

# Village of Byron

## Master Plan Visioning Workshop

Report to the Village of Byron  
Planning Commission

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## **Introduction**

On May 22, 2007, the Village of Byron sponsored a visioning workshop to identify current and future planning related needs and issues that must be addressed to shape the future direction of the Village. Local residents, Village Council, staff members and other public officials were encouraged to attend and provide ideas on such issues as residential & non-residential development, transportation/traffic, natural and historic resources and the Downtown. The vision statements gathered from this workshop will be used to develop community planning goals, land use programs, and policies for the updated Master Plan for the Village of Byron.

This report is a summary of the process and outcomes of the Village Visioning Workshop. Priority vision statements and ideas for the improvement of the Village will be generated from this session, and will help define community planning goals and objectives for the Village. The vision statements from this workshop are included in this report.

## **Visioning Workshop Format**

The group workshop techniques for the Village were carried out in the following manner:

- PowerPoint presentation on what a Master Plan is.
- Presentation of background data that included 2000 Census information and information on natural resources.
- Round robin listing of ideas and brainstorming.
- Discussion and clarification of ideas.

The workshop began with a brief introduction to the visioning process and the purpose of the workshop. The attending group was directed to discuss their visions for the Village of Byron on the following topics:

- Likes and Dislikes
- Government
- Commercial Land Uses and Economic Development
- Transportation and Traffic Issues
- Industrial Land Use
- Residential Land Use
- Parks and Recreation
- Environmental Issues
- Historic Preservation

## Major Findings/ Workshop Results

Using the original words recorded on flip charts, a list of statements was prepared. Several central themes emerged from the Vision Workshop and are listed as follows:

### Likes and Dislikes In Regard to the Village of Byron

#### Likes

1. The Byron Community is small and close knit.
2. The Village is a historic place.
3. Good commute to the City of Flint.
4. There is very little traffic and the community is very clean.
5. The Village has excellent services: fire, police and public works.
6. The Byron Community school district has an excellent reputation.
7. The Mill Pond.
8. Trees in the area.
9. Great golf course.
10. Excellent Public library
11. This is the middle of know where.

#### Dislikes

1. High number of rentals.
2. Single-family units converted to multiple units.
3. Zoning Enforcement
4. Mortgage foreclosure – Village & Township
5. Transient population Comes & Goes – mostly young people.
6. Nothing for people in their 20's to do.
7. Public apathy – lack of volunteers
8. Power poles/overhead wires – bad Appearance.
9. Sewer/water capacity?  
- Higher water bills – arsenic removal.
10. River clean up – need walking paths.

## **Government/ Municipal Services/Infrastructure/Other Issues**

1. Explore areas of mutual cost savings with surrounding local governments and the Byron Area School District.
2. Reach out to Burns Township to explore areas of cooperation in the development of new business opportunities.
3. Develop options/plans for a new municipal building that houses all services under one roof: Government Offices, Police Department and Department of Public Works.
4. Maintain excellent police, fire and emergency services.
5. Explore the expansion of the sewer and water plant.
6. Create revenue and budget stability by exploring the sale of sewer system capacity (if plant is expanded) to Burns Township through 425 Agreements or other mechanisms.
7. Discuss the need for annexation and other boundary issues when appropriate.
8. Develop a plan for a side walk replacement and repair program.
9. All utilities should be buried to improve the Village skyline.
10. Maintain the two (2) dams that the Village owns on a regular basis.
11. Develop a plan to reinvigorate the Byron Area Chamber of Commerce and other local civic and cultural organizations such as the Lions Club, Women's Art Club, King's Daughters, etc.
12. Encourage cooperation on cross governmental issues such as planning and zoning issues. (Golf course is in both the Village of Byron and Burns Township).

## Residential/Neighborhoods

1. Develop a rental unit inspection program.
2. Maintain excellent Village services.
3. Promote and encourage several housing styles including loft commercial in the downtown.
4. Encourage self maintenance of single-family homes and residential neighborhoods.
5. Update landscaping regulations.
6. Improve street cleanup of weeds, litter, blight, removal of inoperable junked vehicles, etc.
7. Set up a program to make Village homeowners aware of programs that prevent mortgage foreclosure.
8. Develop incentives for homeowners to maintain residential properties.
9. Initiate housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization efforts in appropriate areas.
10. Carefully monitor areas where residential uses are located adjacent to industrial or commercial uses, so that timely safeguards against blight can be initiated, if necessary.
11. Encourage the use of land in accordance with its character and adaptability through the use of innovative planning techniques that will result in substantial benefit to future residents and to the Village.
12. Maintain and increase “walkability” within the Village.
13. Monitor the possible sale of the local golf course for residential redevelopment.
14. Develop a tree planting and replacement program.

## Commercial/Industrial/Economic Development

1. Create stability for Village businesses.
2. Develop a business improvement plan.
3. Create a Downtown Development Authority or Corridor Improvement Authority.
4. Develop a window display program for empty businesses.
5. Develop a historic streetscape for the Village downtown.
6. Identify sites that present a challenge from a land use/zoning perspective and develop plans for their reuse. There are seven (7) empty buildings and four (4) empty lots that are currently zoned commercial.
7. Develop gateway plans for Saginaw Street, at both the north and south end of town. (Signage and flower beds or planters)
8. Have a retail marketing study done to prioritize commercial needs and a niche for the Village. Develop a plan that differentiates between tourism commercial and local needs commercial uses.
9. Recruit businesses that fill a need like Fairway.
10. Work with the Byron Area Chamber of Commerce to promote local businesses.
11. Promote 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office space and loft apartments downtown.
12. Work both regionally and locally with planning agencies to keep commercial uses in the downtown area (Surrounding Townships).
13. The Village should be the commercial core for the surrounding area and Burns Township.
14. Develop directional signage within the Village.
15. The Village should establish a building and lot maintenance program or ordinance.
16. Develop and adopt a Blight Ordinance.
17. Separate conflicting land uses – commercial vs. residential
18. Develop a historic façade program to create continuity in the appearance of commercial properties.

19. Coordinate with MDOT and/or the Shiawassee County Road Commission to develop a plan for the replacement of curbs and gutters (street grade is too high) within the Village limits on Saginaw Street to prevent the flooding of local businesses.
20. Encourage current industrial uses within the Village to stay and/or expand.
21. Expand light industrial uses within the Village.

## Parks and Recreation

1. Develop recreational opportunities associated with the Mill Pond and the Shiawassee River.
2. Develop a trail system/walking paths that link the Village together.
3. Develop Sesquicentennial Park for more active recreational activities.
4. Develop a plan to update park equipment.
5. Explore a regional approach to parks and funding for them.
6. Create a partnership with the Byron Area Schools to make use of their recreation facilities and to create new recreational opportunities.
7. Discuss the development of a community education department with the Byron Area School District.

## Traffic and Circulation

1. Coordinate with MDOT and/or the Shiawassee County Road Commission for improvements to Saginaw Street.
  - New surface, curb and gutter.
  - Make improvements to Saginaw Street south to the Township line to make it a Class A, all weather road.
2. Develop a truck route, so that the pavement within the Village has a longer lifespan
3. Eliminate traffic issues at the four (4) way stop.
4. Saginaw Street is a short cut for commuters – is this a positive or a negative?

## Environmental Issues

1. Protection of the Village's environmental resources is a top priority
2. Identify Brownfield Areas and other sources of environmental contamination within the Village such as:
  - Vacant gas station (Underground storage tank removal?).
  - Vacant tractor repair building.
  - Empty Blue Chip lot.
3. Discuss and bring to the forefront the issue of contamination of the Mill Pond and the Shiawassee River from up river sewage lagoons and agricultural run-off and other toxic agents.

## Historic Issues

1. The west side of the Village is registered as a historic place with the State of Michigan.
2. Develop a façade improvement and preservation plan.
3. Review Michigan State University Historic Study completed in 1982.
4. Develop guidelines for the preservation and improvement of historic buildings and areas within the Village.