



Village of McFarland Comprehensive Plan Priorities Exercise Results—Plan Commission March 31, 2016

1. WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF MCFARLAND? In answering this question, you might think about:

What McFarland in the year 2035 looks and feels like
How the community functions
What McFarland's best future features are
How the community inspires residents, land owners and businesses to improve their lives

COMMISSION MEMBER RESPONSES:

- Recognition that what McFarland provides is good, as indicated by the wide use of the Village's park systems and other amenities.
- Must view McFarland as a place connected with neighboring lands, particularly the neighborhoods between Siggelkow Road and the Beltline. Many people who live in this area and elsewhere near the Village identify with McFarland based on the School District, postal code, nearest library, recreation programs, parks, etc. It's almost impossible to separate that identification, regardless of municipal boundaries. Plan needs acknowledgment of these people, and how the Village can be enhanced as a result (e.g., bigger market for local businesses, piggy-backing off the Metro bus system).
- By 2035, there should be a better way to get people around the area. Village should be supportive of new transportation methods.
- A choice residential area for people working in Madison and in other locations along the Beltline and Interstate. Short distance to Madison's amenities with a separate community feel.
- Currently, tank farms separate the Village from the City but also form the image of McFarland to a significant degree. How to address?
- When most are asked the question, "Why consider moving to McFarland?," the most common response is the school system. Goal for this answer by 2035: "The school system *and* the amenities that are offered by the community." This could include biking/pedestrian trails, desirable parks with unique features, community/senior/youth center.

The consultant the read the vision statement from the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, which was as follows: "The Plan is formed around a vision of a community expanding east into well-planned neighborhoods thoughtfully linked and integrated by streets, sidewalks, bike routes,



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parks and open space corridors. A community with a downtown that is revitalized and re-shaped with civic, commercial and office development. A community that is aggressively approaching economic development opportunities through infill projects, re-development projects and new projects that reflect McFarland's 'small town' character. A community that is maintaining its reputation for quality schools, state-of-the-art community facilities, and safe neighborhoods."

Members' responses to this 2006 vision statement were as follows:

- The 2016 vision is probably not going to be very different. The Recession had a huge impact on what the Village intended to do in the past ten years.
- "Small town character" is a phrase that's losing its meaning; reconsider this. How does the Village expand and grow while remaining consistent with the qualities that one associates with smaller communities is the challenge. Need to develop a sense of place that provides comfort, and a way to break up a bigger community in smaller pieces.
- 2006 vision missed the important link between the Village and the greater Dane County area. This should include a fully connected transportation system, including bike/ped connections.
- There will be a reduction of people who regularly commute to work. Economic reality of how people's work is structured is changing and the Village needs to be on top of these changes. "Bedroom community" takes on a different meaning in this context.
- The previous vision for "safe neighborhoods" is perhaps better retooled as "healthy communities." There are a lot of connotations of "healthy community" – not only physical health, but an integrated community that moves forward independent of government. Changes often need to come from residents, not always elected officials or Village staff.



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2. WHAT INITIATIVES SHOULD THE VILLAGE PRIORITIZE OVER THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS? In answering this question, you might want to think about:

Land use or zoning	Transportation
Economic development	Recreation and community activities
Redevelopment	Resource protection
Tourism	Community services
Housing	Public facilities
Neighborhood development	Utilities & stormwater management
Historic preservation	Intergovernmental relations

COMMISSION MEMBER RESPONSES:

- Advance economic development, which means both direct recruitment of new and expanded businesses (growing the non-residential tax base) and enhancements to quality of life to make the Village a more attractive location for investment. Need to look at
- Respond to McFarland’s unique assets and limitations. It is a good place for small and mid-sized businesses, but does not have many large sites for bigger industries. Consider targeting a particular niche(s) to McFarland and a business with what they need to thrive. Tech manufacturing start-ups?
- Expand the concept of McFarland’s “downtown” area to include Farwell all the way west to Highway 51, and perhaps areas further east than what was previously defined as “downtown”.
- Prioritize infilling areas that are currently not well-utilized (e.g., Farwell).
- Amount of vacant land that the Village may have for future growth is quickly becoming an issue. Plan needs to address this.
- Respond to the needs and interests of the future labor market, which is rapidly evolving (e.g., home based businesses). For example, the Village may want to promote “third spaces,” places to eat and work and relax.
- Consider the future of retail. Traditional retail is changing due to internet-based purchasing of goods. “Nonstore retailers” (example: SHOPBOP) are likely to stay popular. Having big brick and mortar stores may no longer be an asset. This might be a way for



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small retailers to blossom. On the flip side, small retailers may be used by potential customers before ultimately purchasing from on-line retailers.

- Make wise use of financial incentives for economic development, determining in advance what types of projects are worth supporting.
- Consider advancing an interchange on Interstate 39/90 near CTH AB, which would enhance development in McFarland and relieve congestion on the Beltline.
- Living options like condos and smaller lots are becoming more common. Plan should take on this issue, addressing previous concerns with smaller lots.
- Pursue an intergovernmental initiative to make Lake Waubesa significantly cleaner. It's an overlooked and underutilized asset.
- Pursue a plan for beautification of the USH 51 corridor if possible, as the Village's front door.
- Pursue potential for greater School District/Village sharing of services, particularly for facilities. With the Village collaboration, the pool currently operated by the District could expand into an aquatic center. Also consider other athletic facilities (offered by both District and Village) and the auditorium (also operated by District, but perhaps an underutilized space.) This approach would spread out costs for upkeep to these amenities.
- Create a community of open dialogue, discussion, and inclusion, and opportunities for community discussion that allows all voices to be heard. A comprehensive plan can set the framework for ongoing dialogue and community development. For example, there could be an open community discussion about some people's concerns about expanding bus service or trails into Madison.