

Power of Ten

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Colfax, Little Slice of Italy

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Presentors: Phil Myrick and Elena Madison from the Project for Public Spaces

Facilitators: Jay Tappen, Lynn Nelson, Ann Schell, Chris Straight, Jing Duan, and Tobi LeMahieu (all from the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission)

Identify Opportunities Exercise

Site #1 Railroad Museum

1. What do you like best about this place?
 - History
 - Uniqueness
 - Potential to be an attraction
 - One visitor from Iowa came to Colfax with a goal to see all depots in the village
 - Could be a tourism draw
2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.
 - Benches
 - Better signage on dining car
 - Flower gardens, bushes
 - Mural on Cenex building (both sides)
 - Improved sign on museum
 - Train-set playground
 - Advertise in papers
 - Trim trees near sidewalk and fix sidewalk
3. What changes would you make in the long-term that would have the biggest impact?
 - Railroad buff swap meet
 - Christmas train scene
 - Expand museum to Main St. and acquire other depot building
4. Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
 - "Cool that people traveled that way"

5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
 - Cenex
 - Women’s Club
 - Foundations
 - Village of Colfax
 - 4-H
 - Church groups
 - School Honor Society
 - Railroad foundation?

Site #2: Main St. and Railroad Ave. intersection

1. What do you like best about this place?
 - Oldest building in town now is restaurant with outdoor seating
 - Co-op is the center of activities, easy access but pedestrian hazards
 - Street lighting
2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn’t cost a lot.
 - More outdoor seating
 - Find a way to work with State highway to address community needs on state highway
 - Signage restrictions
 - Bump-out restrictions
 - Restrictions on pedestrian yield in road
 - Remove overhead wires
 - Wayfinding sign
 - Paint crosswalks
 - Mural on Little Italy building (on the Railroad Ave. side above the awning)
 - Wayfinding to fairgrounds and other destinations
 - Correct the RR signal malfunction which makes them activate inadvertently
3. What changes would you make in the long-term that would have the biggest impact?
 - Screening or something to lessen the visual impact of the loading dock and railroad tracks
 - Close off railroad company access along railroad tracks to keep the public from using it as an access to the parking lot
 - Put in plantings and way-finding signage on southeast quadrant
 - Improve driver awareness of pedestrians and yield compliance
 - Speed enforcement
4. Ask someone who is in the “place” what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
 - Likes convenience of the gas station
 - Likes Little Italy restaurant with outdoor seating
 - Difficult to get in and out of the gas station
 - Difficult to see the traffic (parking on both sides blocks the view)

5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
 - DOT – “Major stumbling block”
 - Gateway sign to welcome to downtown
 - Bump-outs as a form of traffic calming
 - Need “something” physical to induce drivers to slow down
 - Village
 - School district
 - County highway
 - EDC
 - Legislators
 - Churches
 - Businesses, Kiwanis
 - Other service organizations

Site #3: Intersection of River St. and Main St.

1. What do you like best about this place?
 - Old time feeling
 - Sandstone buildings made from sandstone blocks quarried and cut locally
 - Windows in a couple of the businesses draw people in
 - Seating
2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.
 - Paint light bottoms
 - Signage on buildings
 - Murals on panels closing off windows on Commercial Testing Laboratory, Inc. building
Older men used to sit on steps and on window ledges when it was a grocery store
 - Benches and/or trees near Karl's (auto sales) to soften the blank spot it creates
 - Flowers attract the eye and help make it the next “bread crumb”
 - Business association
 - Farmers' market/or street dance-concerts on west leg of River St.
 - Walking tour like Chippewa Falls with updated brochure on the history of the sandstone houses and buildings
3. What changes would you make in the long-term that would have the biggest impact?
 - Bump outs to help in crossing Main, and create space for way-finding signs, etc.
 - Way-finding signs (This is the “middle” of downtown.)
 - Signage on sandstone buildings (plaques describing local history of buildings)
 - Widen sidewalks – significantly in wide portion of River St., to the west of the intersection, add umbrella tables (for shade) and benches.
 - Narrow River Street, especially the block west of the intersection
4. Ask someone who is in the “place” what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

- They liked that everything is close together and they can get everywhere easily
 - They like to hang out with their friends downtown
5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
- H.S. art classes
 - Shop class
 - Flower boxes
 - Chairs
 - Benches
 - Discovery Center @ UW-Stout
 - Historical Society
 - Chippewa Valley United Way
 - WisDOT
 - Business owners

Site #4 Village Hall

1. What do you like best about this place?
 - Historic buildings/Citgo
 - Nice remodel of many of the nearby buildings
 - Community space beside municipal building
 - Private
 - Benches/lighting (historic and people-scale)
 - Gardens/flower plantings
 - Music/library events
 - Street lighting has historic character
 - Lots of activities in municipal building
 - Greening of spaces, window boxes, and plantings
 - Signage and community bulletin board outside municipal building
 - Traffic is fairly safe; most cars stop for pedestrians.

2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.
 - Farmers' market in lot behind municipal building (visibility concerns though)
 - Bike share program (community wide)
 - Window murals on adjacent building to south
 - More use of the public space by library; bring kids outside for events
 - Kid-friendly amenities
 - Better lighting in pavilion
 - Sprucing up of public space (e.g., painting, minor repairs)
 - Historic information posted or walking tour (publicize more if have)
 - Electronic bulletin board to post events
 - More planters as a way to get people to slow down and linger
 - Signage visibility to park area
 - Flag/sign to indicate the park (park is easily missed)

3. What changes would you make in the long-term that would have the biggest impact?

- Develop a connection from park and main street to river behind municipal building
 - Teen amenities (possibly Quonset hut site)
 - ask the teens what they would want
 - kayak/tube/canoe rental with snack shop
 - Indoor teen facility (e.g., skating)
 - Open mic. poetry
 - Bike lanes/routes to school
 - Skate park
4. Ask someone who is in the “place” what they like about it and what they would do to improve it.
Their answer:
- Love municipal building
 - Want tours of municipal building
 - Freshen-up amenities in park; looks slightly run-down
5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
- High school art class
 - Horticulture class, shop/mechanics
 - Municipal restoration group
 - Individual community members

Reflection

1. There should be more promotion/visibility of the walking trail by the creek and across the river
2. There should be better promotion of the bike path and its connection from Menomonie
 - Possibly a bike tour
3. Improve connections between the downtown and the river, perhaps through #4
4. Traffic speeds (traffic vs pedestrian) are a concern, especially on the south side of Main Street....improves somewhat by the time vehicles reach Village Hall.
5. Going from Site #2 to Site #3 lacks bread crumbs. No linkages and existing uses break up the space.

Next Steps

Chris Smith, Dunn County EDC, stated he would be willing to meet with the Village and businesses to discuss next steps, programs, etc.