

Fairport-East Rochester Post

Fairport residents share a new vision of northwest quadrant

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Fairport, N.Y. — While many residents are proud to call the village of Fairport home, some acknowledged the need for parts of it to get cleaned up during an open discussion about development opportunities for the village's northwest quadrant last week.

The portion of property lies between the intersection of Whitney Road and North Main Street to the east, and Thomas Creek to the west, bordered to the south by the the Erie Canal.

The Fairport **Office of Community and Economic Development** (OCED) has been exploring ways to improve this area after a series of studies on parking and land use, including the 2010 CAP study and 2007 comprehensive plan, recommended it.

OCED has hired two consulting firms to assist in the project, Bergmann Associates and Ingalls Planning and Design, and has also formed an advisory committee to help oversee it. Leaders from the design team met with residents to help brainstorm on ways the area can be revitalized on Monday, Jan. 30.

Nearly three-quarters of the property is residential, and only 7 percent of the total area is publicly owned.

Melissa Streber lives on Elm Street near the American Can Company building on Parce Avenue, east of the LiDestri Food complex and Corning Tropel. She said many of the houses in her neighborhood are in an “embarrassing” state of disrepair.

“Some of the houses are falling apart to the point that they shouldn’t be up anymore,” she said. “It doesn’t seem up to Fairport standards.”

Historically, the property has served as an important industrial center for the village. More than 80 percent of the space in the 350,000 square-foot can factory is being utilized, but much of this includes warehouse storage, said OCED director Kal Wysokowski.

Nevertheless, some say the building doesn’t fit into the aesthetic appeal of the village.

“It’s either got to be cleaned up or torn down,” said Jane Haefner, who lives across the canal on Packet Boat Drive. “It’s an eyesore.”

What would residents like to see changed?

This and the H.P. Neun packaging plant off North Main Street are areas that residents would like to see revitalized in the master plan. Other concerns included the volume of traffic, including large trucks that take sidestreets to avoid the Whitney/Main intersection.

Some even said they consider this intersection to be a dividing line in the village.

“We need to figure out how to extend Main Street to one end of the business district to the other so it’s not so discontinuous,” said Mayor Fritz May.

Guests used words like “charming,” “walkable,” and “safe” to describe their vision of the area in the future.

Foot traffic in the village is heaviest along Main Street and the canal way path. As part of the new plan, designers are looking to add more safe and accessible walkways for pedestrians.

From now until April, planners will use feedback to generate a digital master plan to help illustrate the wants and needs of residents. Wysokowski said that OCED will then tackle each project as funds become available.

While it’s in the preliminary planning stages, village trustee Tim Slisz encouraged guests to spread the word to their neighbors as the planning team looks for more feedback.

“You will always see positive results with a project when you see people make it their own,” he said.

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