

Comprehensive Plan Update
Aldermanic District 4 Neighborhood Meeting Summary

November 6, 2014 – 6:30 PM
Mid-State Technical College
Community Engagement Room - 635
1001 Centerpoint Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54481

PRESENT: Community Development Director Michael Ostrowski, Associate Planner Kyle Kearns, Community Development Department Intern Kelly Strombom, District 4 Alderperson Mike Wiza, Plan Commissioner Dave Cooper, Chris Wiza, Mary Blavat, Jo Seiser, Kyle McNair, Tom Brown, Lars Smith, Neil Prendergast, Guy Janssen, Nathan Braatz, Cathy Dugan, Jon Snider, and Nathan Sandwick.

Meeting Summary:

Community Development Director Michael Ostrowski and Associate Planner Kyle Kearns provided a brief presentation where they described the city's comprehensive plan update project and visioning tactics to establish an overall vision for the community. This included describing the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis (SWOT) to assist in gaining critical public feedback and input. Staff proceeded to provide examples of feedback and input which pertained to a small area or neighborhood, or to the entire community, citing that an overall vision is derived from an examination of the entire community.

A questionnaire was provided, of which can be obtained online, which included nine questions for participants and attendees to answer freely or use as a guiding document when providing input and feedback. Staff then led discussion amongst two small groups using the questionnaire as a guide. Responses to the questionnaire and feedback gathered by staff from public comment and conversation within the small groups have been summarized below for each question.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES FROM QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. What do you see as the community's major strengths and assets?
 - Skate Park
 - Independent businesses – local ownership
 - Amenities and assets of a larger community, but with a small town feel
 - Natural resources, arts, culture, architecture downtown, UWSP
 - Bukholt and Pfiffner Pioneer Park – all public parks
 - Emy J's and surrounding block
 - Cleanliness of community
 - Low congestion of traffic
 - Great bike-ability around the community, bike lanes and bike trails
 - Coop on Fourth Avenue and Second Street
 - Access to larger chain stores
 - Uniqueness of downtown
 - Riverfront Art's Center
 - Downtown directional study and plans
 - No one moves; stability with families.
 - Lack of crime.
 - The fourth district is close to the downtown and is walkable.
 - City ends with the fourth district (country outside the district). Lack of lighting.

- Two of the biggest parks are within the fourth district.
- Wisconsin River
- Lighting on the Green Circle Trail and in the parks is well done.
- Sentry Insurance
- Culture and UWSP (plays and entertainment)
- Sporting events
- The city is safe and clean.
- People have good ethics.
- Tolerance of other people.
- Stevens Point has a lot of businesses that give back to the community. They care what happens in the city.
- The city has good grass roots organizations.
- The fourth district has two good community gardens.

2. What do you see as the community's major weaknesses or liabilities?

- City Garage in Bukholt Park - relocate
- Lighting in downtown and throughout the City – to bright for drivers
- Dangerous to bike into downtown
- First Street and Second Street at the intersection of Centerpoint Drive
- High rate of rental housing
- Inspection department
- Old dilapidated buildings
- Brownfield sites in and around downtown
- Little downtown housing
- Neighborhood streets are too wide
- Geese and ducks in parks along the Wisconsin River
- Too much traffic for a small town
- Too many one-way streets.
- The city has a lot of light pollution.
- The city is ugly aesthetically – poor landscaping and poor signage control.
- Business and parking lot landscaping.
- Too many paved boulevard areas, these should be green areas.
- Lack of pedestrian access to Emy J's. There are no sidewalks around the business.
- North Point Drive needs to be stripped and marked for four lanes if it is going to be used for four lanes.
- Lack of turn arrows at North Point Drive and Division Street and Forth Avenue and Division Street.
- Southside. The city has concentrated so much effort on the downtown and east side, but we need to also focus on the southside.
- There are too many sidewalks to nowhere; lack of continuity.
- Lack of empty nester and young professional housing. Maybe Edgewater or Lullabye.
- Connection to the riverfront and downtown.

3. What do you see as the community's major opportunities

- Find a use for bathhouse at Bukholt Park
- Grocery store downtown
- Hardware store downtown

- Enhance the connection of downtown to the river
- Enhance corridors into downtown
- Expansion of riverfront parks
- Redevelop block along Centerpoint Drive near First Street
- Improve transportation in Division Street corridor and pedestrian friendliness
- Adopt Portage County Bicycle Plan
- Create a symbiotic and stronger relationship between UWSP students and faculty and the City Staff
- Improve lifestyle for students
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Potential to bury electrical lines to improve aesthetics
- Utilizing vacant city lots – such as for solar or sustainable energy resources
- A better connection amongst the City and UWSP regarding community events and planning
- Improve aesthetics in older neighborhoods – decrease width of streets
- Reduce speed limit on Division Street
- Improve Franklin Street pedestrian crossing at Division Street
- Encourage biking and walking at all times of the year
- Remove mid-block lights and utilize historic down-lighting in downtown as well as warm white light bulbs. Take ownership of lighting instead of renting from WPS
- Implement goals and objectives from past City plans and documents
- Protect and enhance trees, terraces and boardwalks – plant additional trees and species
- Add additional historic districts
- Create more natural parks, especially on shorelines which will help to prevent geese
- Promote Stevens Point's centralized location
- Include and implement sustainability in parks (lighting and machines etc.)
- Work to keep students after graduation from high school and college
- Selling itself as an historic, friendly, well functioning town, not as a suburbia
- Fox Theater
- Development growth
- Downtown revitalization - Jerry's Auto area.
- Convent property
- Lullabye and Belke property
- Develop a plan for the riverfront south of the Clark Street bridge (both sides)
- Have public meetings for what should go on the former Lullabye property.
- East Park Commerce Center and industrial development.
- Development area between Great Lakes and Shopko.
- Residential development on the former Lullabye property.

4. What do you see as the community's major threats?

- The city's dependency on cars
- Rules for small businesses
- Donations for parks and benches, etc. specifically for publicity and recognition
- Demolition of historic properties or potentially historic properties
- Remodeling of multi-family used residential homes
- Adding buildings in public parks
- Geese in parks

- Students leaving after graduation
 - University loss of students, competition amongst UW schools due to decreasing age bracket of 18-22 year olds
 - Lack of long term vision
 - Lack of passion from people and business
 - Jerry's Auto and environmental concerns.
 - City is limited in expansion opportunities.
 - People wanting to redevelop the riverfront with condos.
5. What is your dream for our community?
- Improved shoreline
 - A transition in leadership
 - No cronyism in the City
 - Promotion and expansion of local business
 - Increase in living wage jobs
 - Focus on equality and interior living characteristics
 - Landscape for people of all ages; kids safe walking across street; safer biking on roads; snow removal on sidewalks for elderly
6. What kind of community do we want to create?
- More parks
 - Living wage jobs
 - Redevelopment of brownfield sites
 - Dense development and infill in the inner city
 - Growth in downtown development
 - City workers and elective official more responsive and available to the public
 - Explicitly – welcome minorities
7. What would you like to see change?
- Remove minimum house size
 - Awards for businesses or incentive for existing local business
 - How to compete with local and large scale business
 - Don't zone for Highway 10 residential / retail expansion, which can be competition for local business
 - Keep money in the city and county, not in a corporation out-of-state
8. What would success look like?
- Growth, both size, and in quality of life
 - People growing up here, making a living here, raising kids here, and retiring here
9. Any other additional comments or feedback?
- City is doing a really good job despite the comments above
 - New energy will be seen with a new Mayor
 - Stevens Point is a nice city to live in
 - Keep the library downtown
 - Support and enhance all assets that support the quality of life

- Stevens point has great character and physical structure
- We need to preserve our parks.
- Expansion of parks is not a priority.
- Extend West Street.
- The city needs a gated community senior development.
- Strongs Avenue should be two-way traffic.
- City Hall should be located in the Chase Bank property so it can be brought into the public domain.