

## **Chapter Four: SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **SWOT ANALYSIS (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)**

A major effort in the Comprehensive Planning Process during the Year 2000 was the identification of issues by each of the neighborhoods. As part of the facilitated planning process, the neighborhoods were not asked to begin to identify the issues facing the neighborhood and the community in the first meetings that were held. Instead they were taken through a process to bring the neighborhood together to focus on those things that were the key issues. This was accomplished by first having several residents of each neighborhood take photographs of those things that they felt were the assets of their neighborhood and those things they felt were liabilities to their neighborhood and to the community. The photographs provided a talking point for the meetings and enabled residents to begin to focus on common things in their neighborhood.

After the discussion of the photographs, the neighborhoods were asked to perform a SWOT analysis. This involved having each neighborhood identify those things that they felt were a strength, a weakness or an opportunity for their neighborhood. They were then asked to identify those things that were either threats to their neighborhood currently or that might be threats if they were to succeed in making changes in their neighborhoods.

Collectively, these individual neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats served to identify the same concerns in the community. Worksheets from the eighteen separate neighborhood groupings are attached that show the SWOT analysis.

### **CONCLUSION**

A thorough reading of the SWOT analysis will show that while there are specific items identified as strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats for each neighborhood, many are common to a large number of neighborhoods if not the entire community. Most neighborhoods spoke of the diversity in housing, greenspaces, beauty of their neighborhood and community, security and historic character of the neighborhood as strengths. Common weaknesses related to concerns about traffic, walkability, university issues for those that are near the University, parking, code enforcement effectiveness and public safety as weaknesses. Most neighborhoods saw opportunities for more greenspace and housing as key for both their neighborhood and the City of Charlottesville. Threats were numerous, but quite often mentioned concern that growth might bring more traffic, lack of diversity and gentrification of housing.

The SWOT analysis was a meaningful exercise that was intended to help each of the neighborhoods begin to focus on neighborhood and community issues. The items identified through the SWOT analysis, are not necessarily identical to factors that became issues in later meetings. However, their discussion facilitates the development of the issues that our citizen's feel much be addressed by the comprehensive plan or the various neighborhood plans.

