

FOND DU LAC VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

Student Workshop #2: St. Mary's Springs Academy Workshop

Friday, March 20, 2015

On the afternoon of Friday, March 20th, an *Envision Fond du Lac* workshop was held with 20 students from St. Mary's Springs Academy. Participants included students from the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes. The workshop began with a brief overview of the planning process and concluded with a student discussion of issues, concerns, and ideas. The workshop included a questionnaire exercise, from which participants shared their written comments with the overall group. The following is an issue-based summary of the input received during the workshop.

Note on Summary Context

The following is a summary of the thoughts, comments, and opinions received in response to workshop questions. Some comments were shared with the entire group, while others were recorded privately on worksheets. It is important to note that the items identified in this summary are not recommendations or observations of the consultant, but rather feedback and comments received from those who participated in the workshop.

Issues & Concerns

Students were first asked to identify important challenges facing the community and things they dislike about greater Fond du Lac. Participants voiced their concerns regarding a range of issues; however, many comments centered on key themes, which are summarized by issue categories below.

Restaurant & Business Development

Students want more restaurants. Students listed a few specific restaurants they wanted to move to the area, such as an Olive Garden. While some students felt the area needs more chain restaurants, others believe the area has too many fast food options and not enough family restaurants. Respondents also discussed the need to attract new businesses, largely retail uses, and make necessary improvements to the main street corridor and Forest Mall.

Activities & Recreation

Students noted a number of different activities and recreational opportunities they would like to see in the area, such as more parks, athletic fields, movie theaters, and areas to hang out. Many of these suggestions focused on the need for more youth and family friendly activities within the area. The Mall was stressed as a place not just for business development, but also for youth to hang out and spend time. Students emphasized the need for a new or better mall, including improvements to the existing Forest Mall.

Connectivity

Students noted that trail connectivity in Fond du Lac was lacking. Students discussed their need to have accessible paths for walking and bicycling. In addition, participants noted the need for improvements to the road system, such as new or increased stop lights, while a number of students highlighted Highway 23 as a problematic corridor.

Littering & Pollution

Students demonstrated a repeated concern for the environment. Students expressed frustration at the amount of litter in the community. Participants were also concerned about Lake Winnebago's and the river's water quality

and pollution, expressing that governments needed to do a better job of maintaining the area's natural assets. Discussion also addressed the need for new parks, open spaces, and natural areas, which could help preserve the environment in greater Fond du Lac and provide more outdoor opportunities.

Infrastructure

Closely linked with issues of connectivity, students also mentioned the poor state of roadway infrastructure. Roadways in greater Fond du Lac were described as "bumpy" and with pot holes. A few students also identified other areas, such as public facilities and aging buildings, which require infrastructure improvements.

Priority Actions & Projects

Students were asked to list ideas they had that could make greater Fond du Lac a better place. Their responses provide a wide range of ideas, which have been categorized under economic development, parks and recreation, governmental services, transportation, and identity. All responses are listed below:

Economic Development

- Build more apartment buildings
- Attract more businesses and retailers to Forest Mall
- Attract more businesses and retailers to Main Street
- Attract more restaurants, including well-known chain restaurants and health food options
- Attract more Starbucks

Parks and Recreation

- Add trails and nature paths for pedestrians
- Add more parks and nature areas, like Hobb's Woods
- Clean Lake Winnebago
- Develop ways for better use of Lake Winnebago
- Build a trampoline park
- Build a water park
- Build more athletic fields or sports complexes
- Construct a zoo
- Add more scenery at local parks
- Plant more trees
- Add more soccer fields and baseball diamonds at local schools

Governmental Services

- Provide homeless shelters and food pantries
- Clean litter and debris from streets
- Create a fundraiser to clean up the city, perhaps establishing a contest to see who can pick up the most trash
- Provide a larger budget for the library
- Develop more community centers like YMCA's

Transportation

- Make necessary roadway improvements
- Add more stop lights to improve connectivity and flow

- Clean up roadkill on streets
- Make improvements to street signs
- Add bike lanes and sidewalks on all streets

Identity

- Create more tourist destinations that would increase visitors and enable “sight-seeing”
- Host more community events and festivals, such as a County Fair
- Add more placemaking and pedestrian signs
- Improve signage and safety around schools
- Develop fresh and exciting advertisements for the greater Fond du Lac area
- Develop a program to get citizens involved and motivated in the community
- Develop locations where youth can hang out and socialize

Community Strengths & Assets

The workshop concluded with a discussion of the assets that greater Fond du Lac has to build upon and should be preserved moving forward. Workshop participants identified Walleye Weekend, South Hills Golf and Country Club, churches, and various food options as top strengths for greater Fond du Lac. All assets and strengths identified in the workshop are listed below:

- Lake Winnebago
- Fond du Lac Sports Park
- Taylor Park
- Golf Courses
- South Hills Golf and Country Club
- Fairgrounds
- Hockey rinks
- Blue Line Family Ice Center
- Disc golf courses
- Walleye Weekend
- Color Run 5k
- Water Parks
- Residential neighborhoods
- Churches
- Library
- YMCA and offered extracurricular programs
- Health facilities
- Local businesses
- Forest Mall
- Target
- Convenience stores
- Restaurants
- Fast food options
- Panera Bread Company
- Coffee houses

- Starbucks
- Residents
- Historic buildings
- Automobile uses