

Cedarburg's Community Vision
2001 to 2020

BLUE RIBBON VISIONING COMMITTEE
January 2002

Committee Members:
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"The most effective way to ensure the value of the future is to
confront the present courageously and constructively."
Rollo May

January 14, 2002

Mayor James Coutts
Members of the Cedarburg Common Council

The Final report of the Cedarburg Blue Ribbon Visioning Committee

Enclosed is the final report of the Visioning Committee. Throughout the past 13 months your committee worked diligently at establishing a report that will provide you with insight into the hopes and vision of your citizens for the future of Cedarburg. We included ample opportunity for citizen input; utilized the expertise of Peter Maier from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Center for Initiatives and Research; consulted with City staff; and gathered and considered additional information to formulate recommendations. Our hope is that you will find these recommendations both informative and helpful.

We have organized the information into three sections:

- PART I a multi-page summary, evaluation, and set of recommendations
- PART II survey results, forum comments and other material that assisted in deliberation for Part I
- PART III other materials, supporting documents, charts, graphs, etc.

The Committee has worked tirelessly to establish a vision that truly represents the desires of the citizens of Cedarburg. This report includes both challenges and opportunities for the City of Cedarburg. We are eager to share this report with the City and feel that it has valuable implications for the City of Cedarburg. There is one concern, however, that weighs heavily on our minds. We are hopeful that the report will only be evaluated in its entirety. Caution should be taken

so that isolated responses and information are not focused on and used as a platform for singular issues. Great care has been taken to organize this as a community vision report to assist the City in its future. We are proud of our accomplishment and this report and look forward to its adoption.

Cedarburg Blue Ribbon Visioning Committee

A Vision for Cedarburg

In the year 2020, the City of Cedarburg continues to be a quaint, yet progressive, vibrant community. Life in this very safe small town is supported by quality educational opportunities, a well-educated and active citizenry, and a well-balanced economy. Linking the past with the present by fostering a continued effort at historic enhancement, this charming hamlet on Cedar Creek, which dates back to the mid-1800s, maintains its character. Historic appreciation and preservation is a community value that provides Cedarburg with a link to the past, guiding it into the future. The downtown, its natural setting, and quality of life are the special attributes that result in Cedarburg being the envy of most other communities. Thanks to slow growth with cautious and balanced development in both the residential and business sectors, the city boasts a broad economic base. Providing a variety of housing options, this municipality enjoys increased property values that contribute to the desirability of this community. In addition, the high level of valued city services, which are enriched by quality city staff and inter-governmental cooperation and sharing, reinforces the attractiveness of Cedarburg. Moreover, the solid support for broad-minded school systems prepares students to effectively compete in the global arena.

A main feature of Cedarburg's allure involves its utilization of nature, green space, parks, well-maintained recreational facilities, and community activities. Focusing on residents and visitors alike, with families as the central influence, the City offers annual festivals, numerous events supported by local civic organizations, the up-to-date library facility, the Cultural Center, and a Performing Arts Center to encourage community participation, and a vast array of cultural opportunities. This is further accentuated by the essential belief of its citizens in volunteerism and an overwhelming desire to maintain Cedarburg's quality of life. The sense of community revolves around open communication between city officials and citizens that results in a respect for diversity of people and opinions.

The Cedarburg populace recognizes the importance and interrelationship of economic variation and maintenance of reasonable taxes. This manifests itself in an economically vital downtown and locally supported businesses which also provide employment for local residents. The inhabitants of Cedarburg are content with their small town setting. They exhibit a pride found in few American communities. They eagerly show off their well-kept businesses, attractive neighborhoods, well-manicured yards, well-maintained homes, public facilities, and tree-lined streets.

Cedarburg has faced and continues to face the modern dilemma of growth, change, and loss of identity. Acknowledging these obstacles, the community of Cedarburg has done its best to ensure that the special characteristics that make Cedarburg "unique" are proactively preserved.

In formulating our report to support the vision of Cedarburg several considerations were involved. The following lists were very important in our deliberations.

External factors

The first list refers to the external factors that continue to play a role in our city. Many of these we have very little control over, but nonetheless they are issues that must be addressed.

Highways and roadways influenced by state and county decisions

Proximity to Milwaukee / Metro location

Access / location to I-43 and US 41/ 45

Environmental mandates and new found environmental problems

Declining State aids

Fluctuating school enrollment

Aging Population

Development in surrounding communities

Competition from neighboring communities (retail / housing /
business)
Comm 83 septic rules
Urban sprawl / migration to the suburbs
High cost of energy
Federal, State, and County taxation
Federal, State, and County legislation

Strengths

The second list refers to the catalogue of strengths, which we identified as most significant to the present quality of life in Cedarburg. These strengths need to be preserved and safeguarded.

Downtown	Low crime rate / sense of safety
"Mystique" of Cedarburg	Peaceful
Historic preservation	Green space / nature
Sense of community	Trees
Quality of Life	Sidewalks
Neighborhoods	Water quality
Small town feeling	Friendliness
Strong family values	Good planning
Strong civic associations	Property owners
Educated citizenry	Pride in property ownership
Strong volunteer spirit	Geographic convenience
Deep caring for the City	Proximity to Milwaukee
Control over community appearance/	Aesthetics
Variety of educational opportunities for all ages	
Cultural opportunities for adults and children	
Quality of public and private schools	
Strong City Government	
Public services:	
Volunteer fire department	
Parks	
Police department	
Emergency response	
Volunteer emergency government	

Weaknesses

Unfortunately, Cedarburg's weaknesses seem to over-shadow some of our strengths and show an interrelationship that can appear contradictory. For example, the many valued public services (strengths) may lead to higher property taxes (weakness).

Shortage of candidates for political office
Political polarization
Fragile downtown business base
Under-utilization of downtown at night
High property taxes
Challenges in recruiting volunteer firefighters
Outdated library
Traffic flow; road connectivity
Lack of space for manufacturing growth

Values

The most substantial aspects that guided the committee in its vision mapping were the common values that are most important to our citizens at the present, and for the future.

High quality and quantity of public services
Safety / low crime rate
Small town character

Family values - family activities
Higher education
Appreciation of historic value and preservation of city
Parks and green space
Quality K-12 education
Well-maintained property
Norman Rockwell feel
Volunteer spirit

Recommendations

The following pages outline a series of recommendations to support the "Vision of Cedarburg." While these recommendations may appear aggressive, we need to consider the following:

- These recommendations are intended to be implemented over a 20 year time frame.
- Many of these recommendations are a continuation of practices and policies in place today.
- These recommendations are the shared responsibility of city staff, elected officials, city committee members, and citizens.

Lastly, in the true spirit of Cedarburg, we must set our goals high and work to realize those goals as a collective citizenry.

Small Town Atmosphere

- Ensure that the Plan Commission exerts architectural control to tie development to the quaint historic character of the city.
- Encourage monitoring of rate of growth to equal that of the past 20 years (1% - 1.5% annual average).
- Develop an annual report to Common Council and Plan Commission on current population growth and projected cumulative total through the period ending 2020.
- Expand dialog with Town of Cedarburg and developers to strengthen land use policies with regard to critical issues.

In order to maintain the small town atmosphere which is the most significant characteristic of Cedarburg, there must be a conscious effort to exert architectural control that connects both new development and any redevelopment to the historic character of Cedarburg. Historic designs, styles, and qualities should be more than encouraged; rather, they should be mandated.

A serious issue that faces all communities in Wisconsin is the issue of growth. The citizens of Cedarburg have a general anxiety about the direction that growth may take. An annual report on growth will alleviate fears of citizens and keep the rate comparable to the desired 1% to 1.5% average annual growth.

The importance of the Common Council and Plan Commission in directing the desired order for this vision cannot be overstated. It is their obligation to foster historic designs, styles, and qualities, thus ensuring that development maintains the historic character of the City.

No land use plan for the future can be made without input from the town of Cedarburg. The City and Town rely on each other and need to address their concerns regularly and meaningfully in facing land use issues.

Quality of Life

- Safeguard against taking Cedarburg's quality of life for granted.
- Ensure protection of Cedarburg's desirable quality of life.

Guaranteeing the quality of life is probably the most nebulous of all challenges for the City of Cedarburg because quality of life means different things to different people. This characteristic of Cedarburg was discussed at length in all of our dialogues and needs to be continually addressed. The only way to ensure its protection is to make quality of life an explicit part of any decision. It is imperative that the quality of life issue is advanced in all city conversations on all levels.

Historic Preservation

- Acknowledge the necessity and significance of the Landmarks Commission because it is not mandated and is highly beneficial to the community.
- Maintain relationship between historic preservation and tourism.
- Explore partnership with local, state, and national programs such as UWM Historic Preservation Institute.
- Continue and expand enhancement awards, library resources on preservation and restoration, and projects with local (e.g., Ozaukee County Historical Society, Cedarburg Landmarks Preservation Society, etc.) and outside preservation groups.
- Develop capacity to seek intergovernmental grants for historic preservation, engaging grant writing consultant if necessary.

Linking the past with the present as a guide for the future has been an effective theme for Cedarburg in recent decades. Landmark preservation and enhanced public awareness and appreciation of the community's heritage have a major impact on our quality of life and our economic well-being, especially tourism. It should remain as a primary focus of our tourism promotion. New funding alternatives should be pursued, including grants and city partnering with local preservation groups. Sources of historic preservation expertise should be actively accessed to help assure maximum effectiveness for our efforts.

Downtown

- Recognize the importance of services for both residents and tourists in the downtown.
- Create a more specific "mini-master plan" for downtown that includes elements of historic preservation and economic development:
 - Enhance user-friendliness of downtown through increased parking, improvements in pedestrian safety, and adequate signage for attractions and services.
 - Foster cooperation between city Economic Development board, Chamber of Commerce and businesses.
 - Devise a plan to encourage local customers to utilize existing shopping areas.
 - Develop professional office space downtown in upper level spaces.
 - Explore compatible and complementary uses for existing property.

- Focus on the significance of our most cherished characteristic: a **unique historic, commercial downtown** that is the envy of most communities.

Increased focus on the cherished City of Cedarburg Historic District is needed. An updated comprehensive plan should include a special "Mini-Master Plan Overlay" to explore harmonious and complementary retail uses that are both resident and tourist oriented. Expanded cooperation and support between City government, the Economic Development Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and retail businesses are essential for the continued success of the downtown area.

Community Pride

- Continue to foster community pride through expansion of city enhancement awards, improved local ordinances regulating home and business appearance, seeking and publicizing grant opportunities for citizens, and developing a list of city services available to citizens at cost.
- Provide positive activities for youth.
- Establish citizen partnerships, including school efforts to enlist youth, in maintaining boulevards, parkland, storm grates, trees plus parkway maintenance, and citizen planting and care of medians as part of an "Adopt-a-_____" program.
- Continue and expand landscaping requirements for all developers.
- Establish a training and education program for citizens through the forestry department.

The pride a citizenry has for its community provides a feel for the spirit of that community. Community pride can be seen throughout Cedarburg from its historic city hall structure, to its downtown, to its parks and to its neighborhoods. Continue to honor individuals and businesses that strive to maintain the aesthetic beauty of our community, via community enhancement awards.

Increasing citizen participation in a variety of projects helps maintain the picturesque quality of Cedarburg and provide an ever-increasing pride in "Our Cedarburg." Encourage citizens to take advantage of grant opportunities for citizens to repair, restore and beautify their properties. Positive and rewarding activities for our youth are important and need to be developed. Citizen partnerships, including youth, in maintaining "public properties" instill a positive base of community involvement and responsibility.

Volunteerism

- Use outreach to encourage diverse participation on committees, boards and commissions including a cross section of citizens.
- Communicate city's needs for volunteers and encourage businesses to provide release time for volunteerism.
- Solicit youth involvement and sponsor educational programs for youth as global citizens.
- Recognize citizens, businesses, schools, and service organizations for their service to the community.

Our community would not be what it is without the help of numerous volunteers who annually provide thousands of hours to local projects, committees and activities that enhance the quality of life we so value here in Cedarburg. In addition to the services provided by organizations, the city develops and communicates a detailed list of

community volunteer services to keep our citizens informed of ongoing requests for volunteer assistance. To help foster youth involvement, the community works with the schools to develop age appropriate services that could be provided by students from elementary through high school in a variety of interest areas (parks, festivals, nursing homes, library, youth sports). We value the skills and services provided by our community volunteers and recognize them annually for their contributions to the city.

Culture

- Cultivate a partnership and programs with Cedarburg and Milwaukee-based arts and cultural groups.
- Market both the Cultural Center and PAC in Ozaukee County and Southeast Wisconsin.
- Unify political will on funding for CPAC through city/town involvement.
- Continue support for festivals and other community celebrations.
- Plan for an updated library facility downtown.

Cultural enrichment is imperative to the soul of a community, and Cedarburg has a unique situation: proximity to Milwaukee, wonderful facilities, a history of successful festivals and most important, a large experienced community of artists and artisans. There is an opportunity to market all these attributes to become a regional center for the performing arts.

Through cooperation of all the citizenry we will work to maintain our two vital cultural venues, the Cedarburg Performing Arts Center and the Cedarburg Cultural Center. Through active marketing strategies and partnerships with Milwaukee-based art and culture groups both arenas will present well-rounded performances that encourage the growth of each venue. It is agreed that festivals and other "home-town" celebrations add to the charm and warmth of our community.

Having an up-to-date library facility is necessary to ensure that the lifelong recreational, educational and cultural needs of the community are met. A centrally located downtown library helps maintain the viability and vitality of the downtown area.

Communication / Active Citizenry

- Develop ethos or culture of respect for citizen comments at public meetings.
- Provide all public meeting agendas and minutes on web site and cable TV.
- Explicitly acknowledge the difficulties of "hot button" issues; attempt to get all viewpoints and opinions.
- Increase/facilitate frequent communication between government and citizens, through actions like more frequent publication of newsletter, televised meetings, web page reports on governmental activities, "State of the City" meetings, etc.

The most important strategy for Cedarburg in the 21st century is not to redefine the structure between citizens and government, but to strengthen the relationship among them. Placing citizens at the center will remind us that the central purpose of government is to serve the

people and that it is the basic compass guiding our community through this period.

City Government

- Continue to provide opportunities and encourage Committee/Common Council members to participate in formal training on municipal finance and budgeting.
- Adhere to guidelines setting the amount of debt service to be supported by property taxes.
- Require fiscal impact analysis for all future development proposals.
- Conduct feasibility study on marketing additional utility services, as well as other city services (e.g. Department of Public Works, Fire and Police).
- Mobilize citizens to lobby against unfair and/or unfunded state mandates.
- Create contingency plan for negative changes in the economy and/or state subsidy programs.
- Utilize local university expertise, urban initiative programs, and independent consultants to assist in maintaining or lowering property taxes.

As the Visioning Committee explored issues that surround its citizens, businesses, and the partnership between state and local government, we were repeatedly struck by the need for ongoing training, data collection, dispute resolution, and research. The future of Cedarburg depends on understanding quickly what works best and why.

Universities around the state already invest considerable energy in these efforts. For example, Marquette University's Mediation Center provides a valuable service to local governments. The University of Wisconsin Extension also has expanded its traditional outreach mission to include services to local governments.

The Cedarburg of this vision is stabilizing government's cost, improving the way it works, utilizing its assets, and growing the economy. This strategy, in the near future, will strengthen the services citizens receive while reducing property taxes they pay.

Valued City Services and Public Safety

- Maintain and enhance the present level of city services.
- Continue capital improvement budget planning and projections for managing expenditures.
- Educate residents on the benefits of shared services.
- Propose shared services with neighboring communities when service levels increase and/or unit costs decrease.
- Conduct research on both new and existing programs involving shared services with Ozaukee County, the State of Wisconsin and the Cedarburg School District.
- The safety of Cedarburg is directly contingent upon the continuous support by the community for the Police and Fire Departments through both financial and moral support.

The citizens of Cedarburg appreciate the high level of valued city services because such services enhance the city's appearance and maintain a feeling of safety reminiscent of the past. Through Cedarburg's leadership in working with other local units to develop

inter-governmental cooperation when such arrangements lead to the involved parties sharing economic advantages, the City continues to provide top quality municipal services at reasonable costs. A police department that works with the community and an outstanding volunteer fire department are greatly appreciated and supported by the residents.

Parks and Open Space/Recreation

- Encourage and enlist citizen participation (e.g., facilities maintenance; coaching).
- Lead efforts to share service and facilities with neighboring communities.
- Continue utilization of Park Plan and update with the Master Plan.
- Ensure that parks are centrally located in new developments.
- Work with the school district to create a more extensive recreation program.
- Continue to expand a hiking/biking trail system.
- Identify "hidden" parks and unused parks so that all community members may make use of them.

Continued focus is needed to maintain and enhance the Cedarburg Park and Open Space System Plan. The philosophy of neighborhood parks and expanded multi-use hiking and biking trails with regional intersections is recommended.

Preservation of all conservancy areas and environmentally sensitive areas is advocated. Expansion of open space is suggested to aesthetically enhance the overall appearance of Cedarburg and provide more recreational usage. Pursue state and federal assistance in acquisition costs or development of desired park system improvements.

Roads & Traffic

- Create a city Road Plan and establish a Traffic Study format with allowances for annual review.
- Reconcile zoning and land uses to prohibit development that adds undesirable weight and volume to existing roads.
- Be careful in giving up control of roads within the community that could effect control (of its uses) and the city's destiny.
- Work to maintain influence over Wauwatosa Road (State Hwy.181) to guarantee community input in the future of the road.
- Engage "calming" road design; discourage internal pass through commuter traffic.

During this visioning process the Wisconsin Department of Transportation publicly demonstrated its intent to expand engineering guidelines concerning future road design projects. Some important goals -- such as improving pedestrian safety, addressing environmental issues or reducing noise levels, protecting the area's character, and reaching for design consensus -- will now be emphasized.

With slow to moderate population growth, the City of Cedarburg should have few (if any) requirements for additional new road construction. Existing residential streets can remain calm and require only normal maintenance. New road construction should be networked with existing roadways to ensure connectivity.

Environmental Safety

- Develop an environmental plan that will recognize the significance of environmental issues for the future and become proactive in establishing both local and joint community proposals that will:
 - Preserve present aquifers that supply water to the city.
 - Conduct a study of ground water supply and consider needs of existing users.
 - Budget for exploration of new water sources as needed.
 - Publish an annual report, in lay language, addressing water supply, water quality and potential problems.
 - Be proactive in establishing dialogue with neighboring communities in regard to groundwater issues.
 - Address air and noise pollution issues as they arise.

Cedarburg presently enjoys good water and air. However, it is necessary to plan for the future and become proactive in safeguarding the quality of our environment. This should include communicating with neighboring communities, the county and state.

Education

- Continue communication with the town on the effects of development on school enrollment.
- Maintain and expand continuing education opportunities.
- Seek alternative uses for under-utilized facilities, when relevant, such as adult education or satellite sites for college classes, and market the district through the state open enrollment policy.
- Support job-training programs between schools and businesses.
- Maintain and enhance cooperation between public and private schools to enhance cost effectiveness, acknowledging that good schools cost money.

Education is a major community strength and concern since quality schools add greatly to the appeal and value of our community. A harmonious working relationship between the schools, government and businesses ensures that our schools remain strong and able to provide the kind of education required for all students to function in the 21st century. Continuous communication between the city, town and schools enables us to plan for population fluctuations that will affect future school enrollments and space availability. Government/community cooperation with the school district allows us to develop other facility uses when enrollments are down that benefit the community as a whole, both economically and educationally. Our citizens recognize the need for ongoing community support of education in public and private schools.

New Business Development

- Create a plan for new business development that addresses the following questions: What? Where? How? At what cost?
- Identify a niche business development strategy that is compatible with Cedarburg's character, and leverage state activities in such areas as venture capital and Centers of Excellence.
- Evaluate existing business siting opportunities and support utilization of those sites.

- Resolve conflict over proposed Highway 60 business park by updating an analysis of costs and benefits in light of changing economic conditions, providing the community with possible financing plans for such a development and providing the community with plans for marketing the development.
- Compare cost/benefits, financing plans, and marketing plans for Hwy. 60 to other potential business sites.

Thoughtful and responsible new business development is not only welcome in the Cedarburg of this vision, but is vital to the success of the overall vision. City government, business organizations and companies must come together to define a thoughtful approach to business development before irreversible major commitments are made.

Recognize and take advantage of major trends that are outside Cedarburg's direct control and influence (e.g., Wisconsin's biotechnology focus), and develop a niche business development strategy (e.g., biotechnology firms or high technology firms or other growth industries) to effectively compete with neighboring communities. The business plan should make full use of what Cedarburg has to offer (e.g., quaint downtown, a highly educated work force).

There is no doubt that the Community of Cedarburg feels that a new business park is necessary; citizens supported a business park in community forums, the community conversations, and the survey. The issue of the Highway 60 location for a business park must be resolved, enlisting the help of an outside party to serve as facilitator if necessary. Decisions must be based on an updated analysis of costs and benefits in light of changing economic conditions, possible financing plans (including public/private and intergovernmental options), and plans for marketing the development. The cost/benefits, financing plans, and marketing plans for Hwy. 60 should be compared to other potential business sites. New business development should be in a location that protects and preserves the key qualities cherished in Cedarburg by retaining green space and shielding surrounding neighborhoods from visual pollution, truck traffic, and noise.

As supportive as citizens are of a new business park, they are equally adamant that this park is built at minimal cost to taxpayers. Responsible new business development must balance the potential for increased tax base with the potential risks associated with any major capital expenditure.

Local Business

- Develop a marketing plan to define opportunities for new businesses.
- Develop a plan to create and maintain customer traffic for additional entertainment opportunities.
- Encourage all businesses, including North Washington and South Washington Avenues, to work together to create a unified character similar to Downtown businesses.

Retail and other local business in Cedarburg are strong components in the makeup of the Cedarburg small town atmosphere. They provide jobs, needed products and services for our citizens. They are a source of community goodwill via donations and volunteerism. There is a need to recognize the fragile nature of small business in our community. There should be a level of assistance provided to local businesses from a variety of sources.

Housing

- Encourage diverse housing options:
 - New single-family home size in the range of 1500 to 2500 square feet
 - Affordable
 - Senior housing
 - Duplex condominiums
- Study the impact of development through fiscal analysis, environmental implication and weight on public services and safety, e.g. traffic, police, schools, etc.
- Update the present Master Plan and utilize outside consultants to assist in this project.
- Annex strategically to complement existing land uses safeguarding the high quality of life.

The well-kept houses and residential sections of the City give its citizens a reason for community pride. Providing a variety of housing options for residents, the City gives consideration to the needs of a diverse population; a population that includes first-time home buyers, new comers, growing families, empty nesters, residents who want to down-size and retirees. Through careful planning that includes consideration of factors that have an impact on the community as a whole, the city maintains its quaint character and community pride, increases its desirability, and protects existing property values with appropriate zoning.

Conclusion

" But the bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet not withstanding go out and meet it." - Thucydides

The final challenge of this report revolves around the effort and energy that the Mayor and Common Council choose to embrace in carrying out the recommendations of the visioning committee. The suggestions are not necessarily clear-cut or without some personal evaluation, but they do represent a defined direction that the community desires at this time. Yet in the long run, we believe adherence to this vision will maintain those qualities and values which the citizens of Cedarburg hope will continue for at least the next twenty years. The future is ours to proactively face and thereby direct our fate in a consistent manner that will retain Cedarburg as our vision projects.

Time Line

November 2nd, 2000

Appointment of Visioning Committee

November 14th

First Meeting

December 5th and 6th

Community Forums were held. Basic Questions asked were:

1. What are the best things about living in Cedarburg?
2. What improvements or changes would you like to see in Cedarburg ?
3. What characteristics would be in your ideal Cedarburg community in 2020 ?

February 6th, 2001

Focus Groups /Community Conversations were held. Six groups were:

1. Church / School
2. Residents I
3. Residents II
4. Services
5. Economics / Business
6. Volunteers

Approximately March 15th
Surveys were sent out.

June 12th 2001
Consultant Peter Maier presented report on surveys to the
committee

June to December 2001
Analysis of survey results and formulation of report

January 14, 2002
Report presented to the Cedarburg Common Council