

FORT ATKINSON COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE

CONSENSUS VISION SKETCH: ORGANIZED BY PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING

The facilitator has compiled the revised consensus vision ideas developed by the Steering Committee at their February 11th workshop. This represents the participants' "consensus vision sketch" for the Fort Atkinson community using a framework around the principles of community placemaking. As described on page 36 of "Principles and Practice of Community Placemaking", the purpose of this vision sketch is:

- *To develop a narrative vision which describes what a desired community would look like in the future.*
- *To use the actual language of the community, as close as possible, in order to reflect the values of the community.*
- *This vision of success provides the target for actions and strategies which, when implemented, would move the community of Fort Atkinson toward its vision.*

The decision-making process was based on standard definitions of consensus. Subsequent to the workshop, the facilitator slightly adjusted the format and wording in response to a request by participants.

Also, in response to input by Steering Committee members to the Project Manager, additional context was provided in the "Corollary Principles and Vision Ideas" part of this vision sketch. In addition, reminders about what will happen at Workshop 5 (excerpted from the Project Understanding and Scope document) are included in a section on Follow-up Activity of the Steering Committee.

Each vision statement describes the "desired end-state" of what the community would like to have in place at a future point in time. The typical lead-in phrase for each vision statement is illustrated as follows:

The Fort Atkinson community (we) will.....(add individual vision idea).

I. Physical Configuration:

Principle 1: Compact Community with Clear Urban/Rural Differentiation

- We will embrace the bypass while growing our community smartly and sustaining a healthy and prosperous downtown.

Principle 1: (Continued)

Note: There was significant discussion on these vision ideas. To further inform these ideas, the participants and facilitator reviewed the professional perspectives on the importance of this principle on page 8 of *Principles and Practice of Community Placemaking*, including these excerpts:

- A strong model of growth contains the vision of compact urban form while protecting the green spaces of natural areas and working farms around the periphery of the city.
- Future development patterns that recognize the clear distinction between the country and the community are positioned for sustainability.
- Future development patterns that are more compact and contiguous to existing development make communities more sustainable.

Principle 2: Strong Urban Center

- We will use our downtown buildings as an asset.
- We will better plan/define what we want downtown to be (i.e. Retail? Quaint? Services?).
- We will learn from other cities' downtowns (Niche opportunities? Services?).
- We will assess/plan for our downtown.
 - Consumer spending on retail
 - Other spending
 - Service
 - Hope to understand the best mix of those listed above.
- We will focus on the interests of downtown, realistic options and create a healthy mix of uses.
- We will better accommodate our smaller business start-ups in downtown (With access to Madison College/UW Whitewater Innovation Center and other expertise); Example: incubators.

Principle 4: Integration of Housing and Employment

- We will have housing close to where people work.(including downtown)

Principle 7: A Mix of Housing Types

- We will have rental options for young professionals (affordable, competitive, adequate quality)
 - Will have middle-range costs in rentals (ranging from \$550-\$700 in current dollars).
 - Will use to recruit young professional (so we need housing for this sector).
- We will have innovative ways to address housing needs (Example: Waterloo had incentives).
- We will access housing grants and further utilize other available grants such as offered through the County (further involve banks in this effort).

Principle 7: (Continued)

- We will leverage partnerships with other Jefferson County communities to address similar issues (i.e. collaborate more on housing; work together on opportunities with the proposed Medical College in Jefferson; other).
- We will address issue of buildable lots so we need to address these physical limitations at identified general locations throughout the City (Example: there are approximately 60 lots behind Pick 'N Save but only about 30 of these lots are buildable.)

II. Circulation and Transportation:

Principle 8: Pedestrian and Bike-Friendly Environments

- We will make it easier to bike by identifying bike corridors (bike paths).
- We will take advantage of biking by making safer paths (to Carnes Park and other destinations).
- We will create safer bike routes and create safe routes to all schools.
- We will create, add and “infill” sidewalks in several subdivisions (many from the 1970’s and 1980’s).

Principle 9: High Quality and Convenient Public Transit and Transportation

- We will use the by-pass to bring people to our City.
- We will have better ways to get students who don’t drive to schools (Example: to Madison College).
- We will address the transportation issue (elderly, youth) and recognize this needs addressing as a County issue (significant needs for both social and community services).
- We will improve our existing roads.

III. Natural and Cultural Resources and Environment:

Principle 10: Environmental Resources and Parks

- We will identify our physical assets to better meet our needs (Rock River – Federal Waterway Designation).
- We will recognize that we are strong in this category (Natural Resources) and keep it up.
- We will better showcase our “river walkway” (should be a center piece) and linkages to Lake Koshkonong (and its future).

Principle 11: Preserved Farmland and Related Open Spaces

- We will retain our agricultural identity (and our agriculture history) and linkages to local foods.
- We will preserve our farmland and our uniqueness for local agriculture (more local, more organic).
- We will have “Information Technology” links to agriculture enterprise.
- We will build on our strong base and support for agriculture and related start-up businesses.

Principle 12: Historic and Cultural Resources Preserved and Integrated into Contemporary Settings

- We will build on our cultural assets and integrate them into economic development and other strategies.

IV. Identity and Sense of Place:

Principle 13: Strong Local Character, Community Identity and Sense of Place

- We will be a self-sufficient County (everything we need should be here).
- We will build on our nine (9) international companies (small town and international business – unique identity).
- We will capture and canvass to make sure we are marketing our unique attractions.

Principle 14: Public Spaces Enlivened by Work of Art and Sculpture

- We will “frame our area” with these strengths (including the “arts”).

V. Attributes to Instinctively Draw Us to Places:

Principle 15: Connectivity

- We will have enhanced signage for “wayfinding”.

Note: Participants are interested in providing additional context and definitions on the concept of wayfinding. The facilitator changed roles and provided some research-based concepts around the concept of “wayfinding”:

Wayfinding is the process by which you move through an unfamiliar environment toward a destination. It is a hierarchical system of navigational cues that you internally process while you are on the move. Wayfinding sign systems have become popular tools to help communities guide visitors and convey a positive image. (Source: The National Trust Main Street Center)

Principle 15: (Continued)

- We will build on motor-coach destinations (Fireside) and other attractions (Café Carp, Lorine Niedecker).
- We will have ease of access to our downtown for special events/attractions, and assure downtown safety related to pedestrian and parking safety (market our good location to draw people from the west side, from high school events and from the Fireside).

Principle 17: Variety and Whimsy

- We will address entry ways to our community (add whimsy; make attractive; also relates to Principle 15).
- We will create unique, new activities (riverboat rides incorporating the bypass; be creative) Bring the FUN back!

Principle 19: Many Choices and Many Things to Do with Sociable Settings

- We will have flexibility, unique needs of younger generation (interest in giving back, philanthropic opportunities and other personal rewards).
- We will have opportunities to involve diverse communities (including youth, Latinos and women), and integrate them into the community (engage sectors of the population not engaged in the City, and provide leadership opportunities.).
- We will invite, listen to and engage diverse populations. (Better identify diverse groups and involve them in new ways.).

Corollary Principles and other Vision Ideas and Strategy Areas **(Related to the Support and Implementation of Placemaking Principles)**

The three additional areas in this section are fully a part of the “Consensus Vision Sketch”.

Economic Generators

- We will build on assets of those drawn to town (amenities that our business draws, i.e. 2 Rivers Bicycle and Outdoors).
- We will create an identity of strong employers and opportunity for good jobs that attract and maintain workers. (Characteristics of good jobs include those jobs with flexible benefits, opportunities for career growth and provide personal fulfillment.)
- We will continue our good mix of employment opportunities.
- We will have a diversified economy.
- We will support a culture that supports entrepreneurs.

Economic Generators (Continued)

- We will bring together “clusters” in innovation centers (examples: agriculture, science, business investors, education and other sectors)

Note: The *Principles and Practice of Community Placemaking* document (Page 4) identifies corollary principles, including “Economic Generators” that are also fundamental to making places special and of high quality. A community must have a strong economic base and economic vitality to support quality places. The synergy of the private sector in concert with the public sector drives community revitalization. It was determined that this corollary principle is actually a component of or “cuts across” many of the identified principles. Ideas around “economic generators can also be considered as strategies or part of a pattern of policies or actions necessary to support and implement the principles of quality places. For these reasons, ideas around economic generators are not included in the primary listing of principles, but are certainly imbedded in key concepts of placemaking.

Growth and Change

- We will better understand and have active dialogue around “growth potential”, growth trends and implications of growth in Fort Atkinson (Note: Include exploration about the limits of growth which has been identified as 15,000 people based on natural boundaries and geography).
- We will determine and figure out:
 - How big do we want to be?”
 - How do we define “growth”?
 - Do we want to grow or not?
 - How do we want to grow?
 - What type of growth do we want?
- We will figure out “how we want to change”.

General Community Quality and Livability

- We will have high quality schools, good jobs and good health care.
- We will build on our location and proximity to education (day-care, pre-school, K-12 and Madison College; and re-tool people for new careers, move to new places in their lives and lifestyles through education.)
- We will build on our being the hub of wellness and health care.
- We will help our partner communities so we are all strong.

Note: The *Principles and Practice of Community Placemaking* document (Page 5) also identifies a link between placemaking and notions of sustainability and quality of life. The reference to community livability has gained prominence as part of urban design movements committed to reestablishing the relationship between the art of building and the making of community, through citizen-based participatory planning and design. An argument can be made that the ultimate outcome or long-term vision for a high quality of life in the future is both sustainable and livable places; sustainable and livable places should reflect a balance among environmental, economic, equity and livability values.

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