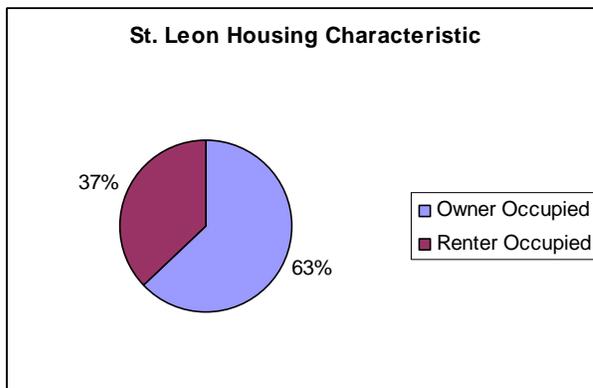


Source: American Community Survey – 2009 data



Source: American Community Survey – 2009 data

What the above data represents is that St. Leon presently, is for the most part a very stable community. However, if some of the trends concerning out migration of both youth and the general workforce are not reversed an even greater threat may evolve concerning the ability of the community to maintain itself with a declining tax base.

**SWOT Analysis – (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats)**

One of the first tasks to undertake in determining the direction the Town of St Leon should follow in engaging an Economic Development strategy was to conduct a comprehensive SWOT Analysis. The process used was to interview community stakeholders and local businesses to determine both the current status of the community

as well as future needs and direction of the community. From these interviews five categories were considered as critical to the development of St. Leon. They are:

Community – St. Leon

Utilities

Workforce/Education

Sites

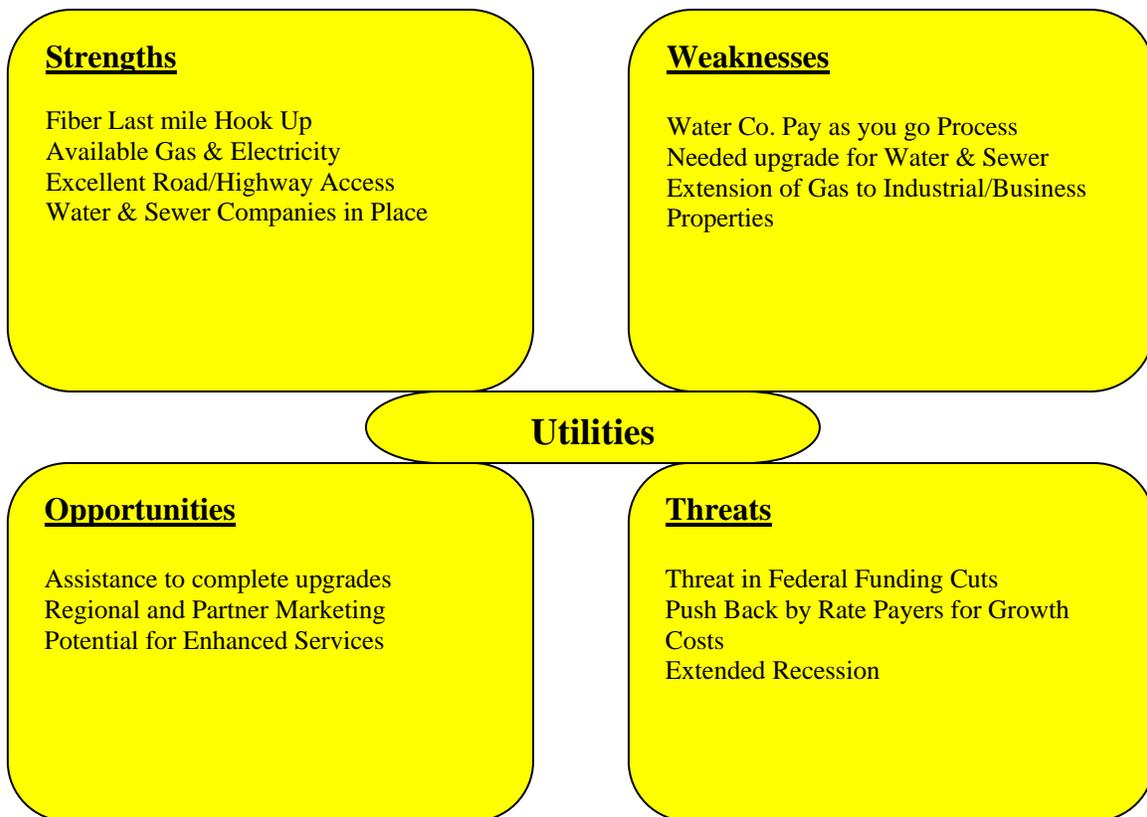
Quality of Life



The community is poised for growth due to its location and the quality of the people that live there. St. Leon’s access to good roadways and a sound labor force along with significant land for future growth puts them in an enviable position in both Dearborn County as well as southeastern Indiana.

However, the community leaders must also keep in mind that there is a thinking in the general community that the residents want to keep it like it is. Leadership must find a way to bring this thinking in line with a smart growth community, one that is both progressive, but not growth for growths sake. This can be done, but it will take dedication to being open to suggestions and new ideas while protecting what made the community great in the first place, its people. Slow but steady growth should be the overall goal for the community; i.e. managed growth. A potential process that could be used by St. Leon to improve and further educate the community about the Economic

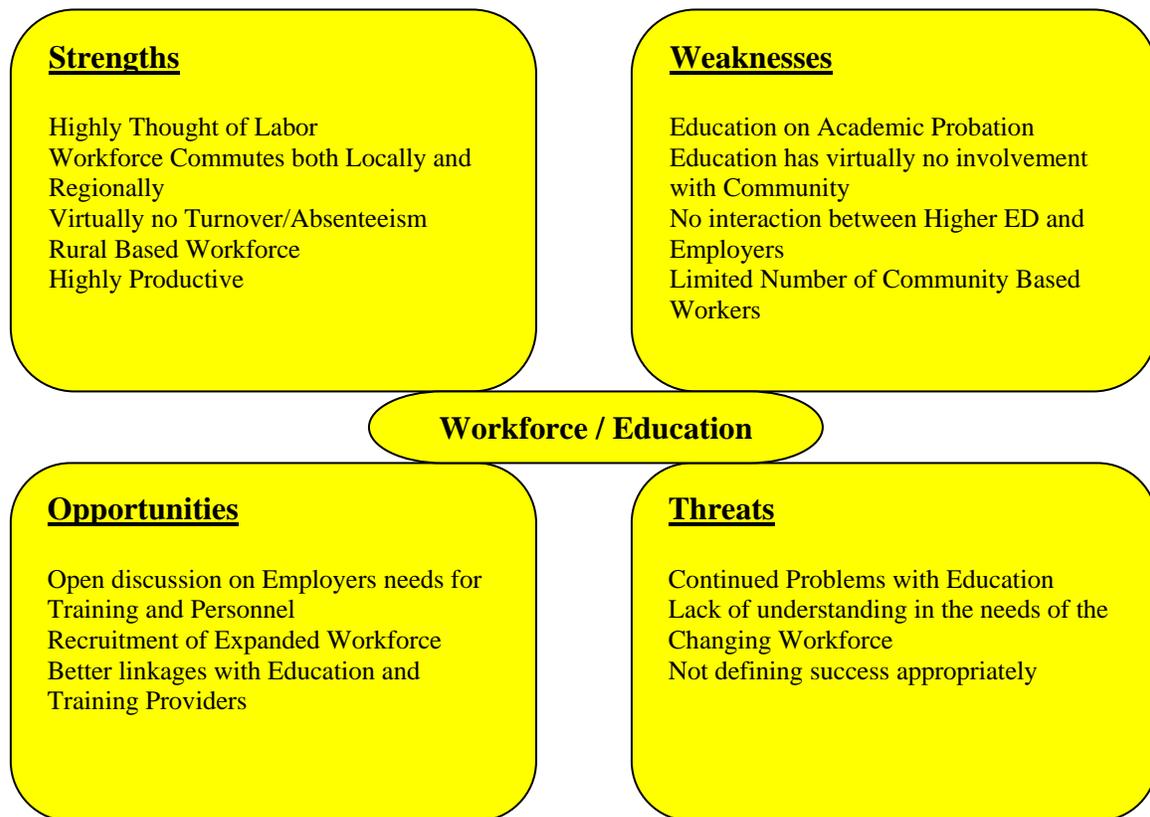
Development process is to have annual updates for the community as a whole and discuss both progress and new and continuing problems that affect the growth process. Provide for input from the citizens to identify solutions for the problem areas as well as identification of new potential development ideas. This could act as an update to this current plan and give the community a base from which new priorities can be obtained for the community to accomplish. Another idea to consider is to create a committee of youth to help and have input into the direction that the community should consider. They are the future workforce and having input would give them a sense of both involvement and ownership of the community and the process.



The community has a number of positives that make it unique among Southeast Indiana Communities. Three private utilities that are both aggressive and have strong infrastructure in place and are poised for growth; Duke Energy, Ohio Valley Gas and Enhanced Telecommunications Corporation and are willing to assist the St. Leon area. The fact that the last mile of fiber is in place throughout the community is a very strong point, which will allow the community to market itself as a highly connected community. This could relate to the potential of technology based jobs targeted by the community for location.

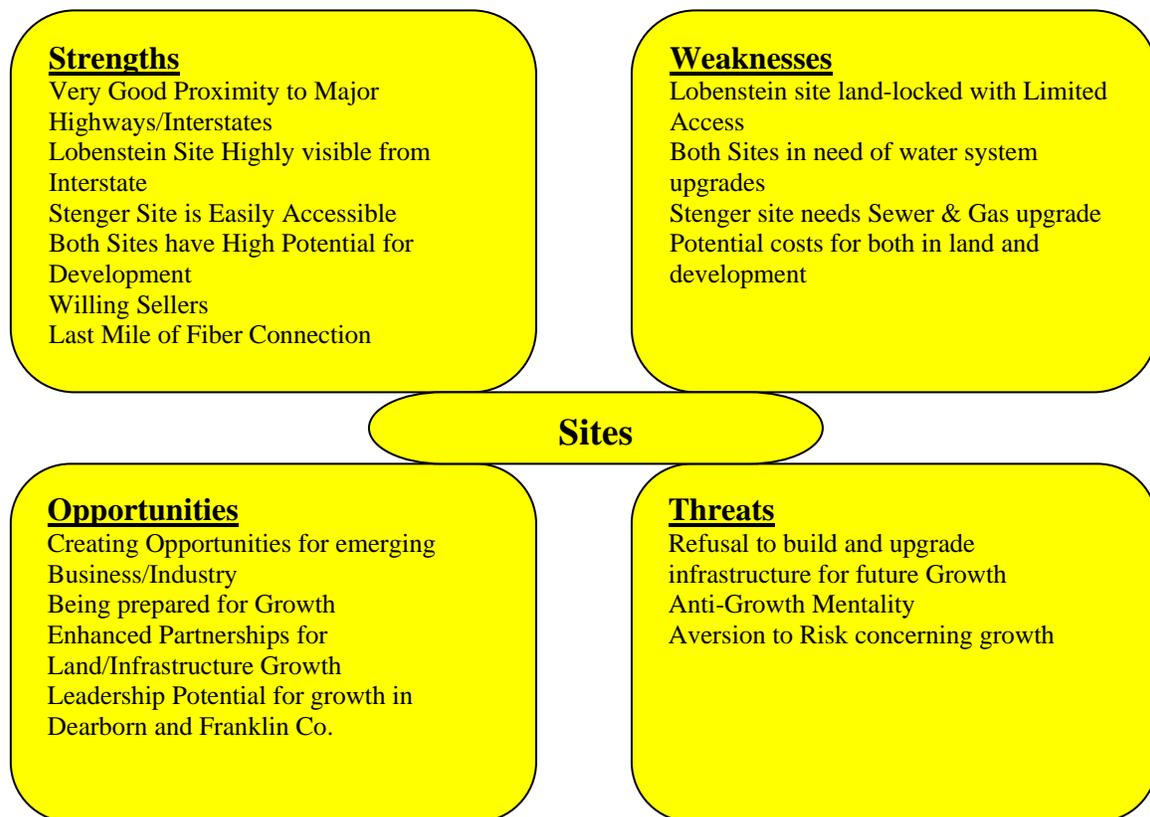
However, there still are some utility needs in the St. Leon area. While both water and sewer are in place and adequate for the current needs, there will be a need to upgrade both services at the two identified locations to meet business and industry requirements.

By working with both entities and by identifying potential resources these upgrades will be able to be addressed. An initial program explaining the need for advanced building as well as the impact will need to be accomplished so as to allow for the understanding of the need for upgrading the various systems. It is understood that in the past many utilities have expanded on a pay as you go basis, relying on the investing party to pick up the tab on extensions. In this highly competitive environment for the location of both new jobs and investment, those communities with the infrastructure in place and sized appropriately will be the ultimate winners a majority of the time. One of the critical issues is that of both timing and money. Both can create problems within the Economic Development process. There are potential solutions to the money side of the equation. These include the creation of a Tax Increment Finance District, which allows for the taxes raised in the district to pay for infrastructure improvements, a second is the use of infrastructure funds from two sources from the federal government the Economic Development Administration and the USDA Rural Development Division. Both require an application and some match to be provided as well as potential payback on funds used for the creation of an industrial/business park. Another source for upgrade funds is the State of Indiana from two potential sources including the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs. Both have some grant monies available for specific investment projects. If any of the above are used then the impact on individual rate payers should be minimized and address the issue of pre-building the improvements.



The current workforce is very highly thought of. The fact of high productivity and minimal turnover will relate positively with future employers as will the very low absenteeism found in then area. There are some problems with both the labor and education found in the area, they include a limited number of locally based workers, the school system being on Academic Probation (rightly deserved or not) and the lack of dialogue with area businesses on the basic education needs of the area.

To address these problem areas, the community should attempt to open a dialogue with the school system to determine ways that both can work together in identifying and addressing the issues that allow for a comprehensive approach to a sound economic development process. These issues include graduation rates, co-use of facilities, volunteerism, curricula enhancement and any other ways that could enhance the activities of each entity. Additionally, the community should begin a dialogue with Ivy Tech to establish closer ties to the businesses located in the St. Leon area. Another area of concern is the recruitment of people to fill the jobs that if located in St. Leon would be needed. Thought now should be given on how and what needs to take place to recruit people to both live and work in the St. Leon area.



There are two primary sites under consideration for the purposes of this analysis. Both have significant strengths and both have some weaknesses. The strengths for both are their proximity to major transportation routes and high visibility, willing sellers and high

development potential. The fact that they both have within easy access the last mile of fiber connection is a definite asset for both sites in terms of development.

Both sites also have some issues that must be addressed prior to them being developed or marketed. One site is virtually land locked from an efficient development perspective. A potential access point from Indiana Route 1 should be identified and constructed. Both sites are also in need of water system upgrades to handle the industrial and business needs of fire protection (sprinkler systems) and potential regular daily use. The site out Route 1 need water and sewer upgrades as well as gas upgrade to be able to serve potential industrial users that may locate on the property. Both sites will also need some general improvements on site to make both highly developable. There are sources to achieve these upgrades but local decisions must be made and committed to make both sites attractive for development.



Again, St. Leon’s access is critical to its Quality of Life. It is rural based and has available numerous outside activities nearby to take advantage of throughout the year. The citizens have a strong community linkage and volunteerism is quite strong. The fact that they are highly connected (fiber) also lends itself to a good quality of life allowing for interaction with the world. The community is also benefited by having forward thinking leaders that have a vision of the future and how it can be leveraged for all of the citizens.

Even in light of all of the positives, St. Leon has issues that need to be addressed. There is no image or community identity that relates itself to the Town of St. Leon. Thought should go into what type of image the Town would like to have or be thought of by the rest of Dearborn County as well as the State of Indiana and the region. Currently there is little in the community to keep their youth in the area following their high school years. There are also limited activities for younger youth and families to take advantage of in the way of local parks if they are not part of the school system. There is also a need for basic services in the community to further strengthen it including additional retail, restaurants, medical clinics and affordable housing stock for new entrants to the community. All of these can be addressed with additional resources and good future planning by the Town and its citizens. The town may want to consider the establishment of a formalized volunteerism component that would both foster the concept of volunteerism as well as provide a program for assisting both the community and the residents when there are issues of need.

### **Target Industry Analysis**

Selecting target industries and businesses for St. Leon is a multi-step process. In Phase 1, the SWOT, we identified the area's strengths and weaknesses as a location for business growth. From this, we utilize a "site selection" process that attempts to answer the following four questions:

1. **Are there local assets that give specific industries a competitive edge? What clusters currently exist locally, and are they growing?** Immediate and obvious candidates for targets are those that are experiencing growth within the community or surrounding communities. Industries that have a large presence but lack growth suggest that the county is losing its competitiveness in this industry. While the industry may be a candidate to target for a retention effort, a long-term decline calls for a close look at transitional opportunities into new industries that create jobs (e.g. textile workers transitioning into food processing).
2. **Are existing or emerging local clusters growing nationally or undergoing geographic dislocation?** For those local clusters that have potential, are they growing nationally as well? While some industries are experiencing high growth rates, most U.S. industries are modest or stagnant in their growth. However, the dislocation of industries from one part of the country to another has been a longstanding opportunity for recruitment. Many industries undergo restructuring in order to be more competitive or simply suffer a high rate of startup and failure.
3. **Communities are as unique as people.** Each one has strengths that companies can leverage to create competitive advantages. These strengths can include such things as workforce skills, tax structure, infrastructure, and market proximity. Likewise, many companies have specific infrastructure and workforce minimum requirements, and understanding whether the region can meet those requirements is crucial. For example, if the region lacks water and wastewater capacity or has overly stringent environmental regulations, then the community could be ruled