



POGGEMEYER  
DESIGN GROUP

Village of

# new bremen

German Township

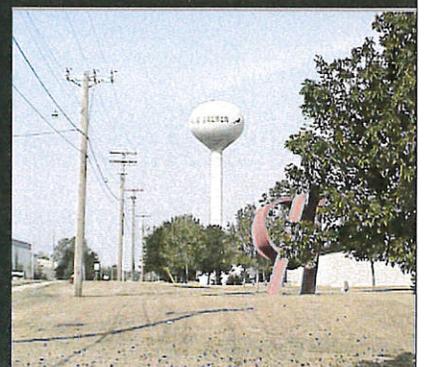
Final Report of Focus Group Sessions

**Prepared by**

Poggemeyer Design Group  
with the assistance of New Bremen  
Community Improvement Corporation

**Date**

November 2002



# **New Bremen / German Township**

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## Introduction

Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc. (PDG) assisted the Village of New Bremen, German Township, the New Bremen Local Schools, and the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) with conducting focus groups to identify issues of community concern. A committee of the CIC worked with PDG to develop an issues list and to schedule and facilitate the focus groups. Several meetings were held with the committee to identify assets and liabilities of the community and to identify issues of concern to use as an outline in the focus group sessions.

Members of this committee included the following individuals:

- Mr. Dave Albers, German Township
- Mr. Dave Kelch, New Bremen CIC President
- Ms. Diane Gast, New Bremen Village Clerk/Treasurer
- Mr. Greg Myers, Southwest Auglaize County Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Larry Smith, New Bremen Schools Superintendent
- Mr. Mark Barhorst, New Bremen School Board (Survey Committee member)
- Mr. Bob Kuck, New Bremen, German Township Fire Department Chief
- Mr. Bob Klein, New Bremen Village Mayor
- Mr. Terry Dick, New Bremen Emergency Squad
- Mr. Todd Rhoades, New Bremen CIC
- Mr. Bob Kramer, Boy Scout Troop 95
- Mr. Frank Borchers, New Bremen Schools High School Principal
- Mr. Larry Durkee, New Bremen Village Administrator
- Mr. Ron Willett, New Bremen CIC (Survey Committee member)
- Mr. Urban Buschur, New Bremen CIC
- Mr. Chuck Gambel, St. Paul United Church of Christ
- Ms. Karen Smith, New Bremen School Elementary Principal
- Rev. Dean Greenwood, Faith Alliance Church

Basic *demographic data* from the 2000 Census and *projections* from Claritas, Inc. were presented by PDG to provide a general understanding of population, income, and housing trends in the community. Noteworthy information included:

- The County, Village, and Township have experienced a steady increase in population and households since 1980, and that is projected to continue, although possibly at a lesser rate.
- Between 1980 and 1990, population increased twice as much as households in German Twp., whereas the opposite was true in the County as a whole.
- The Claritas projection for new housing indicates a slightly lower rate of near future construction than in the prior decade.
- The ratio of owner-occupied housing to renter-occupied housing is slightly higher in German Township than in the Village or County.
- Both the Township and the Village have a higher median household income, and a higher rate of change, than the County as a whole.

- Most residents of all three entities are high school graduates or higher.
- A majority of the housing in all three entities was built before 1959. The 1970's saw more housing construction than the 1960's and the 1980's, especially in the Township and the County as a whole.

Issues discussed with the committee, and then later with the focus groups, were divided into five categories:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Quality of Life
- Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services, and
- Commercial and Economic Development.

During the sessions, no ideas were considered wrong, and all were recorded. In addition to input at the sessions, several invitees who could not attend, and one who did, provided written comments to the CIC. These comments have been included in the summary, where applicable.

A total of *three focus group sessions were held*. The two resident focus groups were held on Thursday, July 25, 2002 and Saturday, August 10, 2002. Over fifty residents attended the two sessions, providing valuable insight into their thoughts and concerns. A combined focus group session was held with merchants and industry representatives on Thursday, August 22, 2002. This session provided a slightly different view of the community and also provided very valuable information.

The assets and liabilities identified by the committee were discussed, reviewed, and amended during the initial portion of each focus group session. The resulting list of assets and liabilities is as follows:

**Assets** [*Italicized items* were those items that were prioritized by the focus groups.]

***Land Use***

- Unique community
- Small town image
- Good population base
- German heritage/influence
- *Strong, clean farms*
- Preservation without radicalism
- New housing is available

***Transportation***

- *State Route 66 is a "Scenic Byway"*
- *Canal path walkway, scenic path*
- The Canal (our heritage)
- *I-75 access (close enough but far enough away)*
- *Good Township/Village roads and bridges and good maintenance efforts*

- Auglaize County's willingness to invest in roads and bridges
- ADA accessibility (*sidewalks/curb cut-outs*)
- *The railroad*

### **Quality of Life**

- *Community pride*
  - The people
  - Caring attitude
  - If/when there is a need, the community is supportive
  - Strong desire to live here
  - Non-partisan politics
  - Safe environment (can leave kids unattended with confidence)
  - Friendly atmosphere
  - Sanity and civility prevail
  - Personalities match
  - The cleanliness of the community
  - *Strong heritage and values*
  - *Maintenance and preservation of buildings*
- *Superlative schools (good students and good test scores)*
  - Good parent support for the schools
  - Community support for schools
  - Staff of teachers who are dedicated and concerned
- *Community philanthropy*
- *Great parks, recreational, and historic facilities and events*
  - Historic buildings are kept up
  - *State of the art Auditorium at the School*
  - Arts and cultural series run by volunteers
  - Many well-kept Village parks
  - *YMCA facility and services, including the day care center*
  - Bremenfest, Inc. festival is great PR tool
  - *Bicycle Museum (over 22,000 visitors last year)*
  - Historic tour (by the Rotary Club)
  - *Recreational facilities, State parks nearby, golf courses, etc.*
  - Great swimming pool facility
  - The historic museum
- *Many supportive civic groups*
  - An active historic association
  - Rotary Club
  - *Variety of churches*
  - Churches work to promote "our town"
  - The Community Foundation and the Community Educational Foundation
  - The Sheltered Workshop
  - The Early Childhood Intervention Center

- One stop shop for social/health services through the County (began through JTDMH)
  - *Good senior center*
  - Good County Council on Aging
  - *Joint Township Hospital close by (owned by four townships) with specialists*

***Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services***

- *Community cooperation*
- Willingness to work together (Schools, Village, Township)
- *Good police, fire, EMS departments*
- Good roadways
  - Street cleaning provided regularly
  - Repaving and upkeep of streets and alleys done routinely
- Self-regulating maintenance
  - Good peer pressure
- Impact of the affluence of community on County government
- *Community is ADA accessible*
- *The library*
- *High-speed internet access*
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts recycling program
- Additional space for the cemetery is available adjacent to it
- *Good infrastructure*
- *Low utility rates*
- Competitive cable rates (top notch service is affordable)

***Commercial and Economic Development***

- Strong work ethic
- *Progressive industries and businesses*
- People stay in New Bremen
- Job opportunities are available
- *Quality jobs are available*
- Job (work) supporters of the community
- *Corporate benefactors*
- *Progressive CIC and Chamber of Commerce*
- *Industrial park land available near a railroad*
- Good retail mix
  - *Amsterdam Center*
  - Two grocery stores available
  - Crown Store
  - Unique types of businesses

## **Liabilities**

### ***Land Use***

- *Limited choices in new housing*
- Limited land available for residential development within the Village
- Insufficient convenient park space
- *Out-dated zoning code*
- The issue of annexation
- Limited rental property (senior housing, commercial, condos, & industrial)

### ***Transportation***

- *Lack of a traffic signal at SR 66 and Amsterdam Center and SR 66 & Second Street*
- *Inappropriate speed limits and signs on SR 274 and SR 66*
- *Lack of transportation for seniors*
- Lack of pedestrian crosswalk lights throughout town (Note that SR 274 will have pedestrian signals installed in 2004.)

### ***Quality of Life***

- Lack of Welcome Wagon-type services/communication
- Unwillingness to look at other options (since, "We've always done it this way.")
  
- Recreation issues
  - The poor condition of the tennis courts
  - Inadequate funding for recreation
  - Inadequate capacity of the elementary school playground
  - Lack of a walking tour guide
  
- Social Service Issues
  - *Insufficient student social activities*
  - *Doctors refuse to join a network (all are independent)*
  - Lack of adult day care services
  - Lack of latchkey services for children over age 10
  
- Education Issues
  - Lack of advanced placement classes
  
- Communication Issues
  - Inadequate communication of senior programs
  - *Lack of a Village/Township newsletter*
  - *Poor newspaper coverage*

### ***Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services***

- *Water availability*
- *Staffing of volunteer EMS*
- *Inadequate municipal government facilities*
- Inadequate current cemetery space

### ***Commercial and Economic Development***

- Little affordable retail space available
- Insufficient existing available retail and industrial space, especially for start-ups
- Lack of existing developed land for industry
- Lack of industrial diversity (strong emphasis on machining and tooling)
- Limited retail mix
- Lack of cooperative promotion among retailers
- Ability of small retail to continue to survive
- *Lack of mid-range restaurants*
- *Inadequate new business attraction activities*
- Significant first floor space not dedicated to retail in the downtown
- Railroad crossing issue in the industrial park
- The state of the economy has caused job losses

## Where we want to be in the next 10-15 years

The primary issue discussed at the focus group sessions was "Where do we want to be in the next 10 to 15 years?" Areas of general discussion included the same five categories of land use; transportation; public facilities, utilities, and services; quality of life; and commercial and economic development. Suggestions, which were derived from an analysis of the assets and liabilities, were presented to focus group participants to facilitate discussion. The results of those focus group sessions regarding where the community wants to be in the near future are as follows:

### **Land Use**

- The community should engage in *proactive long-term planning*, which would involve the Village of New Bremen, German Township, Auglaize County, the New Bremen Local Schools, and the CIC. A Comprehensive Future Development Plan should be prepared. Within that Plan, the following issues should be addressed:
  - Identification of *areas for future development* of residential (single and multi-family—possibly on the north side of town), commercial, and light industrial land uses.
  - Land for *expansion of the industrial park* and the cemetery.
  - Land for additional *single-family homes, condos, and senior living*.
  - This planning process should be designed to eliminate past negative feelings regarding the need for long-term planning.
- The CIC should serve as the *umbrella organization for planning activities*, as it is representative of all parties: the Village, the Township, the Schools, businesses, and industries. In the past, the CIC has not taken an active role in activities other than strictly economic development. However, as is evidenced by the results of these focus group sessions, a wide variety of community issues and actions directly impact economic development, and vice versa. Thus, the CIC is viewed as a neutral entity that could aggressively pursue planning and other community development activities, in addition to economic development.
  - The CIC should *establish committees* and recruit volunteers to serve on them to accomplish the goals identified in this process, especially those that are not the responsibility of existing agencies, groups, or the local governments.
- The *youth of the community should be involved* in the planning process, not only to provide their input on what the youth need, but also to facilitate their gaining an insight into community affairs, government, business, etc. The goal would be to begin identifying and training the future leaders of the community.
  - The Chamber of Commerce should consider a *leadership program* or other classes for youth and young adults to help educate and train them to be future leaders of the community.

- The CIC should work with the *government class* at the high school to involve them in the planning process.
- The community should *enhance Scouting* and other similar programs by providing good facilities, as well as adult leadership to serve as role models for the youth of the community.
- The *quality of life* that is existing in the community should be maintained and enhanced. Efforts should be taken during the planning process to assure that nothing detrimental to this quality of life is allowed to occur in the future.
- The community needs to *promote the good things* about living here to existing residents and businesses, as well as to potential residents and businesses.
  - The community should work toward establishing and enhancing the types of assets in the community that would create solid reasons for younger families to live in and return to the community, such as a better park system, activities for all age groups, incentives to locate in the community, and jobs for entry-level, college-educated individuals.
- Areas with or close to existing utilities should be identified for construction of additional housing, as a first step in encouraging *new housing construction*, including areas for single-family, condos, and senior housing. This may require annexation of township land, thus cooperation with the township is critical.
  - *Housing developers should be recruited*, especially for a senior housing facility. Use of the State programs for senior housing should be used more effectively. Attracting developers may require that incentives are offered to entice developers to target the New Bremen area for construction activities.
  - The community should encourage assisted living facilities for the elderly, as well as for persons with mental health, mental retardation, or developmental disabilities. Facilities should be designed for handicapped accessibility. Advertising the availability of these units is critical.
  - *Willing sellers of parcels of property* adjacent to the Village should be identified by the CIC, and general discussions should be held with them to identify their interests in future land use activity, timing, costs, etc. so that this information is readily available when developers are contacted.
  - The CIC should *conduct a survey* to identify the number of residents who may be interested in new housing, including single-family homes, condos, or assisted -living units. A marketing research firm specializing in this type of research could be retained to conduct this study. Having the market information available when attempting to attract developers is extremely helpful.
  - It is critical that *good quality housing* is promoted and built by contractors.

- *Farmland preservation* should be included in the planning efforts in the community, especially for areas of prime farmland in the township. Although levies to raise funds for farmland preservation have not yet been successful in Ohio, the community should explore alternative methods to entice farmers to preserve prime farmland in key areas.
- **A Master Plan for the downtown and the canal** should be prepared to preserve and enhance these historic areas of the community. This Plan should include the following elements:
  - A Downtown Plan, which would include the canal area, should identify needed *physical improvements* to the downtown, (sidewalks, street trees, green space, alley paving, parking lots, etc.) as well as management, marketing, and promotional strategies. Programs to provide technical and financial assistance to small businesses and start-ups should be developed. In addition, design standards should be adopted to assure preservation of the existing historic and architectural integrity of the existing buildings and to guide construction of any new buildings in the downtown.
    - As part of the downtown planning process, *existing retail space* should be evaluated to determine if the highest possible uses currently exist on the street levels of the buildings in the downtown, or if changes are needed to increase the level of retail activity in the downtown, specifically on the first floors.
    - The Village should consider requesting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Tier 1 *Planning Grant* to assist with the costs of preparing this downtown plan.
    - The Village should also consider requesting a CDBG-Downtown Revitalization *Tier 2 grant* at some point in the future, if major renovation activities, both public and private, are planned.
    - *Membership in Downtown Ohio, Inc. (DOI)* should be pursued by the Village and/or the Chamber of Commerce. DOI provides technical assistance to downtowns based on the four-point National Main Street approach. DOI is also actively involved in the CDBG Downtown grant program administered by the Ohio Department of Development.
  - The canal portion of the downtown plan should concentrate on *preservation, stabilization, and further enhancement of the canal*, with possible restoration of Lock One.
    - *Improving and developing the tourism aspect of the canal from New Bremen to Minster* should be investigated.
    - *Stabilization of the banks* of the canal should be pursued, while special efforts are taken to preserve the natural habitat and vegetation along the canal.

- *Tourism should be investigated* as a means to bring more visitors and consumer dollars into the community. The State of Ohio's Tourism program should be tapped for assistance, and the State's emphasis on eco-tourism should be explored for ideas and coordination.
- *A walking tour of downtown*, and surrounding historic residential areas, should be established and promoted. Possibly this could complement and expand upon the historic tour currently sponsored by the Rotary during the Bremenfest.
- *Additional activities* should be planned in the downtown, such as an Art Fair.
- *A Corridor Plan should be prepared for SR 66*, both north and south of town. This plan should address key issues such as aesthetics, signage, number of access points, parallel access roads, streetscaping, decorative street lighting, sharing of entrances and parking lots. etc. [Refer to SR 66 Corridor under the Transportation section.]
- This Corridor Plan should be undertaken in cooperation *with the Village of Minster* and the adjacent townships.
- In order to insure that the planning effort is worthwhile, and that the plan is implemented, the Village and Township *development codes should be reviewed and updated*. Having the appropriate zoning, subdivision, and building codes in place to properly execute the goals and objectives of the Plan is imperative to develop in a planned manner. In addition, the Village may want to consider establishing design standards for the downtown, the SR 66 Corridor, and/or the industrial park to insure appropriate design, maintain quality of construction, and protect both public and private investments in the areas.
  - The community needs to assure an appropriate *balance* between local regulations and quality of development, in order to maintain the quality of life that is so cherished by residents.
  - The Village and Township should determine who the appropriate *enforcers* of standards and regulations are, assure that those individuals have adequate training, and mandate that codes are enforced equitably and consistently.
  - There should be some *consistencies in the regulations* between the Village and Township so that developments are similar in terms of quality.
  - Developers should be encouraged to construct a few *speculative houses* within the community. Potential incentives may be required to entice developers to do this.
- Another layer of this planning process that should be considered presents an opportunity for *enhanced cooperation among the Villages* of New Bremen, Minster and New Knoxville, as well as the townships in the area. Many of the recommendations resulting from this focus group effort involve cooperation between or among these entities. Specific issues of concern (e.g. the SR 66 Corridor Plan), present the opportunity for New Bremen and German Township to approach Minster and Jackson Township for a cooperative planning effort.

- The CIC, on behalf of the Village and Township, should suggest and institute *opportunities for obtaining regular feedback* from community groups. Suggestions include:
  - A designated “*public input*” period during all council and township meetings.
  - An *interactive web site*, where questions could be posted for the local government response.
  - *Annual focus groups*.
  - A question and answer section in the proposed *community newsletter*.
- The New Bremen Local School District should continue and enhance its *five-year planning and implementation process*. Continued efforts should be made to incorporate new technology advances with the education program, to assure that the students are on the cutting edge of technology and that they are acquiring the most marketable skills that they can.
  - Continued and enhanced *cooperation with Wright State University* should be pursued, especially in regards to distance learning facilities and programs.

### ***Transportation***

- The CIC should spearhead an effort to *prepare a Corridor Plan for SR 66* (both north and south of town). This should be started ASAP. Issues that should be considered include:
  - The Corridor Plan should be a *joint effort* among New Bremen, Minster, and the adjacent townships. Efforts have already been initiated to start this process, and the sooner the Plan is developed, the better.
  - The Corridor Plan should consider the *long-term impacts* of continued growth and development along the corridor and increased traffic through the communities on SR 66.
  - Analysis should be conducted of whether or not SR 66 should become a *4-lane road in the future or whether an alternate route*, which could consist of a series of connecting township or county roads, should be identified for a future arterial around the community. The sooner an alternate route can be identified, the sooner proper controls can be put in place to control development along that corridor.
  - Or, consideration should be given to designating a *future truck route* around the Village to redirect heavier, non-local traffic outside the downtown(s). This could include truck traffic utilizing SR 274 in New Bremen.
  - The potential for a *parallel access road*, with local businesses having direct access to the parallel access road as opposed to SR 66, should be considered.

- Landscaping, signage, lighting, and setback *requirements should be developed.*
- *Limited access points* along SR 66 should be mandated, and those access points should be signalized intersections.
- The types of *land uses* desired along the SR 66 corridor should be identified and the appropriate zoning revisions made to assure that those land uses are permitted, and others are not.
- *Speed limits* should be addressed, especially on SR 66, SR 274 by the high school, and along the limited access portions of all state highways.
- *Coordination with ODOT* through this entire process is a must.
- As mentioned in the above section, the *Canal should be restored* to serve as a tourist attraction.
- *Public transportation for seniors* needs to be improved. The existing program through the Area Office on Aging should be better advertised to reach the appropriate audience. This may be one issue that can be linked to the Village's web site.
- The intersection of SR 274 and SR 364 should be studied for potential *traffic control improvements*, as should SR 364 at Lock 2. Numerous accidents occur in both of these areas.
- Sidewalks should be continually upgraded and additional handicapped accessibility provided. New sidewalks should be provided in areas where they currently do not exist.
- *Additional parking should be provided downtown.* Once the Village completes the paving of the lot on the south side of Monroe Street, additional analysis should be undertaken to determine if and where additional parking is required. Some options include:
  - *Shared parking* with property owners who use their parking only at certain times of the day or week should be pursued. For example, use of Crown parking lots during non-business hours (which occurs now) should be further pursued with other entities in the area.
  - Alternatives such as a *shuttle* from a parking lot further out of the downtown should also be investigated, especially for special events or during the lunch hours.

### **Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services**

- *Greater communication* should occur between New Bremen and Minster regarding EMS, fire, and water services. The recent construction of a waterline between the two communities has opened the doors for further cooperative efforts that will save both communities money.
- *Regular joint meetings* should be held between the two communities to discuss potential cooperative efforts on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- A state-of-the-art *joint Minster/New Bremen EMS and fire facility* and organization should be pursued. The current demise of volunteerism and the high costs of operating similar facilities in neighboring communities are solid reasons for joining forces to best serve the communities, regardless of the personalities and politics involved. This should be a major focus in the very near future.
- The Village should provide and assure an adequate *future water supply* for the community. Retaining the services of an engineering firm to study the options that are available to the Village to resolve this issue is planned to occur soon.
- A joint state-of-the-art water system with Minster should be investigated as one option.
- Potential financing alternatives should be pursued. It should be noted however, that since the Village has such extremely low water, sewer, and electric rates, most State and Federal financing programs would likely require an increase in rates in order to qualify for low-interest loans or grants.
- As part of any future improvements, a revenue stream should be incorporated to provide for future improvements and expansions. Regular rate increases should be considered to accommodate the necessary costs to keep the water system current, without necessitating huge increases at one time.
- The Village and Township should continue to improve safety issues within the community. For example, lighting throughout the community should be reviewed to see if and where improvements could be made to provide greater safety for residents.

### **Quality of Life**

New Bremen and German Township are currently places where people and businesses want to come to live or to conduct business. It is imperative that steps be taken to assure that the community remains this type of place. The assets mentioned above need to be preserved and enhanced and the liabilities need to be addressed in a positive manner.

- The community should try to *determine why college graduates return or do not return* to the community after graduation. Surveys could be designed and conducted at class reunions, and results could be compared over time to determine trends. Solutions should then be identified and implemented to change any negatives into positives, in an attempt to attract more college graduates back to the community after graduation.

- Typically, this area has low unemployment, therefore is it difficult to attract people here for jobs. *Additional employers must be enticed* to locate in the community to fill this gap.
- The *lack of diversity* in the types of existing companies (mostly machining and tooling) provide little opportunity for job changes in the area, and few opportunities to attract college-educated graduates.
- The community must work with the School District to *maintain the quality of the New Bremen School system* (all grades), as this is a major attraction factor for the area. Continual improvements and the ability to offer cutting-edge technology are key to maintaining this community asset.
  - Efforts should be made to encourage *post high school educational opportunities*, including distance learning capabilities.
  - The Community Foundation and the Education Foundation should be continued and enhanced. Both provide immense support for the community, the schools and the youth.
  - The local scholarship program should be expanded to benefit even more students than it currently does.
  - *A co-op technical program should be created* for post-high school students.
  - Most of the kids who graduate from high school go on to college (90%). Emphasis needs to be placed on *enticing them to return home* after college.
  - The community needs to *encourage apprenticeships* with local industries, which could result in those companies hiring students after graduation.
  - The Chamber and the CIC should encourage local businesses to give preference to local students in their hiring processes.
  - The *Career Days* sponsored by Rotary at the High School should be continued and enhanced.
  - Wright State University in the Celina/St. Marys area offers several post-college (advanced) degree opportunities. These should be expanded and enhanced. Wright State University currently offers:
    - A Masters Degree in Business Administration
    - A Masters Degree in Special Education
    - A Bachelors of Science Degree in Organizational Leadership

- The community should *enhance its efforts as a Tree City USA*, as it marks its seventh year as a member.
  - Trees should be planted continually throughout the community.
  - The removal of existing trees should be limited and/or curtailed, except when absolutely necessary. Each removed tree should be replaced with two new trees.
  - The community should consider the planting of “memorial” trees, which individuals can purchase and dedicate to loved ones. The species of the trees should be identified on a plaque for educational purposes.
- *Elder care facilities and services should be enhanced significantly* in the future, as the number of senior citizens is continually increasing. Life style transitions experienced by senior citizens should be accommodated in these facilities and services.
  - Establishment of an *adult day care and handicapped day care facility* should be pursued. The CIC could serve as the entity to attempt to recruit a developer or service provider to establish this type of facility.
  - *Dining services for seniors* should be considered, possibly as an addition to existing senior services and facilities or as a new service to the community.
  - A *Call Button program* should be established in apartments and homes occupied by seniors.
  - *New housing* that is affordable for both rental and ownership should be pursued. The CIC should consider recruiting a developer to construct senior housing facilities. All phases of housing for the elderly need to be considered, including retirement housing and assisted living, as well as nursing homes. Affordability is the key.
  - *Transportation* to and from senior living facilities to other activities in the community, including churches, beauty salons, shopping, entertainment facilities, and doctors offices, etc. must be enhanced and/or additional services provided. The Council on Aging currently provides an on-call transportation service that could possibly be enhanced or better advertised.
  - A full range of services for seniors should be provided.
  - *Better communication* of existing senior activities should be encouraged. Possibly advertising through the proposed newsletter and the Village web site would help distribute information on these programs.
  - State and federal programs regarding seniors programs and housing should be used more effectively in the future.

- The CIC should spearhead an effort to establish a *community-wide, safe Youth Center*. This facility should incorporate existing programs throughout the community and coordinate activities with the schools. After school and weekend activities should be planned.
  - *Recreational facilities* for youth, such as skateboarding ramps, should be provided in conjunction with this Youth Center.
  - This Youth Center should be *coordinated with church efforts*, but should remain non-denominational, so that youth of all faiths feel welcome and will utilize the Center.
  - Provisions should be provided for the Scouting programs.
  - The *Village Parks and Recreation Department* should be actively involved in this planning and implementation process.
  - *Fast food establishments* that currently benefit from revenues generated after games and other social events should be included in the planning and implementation process, so that they too can contribute to and benefit from the Center.
  - Programs dealing with *alcohol and drug abuse* should be incorporated into activities at the Youth Center.
- The community should *expand its park system* to include more opportunities for all age groups and more consistency in amenities provided at each of the parks.
  - *More concerts in the park* should be planned and organized. These should be coordinated with concerts at the school auditorium sponsored by the Music Boosters and the Lock One Community Arts Group, as well as with private artist and author series, such as those at the Sweet Shop in the Amsterdam Center and at New Bremen Coffee & Books.
  - *A walking tour guide*, as mentioned above, should be prepared.
  - Creation of an *amphitheater* should be considered for concerts, plays, and other cultural activities. Two potential sites include in the downtown along the Canal and at the old pool site.
  - Parks and recreational activities should be tied in with the Canal. The walking path could be continued and integrated into an overall community park system. A passive park should also be considered for along the Canal.
  - The historic buildings in the downtown, as well as throughout the community, should be *appropriately signed* and included in the walking tour.

- The *Continental Divide* should be identified and properly signed for recreational and educational purposes.
- The CIC should spearhead efforts to provide a solid, reliable, coordinated *community communication mechanism*.
  - A *community newsletter* should be established. Communications have already started between the Village and the schools to determine if a joint effort could be established to publish a community newsletter using a class of journalism students or a similar high school club. Such an effort can be a benefit to both the students and the community. Adults and the community in general should also be involved.
  - The Village *web site* should be expanded to include links to a variety of organizations, a current events page, a question and answer section, and other issues to improve communication and get correct and current information to residents.
    - Mailing lists could be established for residents interested in different subject matters, and relevant information could be e-mailed directly to those residents.
    - Continuation of these focus groups should be pursued on a regular basis to keep the lines of communication open between the political entities, as well as between elected officials and residents.
- A committee should be appointed to further explore the potential for developing a *medical network plan* to include doctors within the New Bremen area. The goal of the network would be to provide quality health care to residents at an affordable price. Incentives to entice doctors to participate in the plan may be required.
  - Recruitment of new doctors should be considered to expand the medical opportunities within the community.
- A *residential housing developer* or two should be recruited to develop subdivisions and provide lots for new housing construction.
  - A new subdivision with fewer restrictions than the Pioneer Subdivision should be developed. This would provide an opportunity for mid-range new housing.
  - The Deerfield Subdivision issue regarding its location in the Minster School District (with a New Bremen address) should be resolved so that the lots can be available for development. The owner of the property should take the lead in attempting to get the school district line changed.
  - The extension of Bear Drive to Cardinal, which will result in the additional mid-range housing, should be encouraged and facilitated.

### ***Commercial and Economic Development***

- As mentioned above, the CIC, which currently serves as the “voice of the community” on many issues, should also serve as the *umbrella organization* for planning and other community development activities, in addition to the economic development services it currently provides.
- The CIC should spearhead efforts to *recruit developer(s) and contractor(s)* to construct both commercial and industrial buildings for lease or sale. Housing construction is also needed.
- The CIC should establish goals to *diversify the industrial base*. The heavy reliance currently on tooling and machining can lead to problems if/when that specific industry is in a decline, as it has been in recent months. Different industry sectors should be identified and targeted for recruitment.
  - Central Soya’s recent expansion into the Village is a start at diversification of the industrial base. The CIC may want to consider targeting suppliers to Central Soya or other related companies to target for recruitment.
- *Additional land* must be identified and control must be acquired so that new businesses (including retail) that are recruited can find affordable, developable space easily.
- *Tourism should be supported and expanded* (possibly eco-tourism) as an industry alternative that will generate revenues for local businesses.
  - *An historic/tourist district* should be developed and marketed. Earlier in this report, mention was made of preparing a plan for the downtown and the canal area, which would provide a tremendous potential for tourism with an historic flavor. The bicycle museum, historic museum, and historic buildings could also play major roles in an historic or tourist district.
  - The CIC should work with local entities to begin a process to restore and promote the Canal, as mentioned earlier.
  - Crown should be involved in any tourism focus, as it is a major industry with a tremendous history and impact in the community. Its Crown Store should also be involved in any tourism promotions.
  - The local heritage should be promoted through tours, sale of items, etc.
- The CIC should work with the Chamber of Commerce and local property owners to *develop a Downtown Plan*, which should include the following:
  - Coordination with Crown to address the need for entrepreneurial ownership of existing and new buildings in the downtown and the need to provide affordable rent structures in the downtown to encourage new business development.

- Provision for *more small shop retail space* in the downtown and along the canal, which would help create a focal point in the community.
- Development of *concept plan and rendering* to generate ideas and support for this project.
- A planned *transition on the first floors* of some of the historic buildings in the downtown from corporate offices to more retail uses. This would help generate foot traffic and sales revenues for existing retail stores in the downtown, and would also encourage additional shops to establish themselves in the downtown.
- *Conversion of vacant upper floors* (such as above the hotel) to housing or offices. This may require cooperation with the Village and/or State regarding code enforcement issues. Also, incentives, such as low-interest loans or grants may be required to make the projects financially feasible.
- Continued *preservation of the historic buildings* in the downtown (and throughout the community), in cooperation with property owners. Getting historic buildings nominated to, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places should be a goal.
- Development of a *shopping tour* within the downtown, the Village, and with neighboring villages and cities.
- Addressing parking needs on the downtown, as discussed earlier.
- Providing *affordable downtown retail spaces* for lease. Possibly a for-profit or non-profit group could be established to purchase, renovate, sell, or lease.
- Recruitment of *mid-priced family restaurant(s)* in New Bremen.
- The CIC should encourage more *cooperation and interaction between the schools and local industry*, to the benefit of both. Co-op programs, job shadowing, business advisory councils at the schools, adopt a school programs, training programs, and other opportunities for greater coordination and sharing of talents and knowledge should be promoted. The program which Parker Hannifin recently initiated is an excellent example of what can be done when industry and education join forces.
- The Village and Township should *enforce maintenance codes* (or enact them if they are not in place) to assure that the few properties that are in poor condition receive quick attention from owners.
- The CIC should solicit entrepreneurs to *establish a Bed & Breakfast(s) or small hotel* to service the needs of local businesses and residents.
- The CIC should *address the railroad issue*, including providing for adequate access over the railroad to expand the industrial park and upgrading the rail to 150#. This would assist

in recruitment efforts to attract businesses into the community, and could require the cooperation of R.J. Corman, who currently leases the rail spur. With better access to a higher quality rail, Just-in-Time capabilities could be better promoted for the area.

- The CIC and the community should do a better job of promoting the positive aspects (of which there are so many) of living, working, and playing in the New Bremen area.
- The *Amsterdam Center* should provide better signage for its tenants. It should be a single sign along the highway, tastefully done, preferably a monument sign with landscaping and appropriate lighting.
- *Signage* in the downtown should also be addressed. A uniform signage system should be considered that clearly identifies businesses for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. (This does not mean that all signs have to look alike.)
- The Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center at Wright State University should continue to market and promote their *technical assistance services* to small businesses, especially start-ups. The CIC should refer entrepreneurs to these resources for assistance. In addition, the programs available at the State and Federal levels should be pursued whenever applicable to assist businesses and industries with expansions.
- The Village should provide opportunities for *local companies to link to the Village web site*.
- The Chamber of Commerce should continue to work with local merchants and businesses to *cooperatively advertise* the services and products of New Bremen companies. Joint advertising provides all parties with cost savings and will result in other synergies.
- The Village needs to resolve issues regarding an *adequate water supply* in order for the CIC to recruit and retain industries that require water. For example, if Central Soya undertakes an expansion in 2004, as planned, water supply and treatment capacity are likely to be an issue.
  - If significant water improvements are needed, and thus, higher water and sewer rates required, the CIC should establish a committee to assist the Village with marketing the need for the increase. An educational program may be required to convince residents that the increases are in their best interests.