



Student Advisory Council Meeting DeForest Area High School January 21, 2022

COMPREHENSIVE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Overview

On January 21, 2022, Nick Johnson from MDROffers Consulting (Village Planner) met with the Student Advisory Council at the DeForest Area High School to discuss updates to the Village's Comprehensive and Redevelopment Plans. 10 students participated, with students from each grade represented.

Students provides feedback on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the Village of DeForest, and shared how the Village should change and grow over the next decade or two. The following are student responses, data, and information from each exercise.

Exercise 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

STRENGTHS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to Madison• Schools – quality and proximity• People-driven community• Community activities• Food/shops in community• Recreational activities• Mixture of old/new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highway access (Interstate/Highway 51)• Small-town atmosphere• Safe schools• Community bond• Farmers• Homes with large lawns/large lots• Mixture of incomes
WEAKNESSES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs a lot to run a small business (many are run out of homes, might not be able to afford a building, or a commercial building to house the shop might not exist)• Farmers affected by Village growth and expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most new housing is located on small lots, many homes are cheaply built, most do not look attractive, are located too close to one another, and do not have access to nature• Windsor/DeForest jurisdictional complexities
OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land available around the Village for growth and development• Attractive/family community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing home prices
THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion of Madison/growth may make DeForest too urban• Growth affects small town feel/charm• Community bonds decline with more growth• Small shops could be affected by growth (Aranda's – local vs. Burrachos - chain)• Development costs affecting existing residents/businesses (increasing costs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth affects existing residents/families that have been here for decades• Crime coming in from the City• Local farmers threatened by growth• Repetitive businesses (too many chains affect local shops/restaurants)



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COMPREHENSIVE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Exercise #2: Future Land Use and Redevelopment Mapping

Small groups participated in a mapping exercise to map areas where they believe the current land use ought to change or areas where they believe redevelopment ought to occur. Below is a summary of the responses.

Group #1:

- Roadway by Murray Street
- Behind Chase Lumber, by Village Hall building
- "Overy" by Little Potato Company

Group #2:

- Hahn Road/County Highway I: "weird farmland"
- The River floods a lot and affects all of the houses, which could be a problem for future development near the River.
- River Road/Interstate 39/90/94: really close to busy road
- Highway 51/Gray Road: really close to 51, not a good spot for a neighborhood

Group #3:

- "North and South" restaurant strip mall, and new parking lot

Group #4:

- Highway 19/Pepsi Way: run down and ugly looking buildings, needs to be updated
- Conservancy Place area: good
- Chapel Green/Park Crossing area: really small lots
- Seminole Way/Lexington Parkway/North Street area: needs to be updated, homes and parks out of date.

In addition, there was extensive discussion during this exercise, summarized below:

- Students were not concerned about having fewer shops or restaurants in DeForest, as Sun Prairie and Madison (East Towne) are not far away and they enjoy going to those places.
- Students enjoy the small-town atmosphere of DeForest and stated it's a great place to raise a family and grow up. Keeping the Village small and family-friendly were mentioned repeatedly.
- There is concern about the Village growing too quickly. Students expressed concern with DeForest becoming too urbanized.
- There was an in-depth discussion about new developments having too small of lots, with homes too close together, and not enough green space or nature. Older neighborhoods with large yards, trees, and access to nature were preferred.
- Many students did not realize DeForest extended to and south of Highway 19.
- Several students expressed confusion about the DeForest/Windsor boundary, and wished to understand more about the boundary and relationship between the two Villages. Students asked why DeForest can't extend east of Highway 51, and also why certain portions of Windsor are "in DeForest" (the Oak Springs subdivision).



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COMPREHENSIVE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Exercise #3: DeForest in 2040

The final exercise consisted of individuals filling out a “DeForest in 2040” worksheet. This exercise asked several questions to have students imagine what DeForest could and should look like by the year 2040. The questions and student answers are listed below.

1. What types of housing do you see as you walk through the Village? What are some characteristics of the neighborhoods?
 - Very modern looking, open concept, natural light.
 - A combination of both new and older homes. Nice spacious neighborhoods.
 - Larger lots with single and multi-family housing.
 - Multiple-family, nice looking, spacious, well-built homes.
 - Crammed new housing, larger older houses.
 - I see a lot of suburban neighborhoods with a bunch of plain houses. If not, double houses.
 - Nice house, backyard.
2. What do the streets look like? How do people get around DeForest? How do people get to other places in the region (i.e., Madison, Sun Prairie, Waunakee, etc.)?
 - I think the streets will be similar. Cars will be different but rules/regulations similar.
 - Nicer roads/highways.
 - Streets have sidewalks so people could also walk or bike if they choose to. People use the Interstate and 51 to get to nearby towns.
 - Trees and nature, people primarily bike and walk in rural neighborhoods – they drive to places you can’t walk and when weather doesn’t permit.
 - I drive around DeForest, most people drive to Madison, Sun Prairie, and Waunakee.
 - Most of streets where I go in Morrisonville are cracked.
 - Clean, walk/bike/drive, driving to other places.
3. What sounds do you hear as you walk down the street?
 - Honestly, I don’t think the sounds will be any different. I think street sounds will be quieter since there will be more electric cars.
 - Other people, maybe dogs.
 - Nature – not urban busy sounds.
 - Cars, dogs barking.
 - Cars and cars.
 - Birds, kids playing.
4. What types of people live in DeForest?
 - It’s going to be completely family-based.
 - Hopefully still quite a lot of older people but also younger generations.



**Student Advisory Council Meeting
DeForest Area High School
January 21, 2022**

COMPREHENSIVE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

- Younger people starting families and some older families as well.
 - Community-oriented young families.
 - Young families, older couples.
 - I see most of any, any race, sex, personality living here.
 - Everyone, all ages, shapes, colors.
5. Are there many parks and green spaces in DeForest? What areas of the Village or surrounding area are preserved?
- Hopefully most farmland is preserved but also new places.
 - There are parks and green spaces in the neighborhoods preserved to stay green. Places around rivers and woods are saved.
 - Yes, a LOT, as much preservation as possible, that's what makes DeForest great.
 - Yes, many parks throughout DeForest.
 - A decent amount. Enough where you can go anywhere and find some.
 - Yes, several.
 - Yes, there are lots of parks and greenspaces all around the Village. The areas around the river and the existing parks are preserved and new spaces have been made and protected.
6. If you stopped someone on the street and asked them to describe the Village in three words, what might they say?
- Peaceful, quiet, spacious
 - Small-town, secluded yet accessible
 - Community-oriented, rural/nature driven. Well-preserved/quiet.
 - Local community bond
 - A decent town with food and fun
 - Quaint, quiet, safe
7. Where do people go for entertainment? To meet their daily needs? For employment? For shopping?
- Entertainment:
 - Parks, trails, shops
 - Not big places/fun small areas for entertainment
 - Sun Prairie/Madison area (x2)
 - Laser tag, movie theater
 - Parks, bowling
 - Daily Needs:
 - Pick and Save
 - Sun Prairie/Madison (x2)
 - Grocery, necessitates, we have a lot of resources in surrounding areas
 - Shopping:



**Student Advisory Council Meeting
DeForest Area High School
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COMPREHENSIVE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

- Small businesses
 - Sun Prairie, Madison
 - Lots of local businesses
 - Sun Prairie
 - More shops
 - Pick and Save
 - Jobs:
 - Small businesses (x2)
 - Lots of local businesses
 - Any local places or Sun Prairie/Madison
 - Higher paying jobs
 - Shops, small businesses
8. What does DeForest's downtown area look like? What kinds of businesses are located there? What do the buildings look like? Is there any housing in the area? What kinds? Are there any other community or civic buildings? What events happen downtown?
- Family-owned restaurants, cafes, and bakeries
 - Small family-owned businesses. Some condo/apartments.
 - Pretty isolated and nature-y while still giving that fun energetic downtown feel
 - More multi-purpose buildings, apartments, more Village-type buildings
 - Tons of businesses of any kind like downtown Madison
 - Small business, foods, minimal housing, parks
9. What types of schools are in DeForest? What do they look like? Do they appear well maintained? Are they active?
- Hopefully the same schools, well maintained, updated as needed
 - Well-maintained, safe schools
 - Community active schools, we have such a great atmosphere and school spirit. Very maintained and innovative.
 - Preschools, more newer type schools
 - Expensive, very well maintained with thousands of students
 - Well maintained, modern
 - The schools are safe and accepting places. They look nice and have open spaces. Well-maintained.