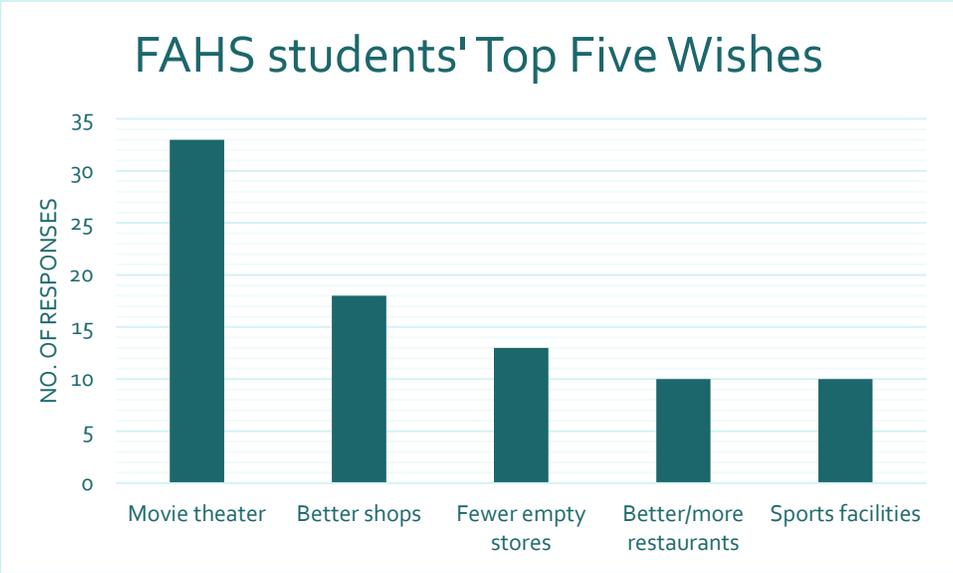


IN TEN YEARS...

In January 2016, a group of seventy-two Fort Atkinson High School students were approached to give their input about how they would like to see their community change in the coming decade. At the end of an introductory planning workshop and introduction to the community visioning process currently happening in Fort Atkinson, students were tasked with answering the question "Ten years from now, what would you like to see in Fort Atkinson?"

The results obviously reflect the priorities and experience of most teenagers, with some of the most common answers being "a movie theater (32 votes)," "Cherry Berry," and "Starbucks." However, it is also clear that the students of Fort Atkinson care deeply about their community, and many of their



answers can offer insight into the priorities of the younger generation.

LOOKING FOR ACTIVITIES

As in many small towns, the teenagers of Fort Atkinson often feel left out. Many expressed a wish for more year-round activities for teens to take part in, including several wishes for indoor and outdoor sports facilities, improved parks, and options such as additional shops and restaurants, laser tag, paintball and go-kart.

While many of these may not be economically viable in Fort Atkinson, the implication is clear. A full 57% of the students listed some entertainment activity on their wish list. Notably, most of these students were 14-15 years old, and therefore unable to travel to reach entertainment on their own. Students clearly feel that entertainment options for those without access to transportation is lacking.

"Maybe like a teen place where you can dance on Fridays."

"I want to see more events like Rhythm on the River."

"More places and opportunities for teenagers to go and hang out and have fun."

"More sit-down, non fast-food restaurants."

"In ten years, I would like to see more activity places for the winter time."

LOOKING TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE

Many students noted one of their main priorities for Fort Atkinson's future was to see an increase in the number of small businesses, job opportunities, and a thriving downtown. Thirteen of the students wished to see no empty storefronts on Main Street, while six expressed a wish for a greener or more aesthetically pleasing downtown through greenery, street art, or more beautiful buildings.

Another popular wish was for more, or better, shopping options in town. Some of these suggestions were general, while some mentioned the popular chain stores that students are familiar with. Again, many of these suggestions may not be economically viable in Fort Atkinson, but it does show that young people don't find much to interest them among our current downtown business mix.

"(I would like to see...) more expansion, larger companies, and more jobs."

"More environmentally friendly buildings."

"I want to see more events like Rhythm on the River and no open storefronts, more family owned businesses."

"I think we should really clean up Main Street by adding more things like trees and flowers. I would like to see all the shops filled, but not just with things like retirement businesses...If it's possible, I think we should make the buildings look nicer too."

MODERN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Most of the students who participated are unable to drive, and thus heavily reliant on the city's pedestrian infrastructure, or rides from others. This may have colored some of their observations and wishes for additional transportation options, and more support for pedestrians.

"I would like to see buses that transport to Madison, Johnson Creek, Milwaukee and Janesville. They can also stop and pick u people in neighboring towns."

"(I'd like to see) crosswalks where they're needed and more of them."

"Safer communities – more sidewalks on streets without them."

"More drivers stopping for pedestrians."