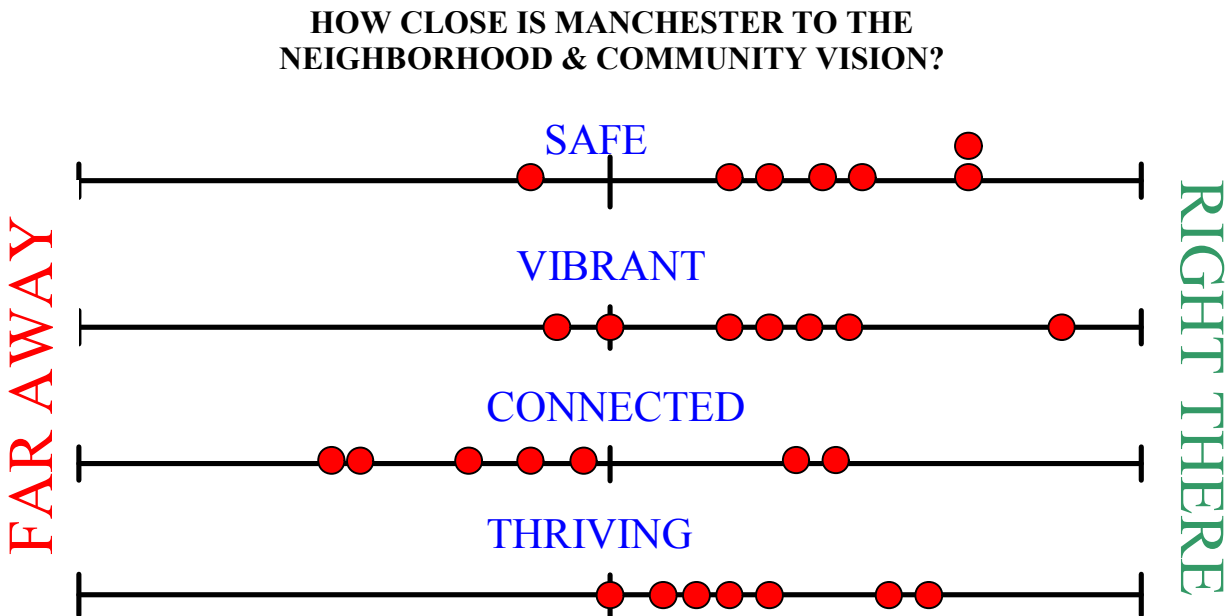


**CHILDREN YOUTH & FAMILIES MASTER PLAN
COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 3, 2009**

Members Present: Barbara King, Geoff King, Leslie Frey, David Carlson, Mike Stebe, Rachel Tower, Mark Pellegrini, Gary Anderson

The meeting began with a review and discussion of A Profile of Manchester Youth: A Report on Their Developmental Assets.

The meeting then moved to a discussion of how close the committee members present felt Manchester was to achieving the neighborhood and community vision of being a vibrant, safe community built and connected by thriving neighborhoods. Committee members first were asked to identify on a simple bar graph whether they thought Manchester was far away from or had achieved the vision for various factors that were discussed by the committee. That graph is presented below.



Committee members then discussed the reasons for where they placed their dot on the chart. The following is a summary of that conversation: what was positive or negative regarding each of the characteristics discussed, and a list of suggestions for what might move Manchester toward the committee's vision.

Safety

Positive aspects:

- Members said they felt safe personally.
- There was not “big” crime in Manchester.
- Manchester was a nice community overall.
- There is a good police presence in the community.
- In many neighborhood people are seen out and about walking, socializing, etc.

Negative aspects:

- In some neighborhoods residents move in and out of the community frequently.
- Sidewalks are not always in good condition and do not encourage walking, and there are some dark spots on some streets at night.
- There are pockets of “bad” spots, where kids are hanging around or what appears to be drug or gang related behavior is exhibited.
- Some kids in the neighborhood are disrespectful (foul language, walking in the streets, etc.).

Some suggestions to make improvements:

- Create “guardian angel” type organizations in each neighborhood made-up of neighborhood residents.
- Provide more and greater variety of activities for young people and adults. (Some observed there are a lot of athletic programs available but not other programs such as dancing, music, etc.)
- Encourage block parties.
- Create a welcoming committee to greet newcomers into the neighborhood.
- Encourage neighborhood fun or pride activities such as holiday decorating contests.
- Expand community policing to provide more officers in the neighborhood for a longer period of time so they can do more community-oriented policing and less reacting to conditions.
- Look into a “neighbors in need” program – a way to let neighbors know which of their neighbors may need help or assistance for special projects like cleaning up, shoveling snow, etc.

Vibrant

Positive aspects:

- The Manchester Road Race.
- Rebuilding Together (Christmas in April).
- Cheney Hall.
- Manchester Fire Museum.
- The Shoppes of Buckland Hills Mall and downtown Manchester.
- Recreation activities, swimming pools, outdoor activities such as hiking and biking trails.
- Good access to cultural and other entertainment venues in other vibrant places in other communities.
- Lots of churches and church related activities.
- Manchester High School performing arts programs.
- Manchester Band Shell.
- Pride in Manchester week.

Negative Aspects:

- We are missing some connections, both physically in terms of sidewalks and in terms of market opportunities for certain type of businesses or entertainment venues.
- There is no club scene or nighttime entertainment scene in Manchester.
- Perhaps there are not enough young people with disposable income or not enough physical connections between places.
- There is a lack of identifiable public gathering spaces throughout the community and in particular in each neighborhood – places for informal or spontaneous socializing.
- There is not enough public artwork in the community.

Connected

Positive aspects:

- There are numerous opportunities for parental involvement in the schools, coaching through athletic leagues, activities through the Manchester High School that students participate in, and many Town boards and commissions.
- There is a lot of political engagement in the community.

Negative aspects:

- Most opportunities for parental involvement are focused on activities their children are involved in.
- It seems the same people are involved in public affairs or school activities, and they are a small proportion compared to the number of parents and students in the schools.
- Racial and ethnic groups do not co-mingle.
- It is easy to get to other Towns where there are similar communities, people, or activities of interest not available in Manchester.

Some suggestions for improvements:

- A community or circulator transit system to get people to places conveniently and cheaply.
- Develop promotional campaigns to encourage residents to go to downtown businesses and to patronize those restaurants and shops as way to make Manchester's downtown more of the recognized public gathering place.
- Look into making more than one "cool" place, such as the downtown, the Buckland Hills area, and a redeveloped Parkade area.

Thriving

Positive aspects:

- Manchester has a positive trend in terms of its growth in terms of its housing stock, population, and businesses.
- We are a diverse community in all of its aspects including race, ethnicity, income, age, and employment.

Negative aspects:

- The senior population is not included in "thriving" and may be isolated or insulated from the community at large.
- Some people do not appreciate what Manchester has to offer or take it for granted or do not use the assets that are available.
- If growth is an indicator of a thriving community, how can Manchester continue to grow as it runs out of land.
- The Town needs to reposition itself in terms of the types of businesses and job growth it can attract.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Carve out a unique identity, emphasizing Manchester's historic roots, but also looking forward to a newer image.
- Capitalize on the many special events that occur in Manchester as a way to promote the Town to the region at large.

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