



Wisconsin Downtown Action Council

**The Thirteenth Annual Governor's
Conference on Downtown Revitalization**

**Hyatt Regency-Milwaukee Wisconsin
October 5, 2004**

**EXPLORING THE VISIONING PROCESS:
“ENVISIONING THE UNIQUE ELEMENTS
FOR THE SMALL COMMUNITY”**

Presented By:

Steve Grabow, Professor
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Jefferson County Office



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Purposes of Presentation:

- ❖ To describe how community research, education, visioning and planning can be integrated to help improve the downtown
- ❖ To illustrate in Jefferson County communities



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

To position downtowns for positive change and betterment, several important activities need to be put into place.

1. Readiness to change:

- Leadership with a few champions
- Commitment to a significant effort
- Resources to undertake the effort
- Some well-thought-out processes



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Positioning a downtown for positive change and betterment (continued)

2. Dynamic blending of key activities to help make good decisions
 - Research and community education - To understand how to go about a change process, to provide clues about what might work, to learn about and understand what might be of importance to work on
 - Visioning – To articulate a desired end state both descriptively and in graphic form
 - Planning – To develop strategies that respond to the issues and vision



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

- There are many processes or approaches to plan for change
- A solid approach for comprehensive planning as well as for functional or geographic areas (like Downtowns) is identified by many experienced practitioners in the University of Wisconsin-Extension
- The overall approach to planning with suggested steps and a look at processes that occur concurrently with planning are shown on the next two slides
- Approach appears linear, but is iterative and dynamic

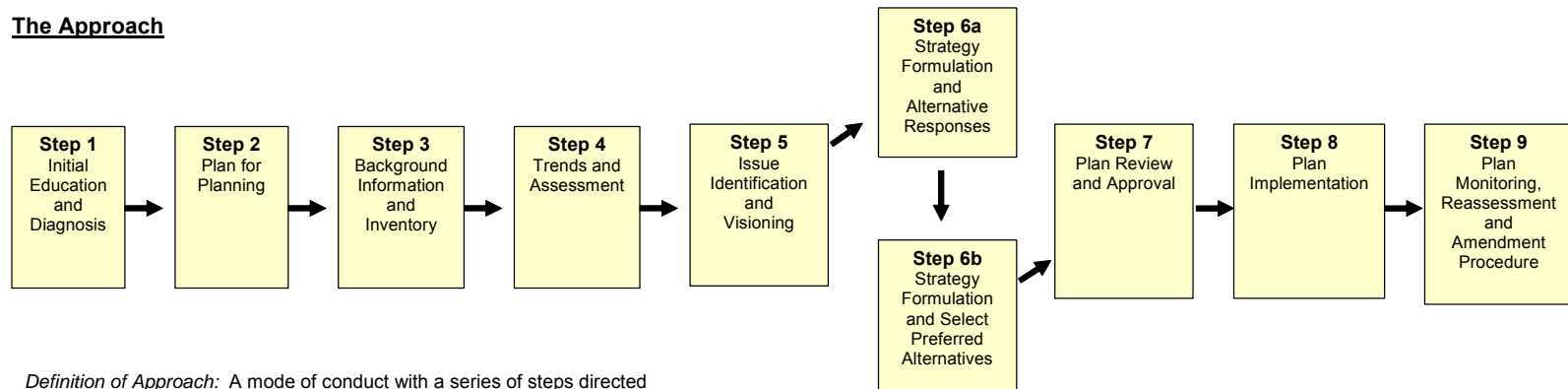


Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

Integrating research, education, visioning and planning: Jefferson County Examples

General Approach to Comprehensive or Functional Area Planning: A Proposed Road Map

The Approach



Definition of Approach: A mode of conduct with a series of steps directed toward achieving desired results.

Generate – Organize – Select: A three-step “mini-process” that occurs in many of the steps in the comprehensive planning approach.

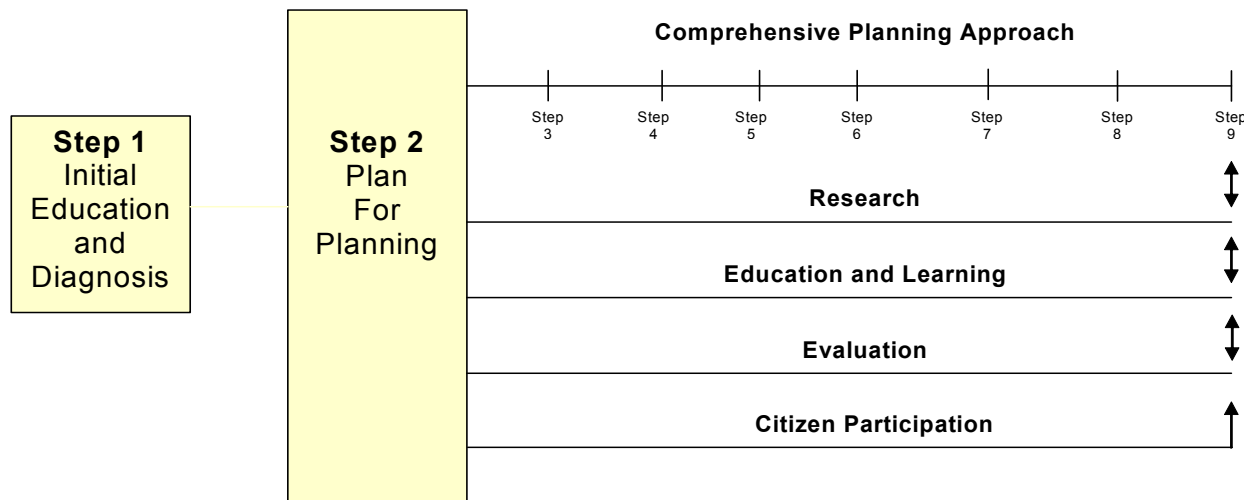


Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Simplified Schematic of Concurrent Processes During Planning

A simplified illustration showing how the parallel tracks of activities occur concurrently with comprehensive planning is provided below.



Source: University of Wisconsin-Extension, Citizen Participation Team/Comprehensive Planning Committee



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

- ❖ Example from Waterloo as a community where processes were integrated

A Tale of Two Cities Waterloo, WI and Dodgeville, WI		
	<u>Waterloo</u>	<u>Dodgeville</u>
Trade Area Population (2000)	12,377	9,382
Population Growth in Community	20.2%	8.7%
Per Capita Income	\$21,402	\$19,701
Downtown Traffic Counts	10,200	10,200
Major Employers	Perry Judd Trek	Land's End
Wal-Mart	No	Yes
Distance to Downtown Madison	22 Miles	38 Miles

A Tale of Two Cities Waterloo, WI and Dodgeville, WI		
	<u>Waterloo</u>	<u>Dodgeville</u>
Retailers in Trade Area	42	67 (Wal-Mart)
Service Businesses in Trade Area	53	59
Restaurants in Trade Area	8	16
Community Events Listed on Chamber Website	6	62



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Early Process Steps: Strategic Planning Emphasis

- Contacted by Waterloo Economic Development Committee chair to help them figure out what was important in the community and what to do about it
- Agreed to lead a strategic planning process to figure this out
- Provided some background education about definition and principles of economic development



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Early Process Steps: Strategic Planning Emphasis (continued)

- Led series of Strategic Planning workshops over nearly a year
- Strategic Plan approved with major issues being 1) how do we revitalize downtown and 2) how do we retain existing businesses
- The Waterloo Economic Development Committee then chose to focus on downtown



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Plan contained some strategies for tackling downtown, which included:

- a) A need to understand the economic of downtown
- b) A need to assess the condition, market and dynamics of the existing downtown (research)
- c) To explore scenarios for what downtown could look like in the future (vision)
- d) To figure out how to focus some strategies to change design and downtown (planning)



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Initial Community Education

- ❖ Brought in UWEX (Law and Ryan)
 - Economics of Downtown
 - The Design of Downtowns(Used some slides to illustrate their PowerPoints®)

- ❖ On Cable TV; good community turnout/
raised awareness
and excitement



Jon Reis Photography, Ithaca, NY

**UW
Extension**



Downtown Economic Revitalization

Presented to the Waterloo Ad Hoc
Development Committee

June 18, 2002

Bill Ryan
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Center for Community Economic
Development



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Developed a Proposal and Implemented a Market Analysis

Market Analysis Process

- Assessing the Current Situation
- Trade Area Definition
- Business Mix Analysis
- Demographic and Economic Analysis
- Business Owners Survey
- Analysis of Business Opportunities (Retail, Services, Restaurants, etc.)
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Niche Recommendations
- Space Utilization
- Marketing and Promotion
- Business Recruitment



- ❖ Market Analysis Tool Kit Guided by UWEX
 - With Core Committee of Citizens (WEDC all agreed to) identify a list of components:
 - Trade Area Analysis
 - Survey of Business Owners
 - Analysis of Demand for Different Business Types
 - A Summary of Promising Business Types for Waterloo

- ❖ Adapted First Impressions to visit two successful downtowns: Plymouth and Sheboygan Falls



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Sample of Research/Market Analysis Findings

Business Mix – Key Findings

	Comparison Communities (Average)	Waterloo Trade Area
Restaurants	15.6	8
Nursery and Garden Center	2.1	0
Florist	2	0
Furniture Store	0.9	0
Appliance, Electronics and Electronics Repair	1.5	0
Photography Studio	0.4	0
Jewelry Store	0.5	0
Child Care Center	3.5	3
Lodging	1.4	0

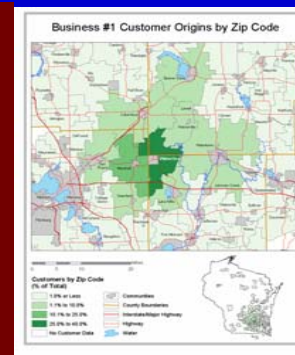
Business Owners Survey - Opportunities

Most common types of businesses that business owners feel would help the central business district:

- Coffee shop/Sandwich Shop
- Lodging
- Bakery
- Restaurants (Family-Oriented, Supper Clubs, Pizza)
- Florist
- Garden Center
- Drug Store
- Bike Store
- Barber

Trade Area Analysis

We need to know what areas generate the most customers for Waterloo





Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Waterloo's Downtown Vision Component

The Vision Process was a four-part workshop series of events including:

1. Hopes and Concerns Workshop
 - With Citizens
 - With Waterloo Economic Development Committee to determine concerns on Vision Statements
2. Downtown Visioning
3. Recommended Vision Statement and Downtown Visioning Mapping Workshop



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Session 1 - Hopes and Concerns Workshop

- ❖ Initially held as an evening workshop with 25 participants
- ❖ Generated Hopes and Concerns around seven functional components (or Topic Areas) of Downtown
- ❖ This is important for the citizens to express what they value and what they would like to see
- ❖ Ultimately the WEDC used a “We Agree” technique to come to consensus



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

Integrating research, education, visioning and planning: Jefferson County Examples

Consensus Downtown Vision Statements

These vision statements describe a "desired end-state" for the physical development of Waterloo's downtown. The vision statements are organized into seven topic areas.

A. Historic Preservation and Historic Downtown Buildings

- a. Hope for a "retro look" of older buildings, but with a modern function
- b. Hope to restore the old "community building" (South Monroe by the theater)
- c. Hope for refurbished and restored storefronts

B. Recreation/Natural Resources Links/River Corridor

- a. Hope for a festival function in the Fireman's Park area
- b. Hope to enhance the river corridor
- c. Hope to implement the river walk from a parking trailhead to the park (for biking, hiking, etc.)

C. Promotion/Public Events Space

- a. Hope for an information center/kiosk
- b. Hope for an entryway sign identifying community events

D. Business Support/Economic Restructuring

- a. Hope to establish a TIF district downtown

E. Physical Features and Improvements for Support, Access, Circulation (Parking Lots, Wayfinding Signs, Lighting, Street Furnishings, etc.)

- a. Pedestrian infrastructure supports and matches in a uniform theme (perhaps historic or other theme, i.e. carousel, bicycle and/or other themes)
- b. Vision for a carousel or other theme in some of the street furniture (bubblers, special murals, striped awnings)
- c. A vision for good wayfinding signs that make it easy to stop, park, shop and physically turn around
- d. Add street banners and wayfinding signs
- e. A vision for brick sidewalks and historically accurate street lamps
- f. A vision for exciting greenery downtown (featuring McKay)
- g. A vision for complying to "standards" for sidewalks
- h. Hope for a pleasant, low traffic area for shopping, dining and recreation at the Monroe Street "dead end"

F. Tourism Enhancements

- a. A vision for more lodging in Waterloo (more informal Bed and Breakfast or inn)
- b. A vision to adapt existing building into lodging (old Fire Station, old Community Center)

G. Other Dreams for the "Big Picture" or "Long-Term Vision"

- a. Have in place a store downtown for selling featured Waterloo products (i.e. bicycles and tree nursery products)
- b. Dream for a gift shop and a nice place to take family for a sandwich
- c. Dream for an "upscale" art studio (sculpture, unique art) to bring a variety of people to Waterloo



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Session 2 – Downtown Visioning and Mapping Workshop

- ❖ Over 20 participants
- ❖ WEDC members were given instructions on how to facilitate at four break-out tables
- ❖ Purposes
 - To provide workshop participants with an opportunity to graphically identify their preferred long-term vision for Waterloo’s downtown
 - To enable citizens to be creative and think “outside the box” for the future of the downtown
 - To provide ideas for the Economic Development Committee
 - To provide guidance to the Economic Development Committee



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Session 2 – Downtown Visioning and Mapping Workshop (cont.)











- ❖ Detailed “instructions” and a “Facilitator’s Guide” were presented
- ❖ Icons, colored symbols and colored pens were used on aerial photos of downtown to identify
 - Special places
 - Opportunities for Improvement
 - Gathering Places
- ❖ The desired end-product was “a colored drawing on an aerial photo showing special places, opportunities for improvement, gathering places, recreation and green space, parking need areas, linkages, pedestrian or recreation corridors, streetscape enhancement corridors and other ideas”.



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

Integrating research, education, visioning and planning: Jefferson County Examples

**Waterloo Downtown Visioning:
SYMBOL AND MAPPING KEY**

Special Places	
Opportunities for Improvement (general)	
<i>Note: List suggested opportunities below dot</i>	
- Underutilized Building	
- Historic Building for Restoration	
Gathering Place or Focal Point Destinations	
Recreation or Open Space Enhancement	
Parking Need Area	
Linkages	
Pedestrian or Recreation Corridor	
Streetscape Enhancement Corridor	
<i>(Place a bracket on the limits or edges)</i>	
Other Ideas or Feelings Related to Views, Noise, Perceptions	<i>Write or draw these on the photo (any color)</i>



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Presentation of Visions/Maps for Downtown

- ❖ The four tables each produced and then presented their vision maps to all participants
- ❖ The four downtown vision maps were then reformatted into a computer-generated aerial by Professor John Patterson, chair of the Geography Department at UW-Whitewater.



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Session 3 – Recommended Vision Statements and Visioning/ Mapping Workshop – *Introducing Words of Experience*

- ❖ In planning you have a multi-step process
- ❖ In each step you should formally or informally go through a mini-process of:
 - **Generate**
 - **Organize**
 - **Select**
- ❖ **Many processes are very strong at generating or brainstorming ideas and the organization of ideas may or may not be adequate. Where processes are often inadequate is with the hard work of selecting, or making the hard decisions on what is preferred.**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Waterloo's Selection of a Preferred Vision

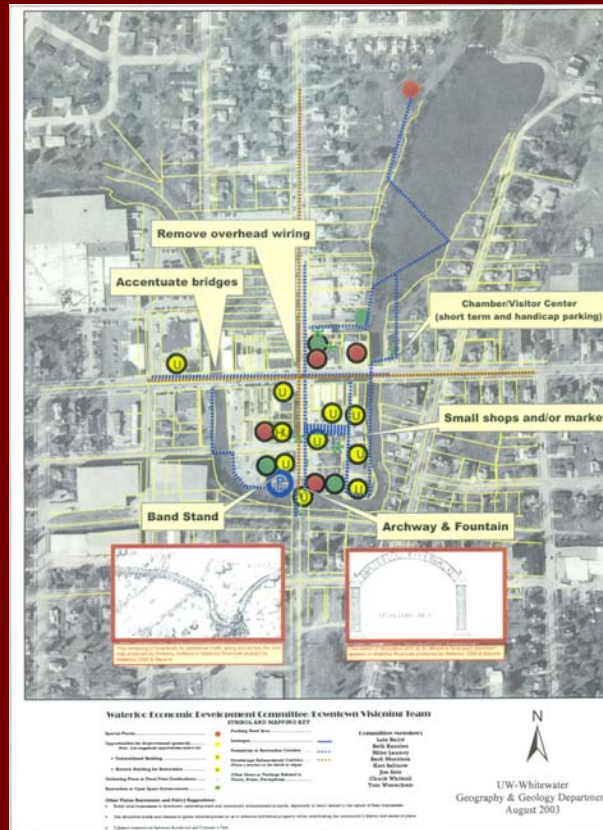
- ❖ In the Waterloo process, the WEDC and a few advisors agreed to make the selection of a preferred vision map. We called them the committee/visioning team.
- ❖ Dr. Patterson reviewed all four alternatives from the breakout groups and organized the ideas into some common themes.
- ❖ **The committee then actively debated what combination of alternatives they wanted to select as the vision for downtown.**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Waterloo's Recommended Vision/Map





Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Recommendations Contained in The Vision

- ❖ The final recommended vision proposed limits on boundaries for potential streetscape improvements.
- ❖ A focal point for downtown enhancements in the south Monroe Street area with a plaza, enhanced shopping and dining, and integrated recreation areas.
- ❖ **Proposed recreation paths, pedestrian routes, delineated trails and river walks.**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Follow-Up Recommendations in Final Market Analysis/Vision Report

- ❖ Hire a professional landscaper or architectural firm or urban design firm to use the Waterloo led Downtown Market Analysis and Vision as the basis for developing a targeted Downtown Market Plan and Education Design emphasizing:
 - **A unified streetscape plan for the entire downtown based on boundaries in the Vision**
 - **A detailed design for South Monroe Street area as a pilot project**
 - **Additional professional advice on sequencing, cost estimates, funding strategy and project coordination**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Current Status of Recommendations

- ❖ Schreiber Anderson has completed the Master Plan
- ❖ Has compiled a major community plaza and bicycle trail head with a four-way partnership with DNR, DOT, City of Waterloo and TREK
- ❖ **Planning to complete the plaza by year end 2005 as a cornerstone of downtown revitalization**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

Other Community Visioning/Planning Efforts in Jefferson County

❖ City of Jefferson

- Initial Education – Organizing for Downtown Revitalization (UWEX - Chuck Law)
- Strategic Planning
- Visioning – Two-Part Series (some similarities to Waterloo)
- Master Plan by consultant
 - Phased Plans
 - Implementation



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

❖ City of Whitewater

- Initial Education – Fact Sheets on Downtown (UWEX-Chuck Law)
- Combination of Strategic Planning/Community Visioning – Vision was a consensus narrative vision for ten Functional Components
- City is following up with a market study/plan by consultants



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

❖ City of Watertown

- Main Street Program sponsored a program on “Placemaking and Making Places Special” with UWEX
- Visioning and Master Planning has focused on a Downtown Riverfront Master Plan



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

❖ City of Fort Atkinson

- **A First Impressions Exchange with the City of Stoughton resulted in several projects being implemented**
- **A Master Plan for Downtown was completed several years ago and many components including downtown housing and a riverwalk are in various stages of completion.**
- **Private sector visioning leadership and development has been a catalyst to downtown revitalization**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

❖ Other Communities

- **Lake Mills has had a Hometown Lake Mills initiative**
- **Village of Palmyra has partnered with UWEX and private consultants for downtown planning**



Exploring the Visioning Process for Downtown Revitalization

*Integrating research, education, visioning and planning:
Jefferson County Examples*

❖ Lessons Learned

- **Community capacity is enhanced when a citizen group is empowered to fully participate in a process that integrates education, research, visioning and planning.**
- **Implementation potential is enhanced when good process works with wide-ranging community involvement.**
- **Downtown vitality and community placemaking is a key component of an overall vision in Jefferson County that appreciates sound land use planning and park and open space planning.**