of Delaware launched a comprehensive planning process in early 2018 called Delaware Together. One of the key inputs to the process is insight from the community. Through the first round of public engagement, multiple opportunities were designed to provide the platform for anyone who cares about the future of Delaware to help shape the plan's recommendations. The engagement lays the groundwork for development of the plan's goals, objectives and recommendations. While distinct comments are useful, seeing where comments share themes or are similar is where the community can come together around core ideas, ideals, and ultimately actionable results. The measure of input can be made in terms of shared comments and ideas together with unique thoughts and challenges.

> *"Loved hearing what others shared and having a dialogue about the possibilities/opportunities"*

2. Approach

Delaware Together's first round of public engagement included face-to-face opportunities to provide input through the City's Citizen's Academy, the Delaware Together Steering Committee and five public workshops held at multiple locations in the City. Opportunities for online engagement through a web-based survey and mapping tool were also designed and broadly promoted. Interactive displays were used to gather input at First Friday and the Delaware County Fair (staffed booths) as well as at the YMCA and Mingo Park (self-directed). Most of the engagement opportunities included two components: Greatest Opportunities input and a Mapping Exercise. In part 1, Greatest Opportunities, participants were asked to answer the question, ***"What are the greatest opportunities for the Delaware community?"*** Through part 2, the mapping activity, participants were asked to identify strong and weak places in the city associated with specific geographic locations, and to explain why they were strong or weak.

This section summarizes input collected. It draws from a database of every comment recorded (in participants' own words) and is organized around themes and sub-topics.

Greatest Opportunities

The following section includes the most prevalent themes and sub-topics shared in response to the question, "What are the greatest opportunities for the Delaware Community?" It includes overarching themes followed by prevalent sub-topics and specific objectives.

1. **Infrastructure, Walkability and Connectivity** *(145 comments)*
    a. Transportation
        i. Create better connection to surrounding cities
        ii. Expand public transportation
    b. Traffic/congestion
        i. Reroute large trucks to reduce congestion
    c. Parking
        i. Provide better opportunities for convenient parking, especially downtown
    d. Bike infrastructure/paths
        i. Connect and expand current paths
2. **Identity, Character and Community** *(98)*
    a. Art
        i. Improve art scene through public art, forming an arts council, calendar, district, etc.
    b. Historic Value
        i. Maintain and preserve historic buildings/districts
        ii. Promote Delaware's history

      c. Aesthetics
- i. Improve landscaping, welcome signs, gateways to city

      d. Sense of community
- i. Conduct outreach such as providing a welcome packet for new residents
- ii. Promote multiculturalism
- iii. Improve East-West and North-South Social Connections

3. **Growth, Revitalization and Targeted Areas** *(89)*

      a. River development
- i. Create a river walk
- ii. Improve access
- iii. Promote development

      b. Revitalization
- i. Improve the South Sandusky corridor (e.g. street redevelopment)
- ii. Improve The Point (e.g. alleviate traffic congestion)
- iii. Improve the East side area

4. **Economics, Employment and Tourism** *(89)*

      a. Economic development
- i. Develop the industrial and tech sectors
- ii. Expand technology to attract business (create corridors, consider fiber network)

      b. Expansion of businesses
- i. Support small and family-owned businesses and restaurants

5. **Sustainability, Environment and Parks and Recreation** *(74)*

      a. Parks and green spaces
- i. Expand current parks
- ii. Add and improve bike trails
- iii. Create greenways

      b. Environmental sustainability
- i. Plant more trees
- ii. Make recycling available monthly for paint, batteries, etc.

6. **Downtown** *(66)*

      a. Parking
- i. Address lack of parking

      b. Continuation of positive momentum
- i. Consider new grocery store and/or other places for residents to shop for necessities

7. **Housing** *(49)*
    a. Housing options
        i. Promote more housing options
        ii. Build more affordable housing
    b. Historic character
        i. Preserve historic homes
8. **University and Education** *(45)*
    a. Ohio Wesleyan
        i. Strengthen partnership to leverage workforce, community dialogue, and continuous education opportunities
    b. School system
        i. Maintain and improve Delaware and Olentangy school systems
9. **Health & Safety** *(26)*
    a. Wellness
        i. Enhance food access (especially, Second Ward)
    b. Safety
        i. Address concerns about crime and drugs (especially Second Ward)
10. **Accessibility and Proximity** *(19)*
    a. Connections
        i. Improve connection to Columbus and Central Ohio suburbs
11. **Social Services** *(18)*
    a. Enhance coordination and communication of services
    b. Support the homeless population and those with drug addiction
12. **Communication and Management** *(8)*
    a. Local news
        i. Increase opportunities for sharing local news and information
13. **Other** *(66)*
    a. "Smart" related topics *(8)*
        i. Be a smart and sustainable city (smart growth in fast growing region)
    b. Vacancy *(7)*
        i. Address vacant lots and buildings
    c. Diversification *(7)*
        i. Encourage socioeconomic diversity
    d. Workforce Development (7)
        i. Sustain and engage the workforce
    e. Wi-Fi *(4)*
        i. Enhance access to public and free Wi-Fi

Mapping Exercise

Below is the summary of the mapping exercise performed and its 471 comments at the Focus on the Future workshops and online survey. Identified and described are some of the top strong and weak places in Delaware, followed by some of the most prevalent comments made about each about why the place was identified. Additional places are identified in the attached map.

1. **Strong**

    a. Downtown *(46)*
        i. People want to visit this vibrant location for its restaurants, shops, walkability, art, culture, and history
        ii. Evokes a sense of community, identity, and belonging
        iii. Includes negative comments in relation to parking
    b. Ohio Wesleyan *(25)*
        i. Beauty and character of the university
        ii. Opportunities that the university brings such as culture, diversity, students, and continuous partnerships with an educational center
    c. Mingo Park *(23)*
        i. Green space, trails, activities, and access to Olentangy River amenities
    d. YMCA *(14)*
        i. Strong community spaces with great amenities such as a splash pad, bike trails
        ii. Facilitates health, community, and a family atmosphere.
    e. Stratford Ecological Center *(11)*
        i. Sustainable, unique location with great greenspace and many educational opportunities, especially for children

2. **Weak**
    a. Corridors *(82)*
        i. Lake Street *(21)*
            • Blight, poverty, vacant buildings, drug use, and visually unappealing
            • Opportunity for redevelopment
        ii. South Sandusky Street (*12*)
            • Run down
        iii. Central Avenue *(8)*
            • Traffic and congestion
    b. The Point *(37)*
        i. Traffic and congestion
        ii. Blight, lack of security, noise pollution, and the need for maintenance
    c. Delaware Square Shopping Center *(15)*
        i. Run down, an eyesore, and not well maintained
        ii. Vacancies
        iii. Inaccessibility to the shopping center without a car

d. East Side *(12)*
        i. Run down
        ii. Empty, vacant buildings and homes
        iii. Lack of connections to the rest of the City
    e. Industrial *(9)*
        i. Liberty and London industrial area is rundown and in need of redevelopment

3. Who Participated

Participants who attended the public workshops filled out an exit questionnaire about their experience and themselves. Of those who participated, 67% completed the exit questionnaire. Additionally, those who engaged online answered a few key questions. The following insight is based on responses:

Key Takeaways

- 1,312 unique comments were collected
- Email and word of mouth were the most popular ways people heard about the Focus on the Future Workshops.
- 100% of participants said they felt comfortable working within the small groups, and 100% felt that their input was heard.
- 99% of participants said they will stay involved with the planning process for Delaware Together.
- Participants closely matched the demographics represented in the City of Delaware with respect to race, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- All four wards were well-represented
- There was age diversity among participants, with over-representation within the age cohorts of 15-24 and over 55.
- Those with a higher education and higher annual household income were overrepresented relative to the City's population.
- Participants varied with respect to amount of time they have lived in the City and included long-time residents as well as those who have recently moved.