

PEMBROKE- HOPKINS PARK

QUALITY OF LIFE PROCESS REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

The natural environment depends on people for its continued health just as people depend on healthy nature for their quality of life. Yet making decisions about the future of a place can create conflict when there are diverse visions for land use, livelihood, and forms of development.

In Spring 2016, Field Museum staff and a team of local facilitators led residents of Pembroke-Hopkins Park (PHP) through a structured process in which participants discussed priorities and concerns, reflected on trade-offs between different land use options and development scenarios, and drafted planning recommendations based on their core values and principles. Residents mapped their community assets and assessed key indicators of their quality of life.

While defining what well-being and sustainability mean in PHP, participants discussed pressing issues such as conservation land acquisitions, a new National Wildlife Refuge, and the outmigration of local youth. The results of this process will inform the Sustainability Plan of Pembroke-Hopkins Park and serve as a guide for decision-makers in the region.

The Quality of Life process explored the relationship among components of the traditional triple bottom line — Economy, Community, and Environment — as residents developed principles and priorities to guide sustainability planning.



THE FIELD MUSEUM'S ROLE

The Field Museum's approach to linking environmental conservation with human well-being has emerged from many years of experience working both in the Chicago region and in the Andes-Amazon region of South America. In much of the Amazon, people depend on traditional agriculture, hunting, and gathering, which require healthy forests and ecosystems. In Peru, the Museum's Keller Science Action Center staff has worked with indigenous communities living near protected natural areas to agree upon key principles, identify social and environmental assets, and determine priorities for the future. This process helps people draw upon their core values and community strengths to develop plans to improve quality of life and to protect natural resources.

As in Pembroke, well-being is about more than monetary income for these communities in the Amazon: it involves quality natural resources, strong cultural traditions, healthy social relationships, the ability to meet basic needs, and a fair political system. (More about this approach is available at conservationforwellbeing.fieldmuseum.org.) A crucial aspect of the Museum approach is training a cohort of community residents to facilitate the planning process while drawing upon their local knowledge and networks. The PHP Quality of Life sessions were co-led by Museum staff and nine residents who worked together as a facilitation team.



THE *ROOTED!* EXHIBIT AS A FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING

The Quality of Life planning process built upon prior community-led projects and research. In 2015, Field Museum staff worked closely with community leaders and content experts in Pembroke Township to co-curate and install an exhibit titled *Rooted! The Richness of Land and Culture* in the Pembroke Public Library. The exhibit draws attention to residents' long tradition of stewardship, herbalism, and small-scale agriculture in and around the black oak savannas of the Township. By focusing on strong community assets, the exhibit challenges the common tendency to focus on poverty. A curatorial committee consisting of five community members made several visits to the Museum and met regularly throughout the year, actively participating in all phases of decision making as the exhibit developed. To inform the exhibit content, Museum staff conducted twenty oral history and ethnobotanical interviews with local residents. The curatorial committee and Museum staff outlined key themes and co-designed the exhibition.

The exhibition launched with a community forum on December 16, 2015. The crowd of 50 people consisted of longtime residents sharing their experiences and knowledge, students learning more about their regional ecology and heritage, environmental professionals, and resident farmers and herbalists. *Rooted!* showcases the Pembroke region's considerable biodiversity, as well as the connections the primarily African-American Hopkins Park community has made to the plants and animals in the area since it was settled after the Civil War. The exhibit has created a public forum for highlighting connections between biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage. Exhibit content provides a deeper understanding of the land ethic that many residents maintain, and of the central place that the natural world holds in local people's lives. During the exhibit development process, a key finding was that many PHP residents consider their sustainable land use practices to be the reason why their land holds conservation value. This served as a starting point for dialogue and has informed the design of the Quality of Life planning sessions that followed the exhibit launch.



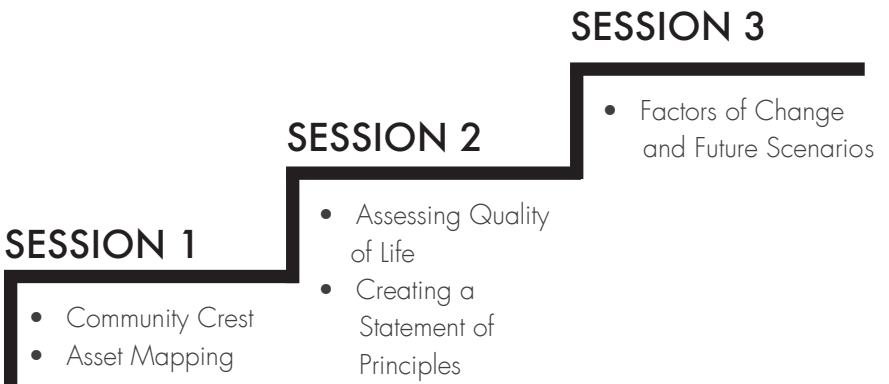


PROCESS DESIGN

A series of Quality of Life planning sessions were held from March to June 2016 and involved over 100 PHP residents and stakeholders (~90 in sessions; 16 via surveys). Sessions took place in PHP at the Community Center, the Senior Center, Bible Witness Camp, Rehoboth Church, and St. Anne Woods Community Chapel. Participants embodied a range of interests and experiences, and included small organic and large commercial farmers, ranchers, leaders of the faith community, youth, elders, new landowners and longtime residents. Museum staff are confident that the information generated by these participants and the analysis that follows provides an accurate representation of quality of life indicators and priorities in PHP. The findings from these sessions are also supported by additional research that was done in conjunction with the exhibit process and previous asset mapping research conducted by The Field Museum.

The main goals of this process were to 1) stimulate and guide meaningful conversations around matters important for the quality of life of individuals, families and the overall community of Pembroke Township-Hopkins Park; and 2) to encourage residents to become active planners, change agents and owners of their community's future by identifying core values, available and sustainable resources, and attainable short and long term goals for the benefit of the overall PHP community.

PROJECT FLOW





FINDINGS: IDENTITY AND VALUES

“If you do not know yourself, you cannot take care of yourself. God is life in every one of you. And if you don’t know what your life is, then you don’t know how to protect it!”

— Pembroke community faith leader at a Quality of Life Session One meeting

The first two phases of the Quality of Life process assessed the current identity and values of the Pembroke-Hopkins Park community in order to understand how the community might move forward in its planning and development. Participants met in small and large groups in these sessions and through a series of semi-structured activities, generated discussion, written notes, and visualizations. Central goals included creating a community crest and statement of principles which elicited rich discussion of who and what makes up the community and why residents value living there.

The people of Pembroke shared diverse stories and views; they do not speak with one voice. They are faith leaders, land owners, farmers, environmental stewards, residents, neighbors, family, elders, business owners, students, cowboys and vaqueros, and much more. However, some key themes around identity and values did emerge in these discussions.

Overall, residents described their community as one rich in culture, history, knowledge, spirituality, natural resources, and beauty. These themes are reflected in the word cloud on page 11. Residents consistently expressed a commitment to the stewardship of Pembroke’s natural environment and they readily connect natural resources to their own quality of life. Many moved to Pembroke or value living there now because of the “peace and quiet,” “freedom,” and “openness.” These observations were often presented in contrast to experiences of urban life and the built environment in Chicago. Pembroke affords a sense of freedom and the opportunity to enjoy and make

use of the land. As one participant said, there's "no place in Chicago where you can plant okra on concrete." While many value the space and quiet of the community, participants also repeatedly expressed appreciation for their neighbors. They celebrate the diversity of their community and especially value their children and youth.

Building on the key characteristics and values, participants in two separate sessions worked in groups to draft community statements of principles (see page 14). The two statements are very similar: both mention environmental stewardship, rich natural and cultural resources, diverse people, peace, and power.



This word cloud was generated from notes taken during discussions of values that fed into the creation of the community crests. Notes from the discussions were typed and then visualized in a way where the most frequently mentioned words appear the largest.





STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES

“We are a multi-cultural community of landowners and residents who believe in the right of empowerment living in peace with the hopes of a progressive, sustainable future. We are determined to steward our naturally rich, biodiverse resources to enhance our quality of life.”

“We are a caring community rich in resources, talent, skills, wisdom, and good stewards of the land. We believe in God, the power of education and people — also environmental growth and protection. We value diverse people, land, animals, pure air and water, homes, peace and tranquility, and culture.”

In the community crest activity, participants were asked to list the things most important to them, then to create crests that would represent their family and the entire community of Pembroke. This activity was sometimes framed as: “Imagine you’re driving into Pembroke and there’s a sign welcoming you — what would you want visitors to see or know?” Key themes that emerged in the visuals include faith, spirituality, community, sensory experiences of nature and wildlife (both sounds and “peace and quiet”), farming, and ranching.

FINDINGS: ASSETS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

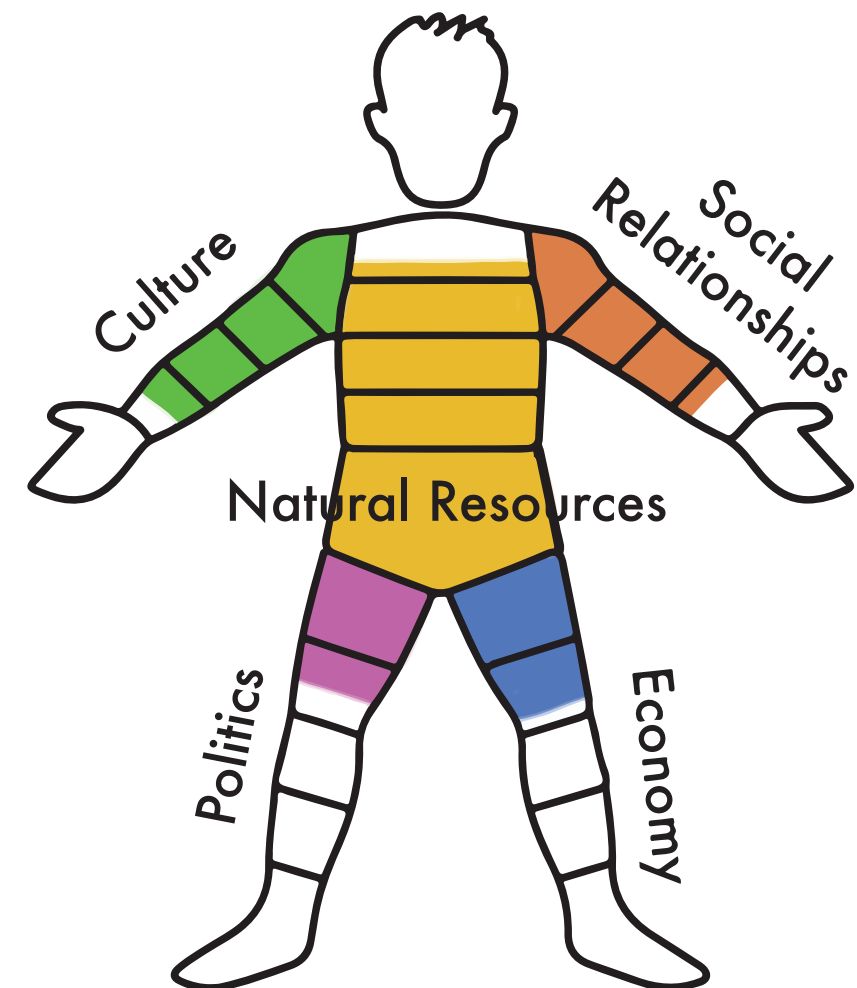
The process of describing the current quality of life in PHP also included asset listing and mapping, as well group assessments of quality of local life in five categories: culture, politics, economy, natural resources, and social relationships. Participants reviewed the many specific resources present in the community, and then assessed what these all add up to in terms of quality of life. Participants provided responses during meetings and through written surveys.

Over 125 assets in PHP were identified through this process. In this context the term “asset” refers to locations, organizations, activities, and resources of value to the shared life of the community. Assets may provide something now, or have potential to contribute to community life in the future. Some assets may be mapped with a point or shape; such assets include businesses, gathering places, places of worship, natural areas, farms, ranches, and public institutions. These are mapped on the following pages and listed in the legend on pages 19 and 20. Other assets are multi-sited, diffuse, social, and/or intangible and are thus less “mappable” in the traditional sense. Some from this latter category that were named at the Quality of Life sessions include: water, the stars (more visible in Pembroke than in Chicago), cowboy culture, medicinal plants, wildlife, black oak savannas, fresh air, and good neighbors.

Quality of Life Assessment visualized on opposite page (16):

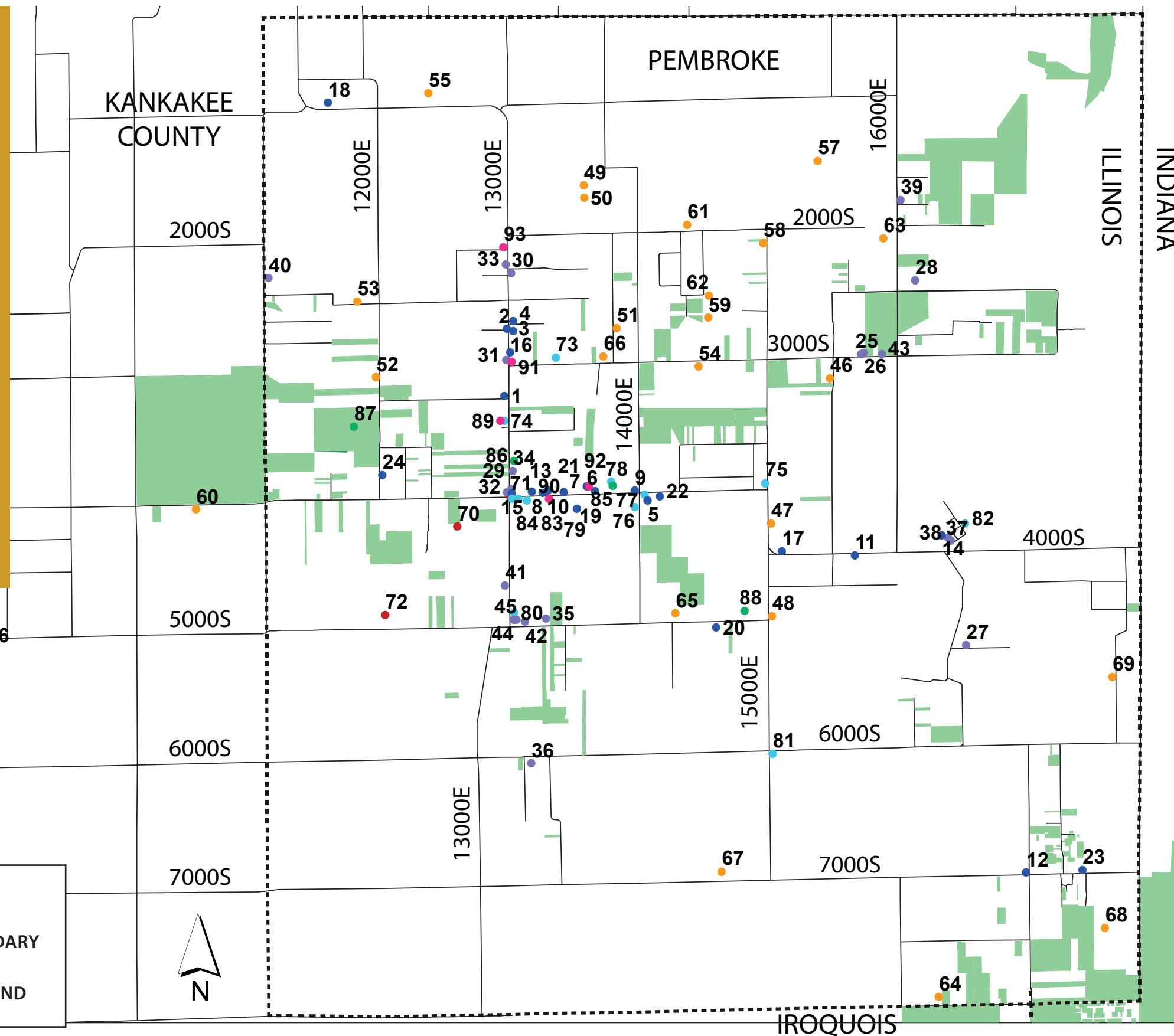
| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Culture: 3.6 | Politics: 1.25 |
| Natural resources: 4.75 | Economy: 1.8 |
| Social relationships: 3.4 | Average Quality of Life: 2.96 |

Using parts of the body as a metaphor for the five categories of quality of life (see image below) participants rated quality of local life in these categories from one (worst) to five (ideal), with the results listed on page 15 and visualized below. The relatively high scores in the areas of culture, natural resources, and social relationships align well with the strengths that surfaced during discussions of values, characteristics, principles, and assets. However, residents repeatedly expressed that amidst all these assets, there were significant deficits in the political and economic realms. Participants expressed a desire for stronger leadership in local government and sustainable economic development that would bring more job opportunities, especially for youth.



PEMBROKE ASSET MAP

This map reflects assets identified through the Quality of Life process. It reflects extensive research but is not comprehensive, and all locations are approximate. This map and asset list illustrate the range and diversity of community resources. Conservation land is highlighted in green because tensions around conservation land ownership generated the first meetings that developed into the Quality of Life process.



Commercial

- 1 Mondy Bros Repair
- 2 Sandstone Hills Apartments
- 3 SS Friendly Market #3
- 4 CITGO Gas Station
- 5 Hickory Hills Apartments
- 6 Leggett Funeral Home
- 7 Melissa's Daycare
- 8 Myka Trucking
- 9 Blades of Glory Lawn Care and Snow Removal
- 10 Astros Heating and Cooling
- 11 GG&M Hardware (Bobo's)
- 12 Tipps Hardware
- 13 East Restaurant & Banquet Room (Closed)
- 14 Sacred Heart Resale Shop (Closed)
- 15 Four-Way Gas (Closed)
- 16 Charro & Sons Tire and Auto Repair
- 17 Red Boy's (Closed)
- 18 ROC Dog Kennel
- 19 Pembroke POWER Center Business Incubator
- 20 Auction House
- 21 Tony Woods Food Service
- 22 Wild Wind Estates Senior Housing
- 23 We Custom Cars Inc.
- 24 Magee Income Tax Service

Albert's Daughter
Ancestral Medicinals
Driven by Ambition (DBA)

- 25 Rehoboth Mennonite Church
- 26 Rehoboth Retreat Center
- 27 Bethesda Church of God in Christ
- 28 Bible Witness Camp
- 29 Christian Hope Baptist Church
- 30 Church of the Cross
- 31 Ephesus Seventh Day Adventist Church
- 32 Christ Deliverance Pentecostal Church
- 33 Hope House
- 34 Pembroke Church of Christ
- 35 Pembroke Community Reformed Church
- 36 St. Anne Woods Community Chapel
- 37 Sacred Heart Church
- 38 Greater St. Paul Church
- 39 Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church (Closed)
- 40 Forest Valley Community Church (Closed)
- 41 Pembroke Bibleway Church of God in Christ
- 42 Prayer & Deliverance Pentecostal Church
- 43 The New Macedonia Church

- 46 Blueberry Patch
- 47 Mr. Ivey Homestead
- 48 Thurman's Farm and Produce
- 49 Basu Natural Farm
- 50 Basu Museum and Cultural Center
- 51 Boots and Saddles
- 52 Big W Ranch
- 53 Jackson Farm
- 54 Nelson White's Chicken and Goats
- 55 R&D Dandurand Farms Inc.
- 56 Degroot Vegetable Farm
- 57 Deyoung Farms
- 58 Beagle Farm
- 59 Black Oaks Center
- 60 Latting Rodeo Production Inc.
- 61 Runaway Buckers Ranch
- 62 Iyabo Farms
- 63 KLOs Ranch
- 64 L&R Farms
- 65 Smooth Ranch
- 66 RR Ranch
- 67 Pembroke Oaks Farm
- 68 Hopkins Ridge Farms
- 69 Zanjabil Gardens

- 73 Pembroke Hopkins
 Park Construction
 Outreach (Closed)
- 74 Riverside Clinic
- 75 Post Office
- 76 LRS Sustainability &
 Technology Academy
- 77 Senior Center
- 78 Community Center
- 79 Pembroke Public Library
- 80 Pembroke Volunteer Fire
 Department
- 81 Cell Tower
- 82 George Washington
 Carver School (Closed)
- 83 Hopkins Park Water
 Treatment & Water Tower

- Contractors
- Good Neighbors
- Health
- Informed People
- Rich History
- Historical Sites
- Property
- Heir Property
- Juneteenth Celebration
- Laughter
- People who care about the community
- Underground Railroad
- Agriculture
- Farm Stands

Organic Farms
Ranch Culture
Apples
Black Cowboys
Vaqueros
Vegetables
Government
Black Oak Savannas
Oak Trees
Good Water
Wildlife
Birds
Butterflies
Camping
Endangered Plants and
Animals
Feldspar Sand
Fresh Air
Hunting
Land
Moon
Mushrooms
Natural Resources
Sand Dunes
Sassafras Trees
Stars
Trees
Children
Seniors
Good Soil
Rappers/Musicians
Women's Education



FINDINGS: CONDITIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

In the final Quality of Life planning sessions, participating residents developed a set of agreed upon conditions, actions, and priorities that advance and sustain the values identified previously in the process. These points are meant to be the building blocks for a community-based sustainability plan and serve as recommendations to inform decision-making affecting the future of Pembroke-Hopkins Park.

Participants first reviewed the information gathered thus far. They then self-selected into groups by categories of key assets identified in earlier sessions (heritage/education/faith, economy & politics, and natural resources). Groups brainstormed specific conditions and guidelines for action associated with these categories. The results can serve as basic principles of good faith for elected officials, conservation organizations, outside partners, and residents themselves.

Three main themes emerged among the conditions and priorities identified in these final sessions:

1. **“Make Pembroke enviable.”**
2. **The Nature Conservancy (TNC), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and other outside stakeholders must adopt and sustain practices of being “good neighbors” in Pembroke.**
3. **Residents must become more organized and involved in decisions affecting their land and lives.**

What follows is an overview of the conditions and priorities generated by the sub-groups.



HERITAGE, EDUCATION, & FAITH

- Consistent focus on youth development is a priority. Stakeholders should collaboratively invest in and support youth and family programs such as field trips, workshops and trainings, mentorship, after school activities, and Lorenzo R. Smith and St. Anne High School ecology and sustainability curriculum.
- Involve youth in decision-making and provide service-level opportunities for youth in green fields.
- Support multi-generational exchange on heritage, farming, land use practices, and traditional knowledge.

ECONOMY & POLITICS

- Provide transparent and clear communication of information about taxes associated with different land uses in Pembroke Township.
- Create forums for discussion on the broader economic implications and opportunities associated with new property ownership scenarios in the region.
- Provide accurate information about possible impacts of conservation on farming, small and large scale.
- Develop a business incubator that draws upon assets and reflects values to build local economic strength.
- Generate green jobs for locals. Institute checks and balances that ensure there is faithful and consistent representation from elected officials, with accountability for taxes, grants, and public projects.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture

- Carefully and collaboratively map land use, crop types, and chemicals used by farmers and conservationists.
- Identify edges and possible impacts of neighboring land uses, such as organic and non-organic plots.
- Involve scientists in developing recommendations for compatible land uses. Prioritize clear communication on water issues. All landowners (TNC, USFWS, farmers) must manage drainage in ways that do not adversely impact neighbors. Work closely with local drainage boards, draw upon existing collaborative systems, and consider involving the Army Corps of Engineers for problem solving.

Natural Areas

- Provide clear communication about access and use regulations. Develop an information booklet for TNC and wildlife refuge lands, and improve signage.
- Provide adequate notification of controlled burns.
- Work with residents to design and build a Nature Center and kiosk system highlighting native plants and animals, as well as local stories and connections to nature.
- Empower residents to have a voice in making decisions about how tourism is developed and managed in the community. Establish a park district.
- Explore possibilities for trail expansion in Pembroke, linking multiple land categories.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Session participants developed recommendations to guide decision-making that will impact Pembroke's future. What follows are three priority issues and suggested action steps for each.

1. Improve communication and transparency.

Residents called for conservation organizations, the federal government, local public officials and other stakeholders to commit to consistent and open sharing of information.

- TNC and USFWS: develop pamphlets and websites with details of mission in Pembroke, FAQs, maps, and the specifics of access and land use regulations. Explain value added and opportunities for residents, and test communication tools with local people.
- Residents: create and maintain a watchdog/advocacy group made up of Pembroke residents that would disseminate impartial facts, provide oversight of local officials and conservation organizations, and hold these entities accountable to the outcomes/recommendations of the Quality of Life process and Sustainability Plan.

2. Build local empowerment and civic participation.

Residents called for education on land tenure options and support for building civic engagement.

- Organize workshops and build awareness about land inheritance and tenure, conservation easements and fallow farmland programs, and other options for landowner sovereignty. Build local agency for land use planning and protecting property rights.
- Formalize a participatory process for long term planning for Pembroke. Identify local "champions" to lead working groups on the key priorities for quality of life. Build multi-generational teams that advise local boards and activate residents in concrete ways.

3. Define and pursue "our" sustainable development.

Residents called for a youth-focused development plan that stays true to their core values while improving local livelihoods. Draft a charter for sustainable development that outlines fundamental principles that decision-makers must adhere to in economic planning.

- Establish a cross-sector business incubator that supports new enterprises through workshops and trainings, grant writing, and market development.
- Expand youth leadership and development opportunities.
- Develop tools for cataloging and mobilizing local assets and networks.



Thank you to the residents of Pembroke-Hopkins Park that participated in the Quality of Life process.

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