

Garrard County High School Youth Leadership
May 2, 2014
At the Kentucky League of Cities

Sixteen students and three adult supervisors from Garrard County High School met in Lexington at the offices of the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) on Friday, May 2, 2014. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the students to community development and strategic planning, a process that their home town of Lancaster is currently undertaking.

Tad Long and Bobbie Bryant, KLC staff members, welcomed the students and explained the agenda for the meeting. The city of Lancaster is conducting community listening and design sessions to find out what residents wish to have for their community in the next three to five years. The information obtained from the residents and students as they envision what is possible for the community will be the basis for developing a five-year strategic plan.

Students were led through a SWOT Analysis to discuss the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Results of their conversation is shown herein.

Strengths

- Close-knit community
- Feel safe
- We know everyone
- Small town feel
- Close to other places
- The Grand Theater
- Nice school building
- Town Square
- Tobacco Festival

Weaknesses

- Lack of restaurants and grocery stores
- Lack of Jobs
- Nothing to do
- Things close early
- Must go out of town to do things
- Ball parks need improvement
- HS does not have its own gym or sports facilities
- No opportunity for public to see or use the new high school
- Roads need improvement

Opportunities

- Taco Bell
- Raising Canes
- Renovation of the ball park
- Need new books at school
- Leverage Smart Tech in High School
- Things to do – shop, movies, etc.

Pool
No grocery stores, but have 2 Dollar Stores
Need a park downtown
The circle at the public square
Owsley House
Old Jail

Threats

Lack of funds
Attitude
Lots of people leave
No reason to stay
Lack of pride
Lack of things to do
Outside perception – perceived as weak
Athletes transfer to other schools
Coaches at Boyle County give athletes better opportunities
Coaches at home don't look out for future opportunities of the students
Stability of school leaders
Coaches shouldn't have to teach, too

What are things other communities have that are important to you?

Good School System
Safe
Playground
Rural areas
Small town
Job opportunities
Hospital/better medical services /urgent care
Arts
Food convenience

After the listening session, the students were given maps of the city and asked to give a visual representation of what they'd like to see in their community. There were three teams:

Table #1

New movies shown at the Grand with cheaper prices
More restaurants and fast food options
New apartments
Dog Park
Animal Shelter
Bakery
More development in northern Garrard County, more shopping
Better water quality at Herrington Lake
Challenge Park and trails

Table #2

Put circle back in downtown

Art in the circle
Restaurants
Park with trails and a pool
Athletic complex
Kiddie park
Restaurant chains next to bank
Grocery store
Small coffee shop next to Subway
Apartments

Table #3

Nice restaurants located out towards Lee's
Need a grocery store
Make town more presentable, clean up
Back road to the high school needs to be cleaned up
Bakery and coffee shop
Alternatives to McDonalds
More art
Theatre – need newer movies, and offer concessions
Park with a pool and trails