

**Elsmere Strategic Plan  
Listening Session – Department Supervisors  
October 6, 2015**

On October 6, 2015, Tad Long, Community Development Advisor with the Kentucky League of Cities, met with the city's department supervisors to conduct a listening session. The listening session is one of several being conducted for the purposes of creating a strategic vision and plan for the city.

Tad reviewed the results of the surveys that were completed by the supervisors, the mayor and members of the city council.

A general discussion about the city and the surrounding communities explored the current services, programs and events as well as the needs of the city. Some of the events noted include magicians, a mini-zoo, movie night, an annual Christmas party and a Halloween party. A lot of volunteers participate including kids and make these events successful. Many of the events are held at one of the city's four parks.

The participants felt that the city had plenty of public parks. The city lacks an adequate shelter for large gatherings at the Covered Bridge Park. Public restroom facilities are needed at the ballpark.

The discussion then turned to infrastructure. The city does not own or maintain the city's infrastructure. A regional authority owns and maintains the infrastructure.

The fire department is self-governing and has its own taxing district.

The police department has fourteen full-time equivalent (FTE) officers. The department is in a state of transition with employees and is two officers down from the recommended FTE. The police chief believes the department will be stable within about two months. The city may need to add personnel in the next three-to-four months.

A citizens' police academy and a Neighborhood Watch program have been established. The city is relatively safe. However, the department feels that it is in reactionary mode rather than proactive in getting ahead of potential problems.

The public works department is complaint driven. Some of the work is contracted with outside vendors. The department needs to be able to contract for additional landscaping, signs and street work. The entrance signs to the city need to be updated.

In addition, the department's work order system needs to be tablet-based. The current system is backwards. A work order system would help with handling complaint tracking.

The city's record retention system is outdated. It would take about a week to archive the required documents and shred the rest. If the office could just "catch up," the paperwork would be much easier to manage going forward. An expiration date needs to be assigned to documents as they are received and filed. This would provide orderly archival and shredding in the future. In addition, the proper archival of documents would make open records requests much easier to respond to.

In the area of housing, several foreclosed homes need to be resolved. Many of the foreclosures become rental houses. The rental vs owned ratio is out of balance as a result. The rental properties need better regulation and owners need to be held accountable.

Junk Cars – The city needs to the political will to address this issue. No teeth in the current ordinances.

Code Enforcement – The following issues were identified.

- Needs to be proactive
- Is currently complaint driven
- Biggest challenge is getting people to understand the process
- Issues with the banks that hold the title to the foreclosed properties.
- Issues with people who buy delinquent tax bills.
- Staff and public need more info and understanding of foreclosed and blighted properties

Currently, the city does not accept payments online. This is an area worth exploring. Website updating is not used and it is not known how to do it.

The staff did not identify any city services that needed to be stopped.

The staff identified community outreach (personnel) as an area for service expansion.

The staff identified the following as potential areas to provide new services

- Using volunteers or part-time people (police department)
- Seasonal employees in public works; however very difficult to enact due to lack of qualified and/or available people

What does Elsmere need?

- A big grocery store
- Restaurant on Dixie Highway – Elsmere side of the road
- A "regular" restaurant = family restaurant – the challenge is lot size
- Resolve territorial/organizational challenges between the cities
- Future steps need to be well-planned and well-executed
- Sidewalks on every street – it is not safe to run on the streets

**What do you envision Elsmere looking in 2020?**

- **An addition to City Hall or a new City Hall**
- **Development of the List Farm – rezoned and upscale neighborhood**
- **Woodside trailer park gone and a new community center built in its place**
- **Find a way to annex additional businesses into the city**
- **Very little land left to build on. Need homes in the \$200K price range which would serve as an attractor for the educated buyer and young buyer**
- **Drug issue resolved – not as severe as in the past, but still a problem. By 2020, drug use will not have spread or grown**
- **Public works employees will have a raise. “We are at the bottom.”**