

2014

Baraboo Economic Development Commission



Facilitated by:

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Sauk County UW Extension

August 2014

BARABOO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION’S
PLANNING PROCESS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission’s Plan for Economic Development was a three month initiative with many participants and contributors.

Baraboo Economic Development Commission Members

Greg Wise, Chair	Buddy Huffaker
John Alt	Scott Sloan
Andi Anderson	Sonja Stauffacher
Sandy Anderson	Dave Taylor
Musa Ayar	Aural Umhoefer
Melanie Burgi	

Other Planning Participants

Mike Palm, Mayor, City of Baraboo
Ed Geick, City Administrator, City of Baraboo
Pat Cannon, CDA Director, City of Baraboo
Deb Bauer, Executive Director, Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce
Meg Allen, Director, Baraboo Library

Summary of Planning Process and Results

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) developed a plan for future economic development priorities for the City of Baraboo. The process was designed to build consensus among community leaders on a clear vision for the future and initial strategies to achieve that vision. This process consisted of five planning meetings and four community discussions which allowed for public input on the plan. A brief outline of the planning process including the timeline is included under Appendix A.

The process started with a demographic and economic overview the Baraboo region presented by Matt Kures, GIS Specialist at UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development (presentation is available at: http://sauk.uwex.edu/files/2014/04/kures_bedc_april_2014.pdf), and included a brief history of BEDC presented by Ed Geick, Administrator for the City of Baraboo (Appendix B).

BEDC and key partners listed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC) facing the Baraboo region regarding economic development (Appendix C). BEDC members also gathered SWOC feedback from representatives of targeted economic sectors including agriculture, earth sciences, education, healthcare, manufacturing and retail/tourism. From the compiled lists the following KEY strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges were identified:

KEY STRENGTHS: Strengths are resources or capabilities that promote Baraboo's economic development.

- Proximity to metropolitan areas (i.e. Madison, Twin Cities, Chicago) and natural resources (i.e. Aldo Leopold Foundation, International Crane Foundation, Devil's Lake State Park)
- Infrastructure (i.e. roads, rail, airport, municipal water, sewer, broadband)
- Educational, historical and cultural assets (i.e. K-12 schools, UW-Baraboo/Sauk County and Madison College, quality libraries, Al. Ringling Theatre, Circus World Museum, activities for kids)
- Access to a variety of quality healthcare options
- Charm
- Diverse economy

KEY WEAKNESSES: Weaknesses are deficiencies in resources and capabilities that hinder the Baraboo's economic development.

- Lack of quality employees/workforce (i.e. too many employees are not employable and/or have drug problems)
- Aesthetic issues (i.e. unattractive entrances into Baraboo, unattractive rail/viaduct)
- Lack of communication (i.e. lack of a cohesive, consistent message about Baraboo, lack of social media presence, lack of communication between key partners)
- Is Baraboo unfriendly? Are we doing an effective job of welcoming people?
- Lack of collaboration and sense of community. The whole does appear stronger than the sum of the parts.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES: Opportunities are outside factors or situations that impact Baraboo's economic development in a favorable way.

- Proximity to millions of tourists each year (i.e. Wisconsin Dells, Devil's Lake State Park)
- Retain and recruit young adults. What makes them return to the area?

- Promote entrepreneurial growth and development (potentially focus on IT or e-commerce professionals). What resources are available (i.e. funding, business incubator) How can we build on “Cool Community” assets like the Coffee Bean Connection and the book store?
- Nice place to raise family (i.e. safe, low cost of living, variety of programs for kids)
- Enhance linkages between education and employers (i.e. S.A.W. program at St. Clare Hospital)

KEY CHALLENGES: Challenges are outside factors or situations that affect Baraboo’s economic development in a negative way.

- Highway 12 by-pass (retail sees it as a threat and manufacturing views it as an opportunity)
- How can we work more effectively with regional partners (i.e. West Baraboo) to build on each other’s strengths?
- How can Baraboo continue to grow without losing its identity?
- Address perception and/or reality of “high taxes” and continue to provide a high level of service

Following the SWOC Analysis, BEDC and key partners brainstormed a list of hopes, concerns and vision statements for the community regarding economic development (Appendix D) which were used to inform the initial vision. The vision is a description of what a community will look like if it achieves its full potential. It conveys a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future for the community.

BEDC hosted four community discussions designed to solicit feedback from the public on the initial vision for the community and to develop strategies to achieve the vision. The agenda (including the initial vision) and the meeting notes from all four community discussions are included in Appendix E.

After incorporating the feedback from the community discussions, BEDC members developed consensus on the vision for future economic development for the City of Baraboo. The vision is comprised of five components: Diverse Regional Economy, Community Engagement and Partnerships, Unique Place Characteristics, Amenities, and Education. The Commission members also developed catalytic strategies (patterns of actions, policies, program, projects, resource allocations or decisions) for each of the components of the desired future vision. The “catalytic strategies” are the specific initial activities that could represent the first steps toward realizing a strong and competitive economic vision in the Baraboo area. Finally, BEDC members prioritized the individual vision statements and those votes are recorded in parentheses after each statement.

Vision for Future Economic Development for Baraboo and Catalytic Strategies

The Baraboo area’s long-term economic prosperity will be founded on providing an exceptional quality of life for all residents which includes a healthy business climate. As Baraboo continues to grow and advance, it will protect its abundant natural resources and retain the best qualities of its small city atmosphere. The community leaders will be forward-thinking, fiscally responsible, and environmentally conscious as they identify and address critical issues and opportunities.

Vision for a Diverse Regional Economy

The Baraboo area will have:

- **A diverse economy recognizing its strengths in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, education, healthcare and natural resources.** (6 votes)
- **A supportive, catalytic, yet predictable environment for entrepreneurs and business expansions.** (2 votes)
- **A respected, reliable workforce with diverse skills that earn living wages.** (2 votes)
- **A targeted, proactive business recruitment program built on competitive advantages.** (3 votes)
- **A strong tourism sector based on exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities, a robust arts and culture scene, and a premier dining and shopping experience.** (1 vote)

Catalytic Strategies to Achieve the Vision for a Diverse Regional Economy:

- **Strategy:** Develop and keep current an inventory of all existing businesses.
- **Strategy:** Build strong relationships with employers in order to better understand their challenges, needs, and future plans. This could include reinstating a formal or informal business retention and expansion (BR&E) program, investigating workforce needs, developing BEDC sub-committees focused on specific industry sectors (i.e. agriculture), etc.
- **Strategy:** Conduct “exit” interviews for businesses that are relocating or closing (i.e. Badgerland).
- **Strategy:** Attract and retain local, non-chain retail/restaurant businesses to preserve the Baraboo area’s unique sense of place. This could include implementing a buy local campaign.
- **Strategy:** Develop a comprehensive tourism plan for the Baraboo area. This could include developing a more formal structure for tourism planning (tourism liaison or funded tourism council), strengthening the partnerships with adjacent communities, researching exemplary tourism efforts of comparable communities, etc.
- **Strategy:** Investigate and address the barriers to business startups (i.e. resources, training, policies, and permits). This could include developing a physical and/or virtual small business incubator.
- **Strategy:** Develop and implement a targeted business recruitment plan. This could include hiring a dedicated economic development professional, bolstering incentives, participating in the International Council of Shopping Centers, partnering with regional economic development organizations (i.e. SCDC, MadREP, WEDC) to better understand the Baraboo area’s competitive advantages and disadvantages, potential industry clusters, supply chains, etc.
- **Strategy:** Review and make recommendations to policy makers regarding Baraboo’s land use plan (including infrastructure) for future growth and development. This could include investing in additional land suitable for development, listing vacant land (i.e. Jackson property), revisiting the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan to consider developing smaller parcels, etc. Communicate the plan with key stakeholders (i.e. BEDC).
- **Strategy:** Develop a plan to reinvest in and better utilize existing spaces within the community for economic development. This could include an improved, online searchable inventory of available spaces, maintenance enforcement for vacant, nuisance and substandard buildings, etc. Communicate the plan with key stakeholders (i.e. BEDC).
- **Strategy:** Partner with educational entities and employers to ensure job training corresponds to employer needs. Communicate progress with local businesses and the public.

- Strategy: Learn more about what employees want and/or need from the community and employers.

Vision for Community Engagement and Partnerships

The Baraboo area will have:

- **A shared marketing message that articulates and communicates its unique qualities to current and potential residents, visitors, and businesses. (6 votes)**
- **Local government, education and employers that actively reach out and engage with the community to identify and address critical issues and opportunities. (1 vote)**
- **Local government, education and employers that seamlessly partner to respond to issues and opportunities in their own unique ways as they work collaboratively toward a shared vision for the community. (1 vote)**
- **Strong partnerships with adjacent municipalities based on a culture of collaboration and resource-sharing.**

Catalytic Strategies to Achieve the Vision for Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- Strategy: Align the vision, goals and strategies of the public and private sectors to more effectively address community-wide opportunities and challenges. This could include hosting regular meetings to strengthen relationships, offering dedicated board/committee seats, highlighting successes, etc.
- Strategy: Develop “response teams” comprised of local government, education, and business leaders to respond quickly as issues or opportunities arise.
- Strategy: Develop a public participation plan to engage community members (with a focus on youth) in major decisions (i.e. goal setting and road projects).
- Strategy: Schedule regular joint meetings of the city, village and adjacent townships designed to identify and address common issues and opportunities. This could include exploring a shared economic development strategy.
- Strategy: Partner with key stakeholders (i.e. Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Baraboo Inc.) to develop a comprehensive, consistent branding and marketing campaign that articulates the Baraboo area’s distinct sense of place. This could include dedicated marketing funds, shared website, messaging, logos, brochures, social media, and signage, etc.

Vision for Unique Place Characteristics

The Baraboo area will have:

- **An attractive and distinct sense of place that reflects the rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources that shape the community. (3 votes)**
- **A unified effort to better leverage and build on the extraordinary convergence of unique environmental and cultural assets throughout the region. (4 votes)**
- **A strong sense of community pride where diversity is valued and all people feel included. (1 vote)**
- **Cultural, historical and environmental assets that are supported, protected and celebrated. (1 vote)**
- **A vibrant, healthy and safe environment.**

Catalytic Strategies to Achieve the Vision for Unique Place Characteristics:

- **Strategy:** Develop a unified look and feel for the community that demonstrates prosperity and reflects the Baraboo area’s unique assets with a focus on community entrance points. This could include uniform building design standards, beautifying transportation corridors, additional landscaping, etc.
- **Strategy:** Participate in Sauk County’s place-making initiative.
- **Strategy:** Better coordinate and promote community events. This could include developing a comprehensive, online calendar of community events for all organizations, determining target audiences for each event, cross marketing with similar events, better leveraging existing resources/infrastructure (i.e. Sauk County Arts and Culture grants), etc.
- **Strategy:** Better coordinate and promote community social programs and networks. This could include better leveraging the United Way fund, providing programs that stress health and safety, etc.
- **Strategy:** Develop a plan to better leverage the region’s assets. This could include developing a consortium of local environmental groups and UW-Baraboo/Sauk County to protect and enhance the area’s unique natural resources, incorporating Baraboo’s heritage and history into community events (i.e. Circus Parade), developing educational materials/maps that promote the natural resources, organizing community events focused on maintaining natural resources (i.e. invasive species removal), partnering with businesses to utilize photos of natural places in their advertisements, promoting environmental tours, etc.
- **Strategy:** Identify and protect critical assets (i.e. prime agricultural land, natural resources) as the Baraboo area continues to grow and develop. Communicate this plan with key stakeholders (i.e. BEDC).
- **Strategy:** Develop a plan to recruit, welcome and engage new residents in the community. This could include partnering with relocation realtors, developing a “welcome wagon,” hosting community pride/neighborhood events, partnering with employers (i.e. hospital, schools) to welcome their new employees, etc.
- **Strategy:** Better understand the needs and wants of the millennial generation and create a community that attracts and retains 21-25 year olds.
- **Strategy:** Partner with MadREP and local employers to conduct annual assessments designed to measure, recognize, improve and promote the Madison region’s workplace diversity and inclusion practices.

Vision for Amenities

The Baraboo area will have:

- **Efficient, innovative and adequately funded public services (i.e. parks, police, and public works).** (4 votes)
- **Well-maintained and interconnected infrastructure.** (2 vote)
- **A mix of housing options that corresponds to the diverse needs of the community.** (1 vote)

Catalytic Strategies to Achieve the Vision for Amenities:

- **Strategy:** Improve coordination between the school athletic program, club sports and community recreational opportunities in part to develop a stronger “feeder” program.

- Strategy: Develop a comprehensive, innovative parks and open space plan for diverse audiences that stresses the importance of long-term maintenance. This could include a park designed for teens, dedicated spaces for people to gather and create, etc.
- Strategy: Better promote the public transportation system in and around the Baraboo area.
- Strategy: Explore and implement alternative funding sources for infrastructure improvements (i.e. premier resort tax)
- Strategy: Grow and expand broadband access. This could include becoming a 100GB community.
- Strategy: Develop a robust multi-modal transportation infrastructure system. This could include creating a more walkable community, increased parking in the downtown, etc.
- Strategy: Develop a comprehensive housing plan/policy that supports a healthy and vibrant community with a focus on affordable housing. This could include creating an inventory of existing housing, code enforcement for property maintenance, developing attractive housing options in the downtown area, creating incentives for developers to build in the city, etc.

Vision for Education

The Baraboo area will have:

- **Diverse, transformative educational opportunities for all stages of life that help identify and unlock an individual’s passion as well as develop contributing members of society. (5 votes)**
- **A respected education system that attracts residents and businesses to the area. (1 vote)**

Catalytic Strategies to Achieve the Vision for Education:

- Strategy: Identify and address “gaps” in educational offerings. This could include strengthening students’ entrepreneurial skills, promoting opportunities for youth to develop leadership and life skills (i.e. greater participation in the Boys and Girls Club and 4-H), continuing education programs for employees, etc.
- Strategy: Educate the community on the array of opportunities in the technical and manufacturing sectors.
- Strategy: Identify and work to address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges within the Baraboo area’s educational system as a community. This could include funding for infrastructure, recognizing and promoting academic excellence (i.e. students and programs).
- Strategy: Strengthen and better leverage the partnerships between the regional educational entities to ensure greater collaboration and coordination (i.e. recruitment, seamless transitions, and internships).
- Strategy: Expand educational programming at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County. This could include offering Bachelor’s and collaborative Master’s degrees, and/or a focus on natural resource related degrees that take advantage of the campus’s proximity to the region’s natural features and environmental organizations.

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE FOR THE BEDC PLANNING PROCESS



Cooperative Extension

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April 3, 2014

To: Mike Palm, Mayor, City of Baraboo and Ed Geick, Administrator, City of Baraboo
From: Jenny Erickson, Sauk County University of Wisconsin - Extension
Re: Draft Outline for the City of Baraboo's Economic Development Planning Process

The following is a draft outline for the City of Baraboo's planning process focused on economic development. This process is designed to build consensus among community leaders regarding the future directions for economic development for the City of Baraboo. The final outputs would include vision statements and initial strategies for economic development for the City of Baraboo. This process would consist of five, two-hour meetings and several focus group discussions:

- 1.) Economic overview of the Baraboo region
- 2.) Identify assets and location advantages
- 3.) Develop consensus-based vision statements focused on economic development
- 4.) Focus group discussions designed to strengthen the vision and identify initial strategies
- 5.) Final strategy formulation

Two key planning bodies are included in this process: the planning committee and the planning participants. The planning committee would guide and periodically review the planning process. The planning committee could consist of Mayor Mike Palm, Ed Geick, Pat Cannon, Greg Wise and Jenny Erickson. The planning participants would be identified by the planning committee, and they would participate in the meetings outlined below.

To ensure an efficient process most of the idea generation or brainstorming work would be completed prior to the meeting. Erickson will develop worksheets that each planning participant will be asked to complete and submit prior to the meeting. Erickson will compile the responses, but individual comments will remain anonymous.

The following is a detailed outline of the planning process, homework and timeline:

April 30th 6-8PM: Setting the Stage for Baraboo's Economic Development Process

- Demographic and economic overview for the Baraboo region presented by Matt Kures, GIS Specialist, UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development. *The specific data and metrics shared in the presentation will be determined by the planning committee.*
- Brief review of Baraboo's past economic development strategies and status of each presented by Ed Geick and Mike Palm.
- Facilitated discussion on defining economic development led by Pat Cannon, City of Baraboo and Jenny Erickson, UW-Extension.

May 22nd 6-8PM: Determine Economic Development Related Assets

Internal economic development strengths and weaknesses of the community are identified along with the community's external opportunities and challenges.

- Report feedback from stakeholder interviews previously conducted by BEDC members.
- Identify Baraboo's key economic development assets and location advantages. *Planning participants will be asked to complete a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC) worksheet. Erickson will compile the results for discussion at the second meeting.*

SWOC worksheet completed before the second meeting

June 5th 6-8PM: Develop Draft Economic Development Vision Statements

A vision statement conveys a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future for the community.

- Develop draft consensus vision statements. *The planning participants will be asked to list their hopes, concerns and vision ideas for the City of Baraboo with a focus on economic development (see worksheets). Erickson will compile and identify draft themes that emerge. A small subset of the planning participants may be asked to refine the vision until consensus is achieved.*

Visioning worksheets completed before the third meeting

Focus Group Discussions (held between June 6th and July 9th)

Focus groups that reflect Baraboo's key assets and draft vision would be identified by the planning committee (i.e. healthcare, manufacturing, and education). The purpose of the focus groups would be to further clarify and strengthen the draft vision statements identified by the planning participants and develop initial, industry specific strategies. *Erickson and a representative identified by the planning committee would facilitate the focus group discussions.*

July 10th 6-8PM: Issue/Goal Identification and Initial Strategy Formulation

An issue is a fundamental challenge affecting a community's mandates, mission, product or service level and mix, clients or users, costs, financing, organization, or management.

- Work to achieve consensus on key issues/goals the plan should include. *The planning participants will be asked to brainstorm a list of issues/goals (see worksheet) the plan should address. Erickson will compile and facilitate an issue/goal identification discussion.*

Issue/goal worksheet completed before the fourth meeting

July 24th: Additional Strategy Formulation

A strategy is a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, projects, actions, decisions, and resource allocations that defines what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.

- Work to achieve consensus on priority strategies for each key goal/issue. *The planning participants will be asked to brainstorm a list of strategies (see worksheet) to address key issues/goals. Erickson will compile and facilitate a strategy formulation discussion.*

Strategy worksheet completed before the fifth meeting

Plan Adoption (August BEDC meeting) and Implementation

The plan will need to be adopted by BEDC and the Baraboo City Council and BEDC will develop an appropriate implementation plan.

Erickson has facilitated dozens of planning processes throughout Sauk County for nonprofit organizations and local units of government. She also serves on the UW-Extension strategic planning team and teaches strategic planning as part of the Professional Economic Developer Certification process through the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). There is no fee for her facilitation services.

Please call (608) 355-3250 or email Jenny at jennifer.erickson@ces.uwex.edu with any questions or concerns.

APPENDIX B: HISTORY OF BEDC

History of the Baraboo Economic Development Commission¹

Formation of BEDC

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission was formed by the City in February 8, 1977 through resolution #77-15. The Commissions duties were to develop data regarding the industrial needs, advantages and sites in the City, cooperate with the Sauk Co. Development Corporation, acquaint prospective industries with the advantages of the City and, in general, to study and make recommendations to the Council for the continuing improvement of the economic and industrial climate of the City.

Prior to 1977 there was the Baraboo Manufacturers Association

A group made up of Wilbur Deppe, George Weber (Baraboo National Bank), Hank Rosser (Plumber), George Martini (builder), Bob Ott, and Kurt Page came together in the 1950's to promote industrial development in Baraboo after the closing of Badger Army Ammunition Plant. The group sold shares to help raise funds for use in buying land, providing buildings or other incentives to attract industry. The first major industry that came to the area was Flambeau.

Baraboo won an award from the State in the 1950's because it had more industry per capita than any other small community. This effort continued through the 1960's and early 1970's. One of the last efforts made by the group was to help in the site acquisition and relocation of businesses for the West Square Building.

The City's industrial development was often influenced by what was happening at the Badger Ammunition Plant. The Plant started in 1941 and was active for the following periods:

1. WWII – 1941 to 1948 (Funding was approved in 1941 when land acquisition started actual construction started in February of 1942. Construction was stopped in 1945 right after the surrender of Japan.)
2. Korean War – 1951 to 1957 (The plant required a complete rehab before it started production and during this time the “Ball Propellant” facility was constructed.)
3. Viet Nam War – 1966 to 1975
4. A web link for more details about Badger is:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badger_Armory

The inactive periods at Badger created a surplus of unemployed workers in the Baraboo area and the periods from the late 50's to the mid 60's and again after 1975 are where industrial growth in Baraboo increased.

¹ Prepared by Ed Geick in July 2012 after interviewing former BEDC members and other City leaders.

BEDC's first Goal Setting

In our files the first goal setting session for BEDC that has a written record was done in 1995. The goal setting process done in 1995 was facilitated by Greg Wise who at that time was the Community Development Agent for UW Extension in Sauk Co. The members of the Economic Development Commission at that time were: Chester Corson, Al Dippel, Robert Fleming, Robert Greenwood, Pat Hamilton, Karna Hanna, Mark Howard, Ken Kenniston, Dick Mathews, Al Paschen and Pat Sort. The goals of BEDC in 1995 were:

1. Stay in touch with existing businesses by developing a consistent and effective existing business, industrial and commercial call program.
2. Attract and retain a labor force by maintaining quality of life programs for the area that make people want to live here.
3. Define relationships and establish protocols with the Sauk Co. Development Corporation regarding advertising, contacts, etc.
4. Work on signage for entry and directional, downtown, the industrial parks and other business districts.
5. Put together a response team for both recruitment and retention.
6. Determine and continually assess the goals and contributions of BEDC

The following provides an overview of the recent redevelopment activities in the Ringling Riverfront Area since 2005.

Veolia Site

1. The City did requests for proposals and retained Vandewalle & Associates to provide assistance with preparation of a redevelopment plan for the area from Broadway St, Lynn St, 2nd Ave/St and Circus World.
2. Vandewalle assisted the City with writing grants to the State and the EPA.
3. In 2006 the City won a \$2.2 million "comprehensive grant" from the State. Baraboo was one of three cities selected for this new type of grant. The purpose of the comprehensive grants was to provide long term grant assistance for implementation of detailed redevelopment plans. Baraboo had a concept plan for cleaning up the Alliant and Veolia properties and the grant provided the detailed planning assistance to implement those projects.
4. In 2008 the City completed negotiations with Alliant Energy to purchase their property and to provide relocation of the business to Commerce Ave on the City's west side industrial area.
5. Veolia site was purchased in 2010 and the buildings on this site were removed shortly after purchase.
6. The City has received \$600,000 in USEPA Brownfield Site assessment funds and \$600,000 in site Clean-Up funds since 2006. Those grants are due to expire on July 31, 2012. The funds have been used to do environmental assessments on various properties in the river area.

General Redevelopment Activities

1. City has acquired sites for redevelopment (see red area on attached map)
2. A River Corridor Redevelopment Plan was prepared in 2006.
3. A follow up set of Redevelopment Guidelines was prepared shortly after the plan was done.
4. Lynn St between Broadway Street and Walnut Street was reconstructed in 2011.
5. Grant funding investigations are ongoing.
6. BEDC went through a long discussion about branding the community and the river area in 2009/10.
7. Staff-level economic development work sessions
8. One of the most recent discussions within BEDC has been about focusing on Regional Food & Hospitality Training & Business Development Center Initiatives.
9. Other projects for future consideration are:
 - a. Relocation of 1AM Dairy
 - b. Relocation of the Alliant Substation
 - c. Development or removal of the Jenny Lee properties on 117-123 Walnut St.
 - d. Improvement of the NAPA business site
 - e. Creation of the Oak Street pedestrian way at the old High Bridge abutment.
 - f. Clean up and redevelopment of the 235 Lynn St. property.
 - g. Acquisition of the old train depot and renovation of that building.

APPENDIX C: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES (SWOC) ANALYSIS

City of Baraboo – Economic Development

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC)

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) members brainstormed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges related to economic development in the Baraboo region. The ideas from each participant (bullets) have been organized under subject headings but not prioritized.

Strengths: Strengths are resources or capabilities that promote Baraboo’s economic development.

Abundance of Recreational/Tourism Opportunities

- Lots of outdoor options nearby for those who enjoy them and don't want to travel too far
- The diversity of leisure activities
- Significant number of city parks
- Recreational hub
- We have young kids: zoo, church, concerts on the square, going out to eat locally, shopping downtown, nearby outdoor activities
- Devil’s Lake/Wisconsin Dells attracts tourists (2)
- Unique; Circus World Museum
- Fairgrounds – but so much more could be done to attract shows & exhibitions (i.e. Jefferson, Oshkosh)
- Zoo

Location – Proximity to Metro Areas, Tourist Attractions, Government Offices

- The location to Madison; 45- 50 minutes to either side (3)
- Midway between Minneapolis and Chicago (2)
- County Seat (2)
- Quick easy access to Interstate system and soon the new Hwy. 12 (2)
- Improved interstate access with the completion of the Highway 12 bypass
- Location, location, location – for visitors (closeness to Madison and Dells) and businesses (between Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Chicago)
- Governmental center

Small Town Atmosphere

- Small town/community atmosphere
- Nice blend of Rural/Urban Setting
- Safe; little crime
- Clean

- Raising our family in a healthy rural environment.
- Manageable size – we aren't a metropolitan sized community which requires much more planning and care.
- Rural

Diverse Economy

- Nice downtown with specialty stores (not common for small towns); strong downtown (2)
- Image is better than most towns, people envy the town square.
- Economic diversity
- The diversity of industry
- Baraboo is a magnet because of its strengths to the surrounding communities

Strong Education System

- UW Baraboo Campus with a potential to deliver additional baccalaureate degrees (2)
- Good School System/UW campus in city
- The diversity of educational resources
- Report of good schools

Natural Resources/Scenery

- Scenic area; geologically unique; aesthetically pleasing
- The Bluffs
- Natural resources

Arts and Cultural Amenities

- Culture: art Fairs, concerts, theatre productions
- Historic preservation
- More cultural opportunities than other similar communities in terms of size/location

Strong Healthcare System

- The opportunity arose 30 years ago to locate my health practice to Baraboo
- Exceptional healthcare options
- People that have Medicare and most insurances

Misc.

- Strong community organizations (as a relative newcomer, this is largely by report, but I am seeing this to be the case)
- Affordable land and housing
- Rail access

Weaknesses: Weaknesses are deficiencies in resources and capabilities that hinder the Baraboo's economic development.

Lack of New Businesses and Corresponding Support Resources

- Not much “new business” coming in.
- The lack of new business or moving businesses concerns me as a physician who would like to serve more patients (ideally insured patients)
- Lack of development; we have banks & healthcare but not much else. Sauk Prairie area appears to be growing. Reedsburg appears to be expanding. Baraboo is in a holding pattern and stagnant.
- Lack of support structure for businesses (Entrepreneurial Start-Up, “Support Groups for Business Owners”)
- Tax breaks/incentives to businesses who are coming
- Lack of city-owned land that can be developed by businesses

Lack of Inclusiveness/Community Cohesion

- Need to find a way to make the community more cohesive, similar to what Reedsburg has been able to establish.
- Welcome Wagons. Community groups might need to be more forward in approaching people
- Cliques
- Not very friendly; “snooty” (mentioned often)
- Few business players with big pockets control the community
- Hard to get included into existing groups
- I do think there is an established “boys club” which needs infiltrating

Lack of Diversity

- Polarity of economic diversities within the community – in income and social circles.
- Lack of cultural diversity, but this has increased over the last 5 -10 years
- Aging demographic
- Relative lack of diversity (in comparison to urban areas, but more diversity than my hometown)

Poor Street Condition

- Poor city streets (always a main thoroughfare that is in marginal/poor condition – Water Street, Broadway, South Boulevard or 8th which are the “gateways” to the City). This is a major black eye in the City.
- Infrastructure in reference to roads. Main roads as well as many residential streets are in need of extensive repair; approach to the city from the east is not a pleasant drive for example.
- Streets are in a challenged state - especially 8th Street (Hwy. 33)

Lack/Loss of Retail Businesses

- Lack of retail (clothing) stores
- Loss of retail; empty storefronts on east and west side
- Loss of local retail owners due to big box stores (Walmart, Menards)

Lack of Business Expansion

- Lack of business growth
- Lack of expanding businesses
- Tax breaks/incentives to promote staying here

Workforce

- Lack of employable/educated labor force
- "Brain Drain" - Many residents fail to return after leaving for secondary education
- Lack of unemployment – becomes a challenge to create an attractive benefit package for good professional/office employees – increasingly more expensive hire employees.

Lack of Recreational Activities/Amenities

- Lack of indoor family activities; only bowling. A sports complex, equine complex, youth center would be an improvement.
- Lack of “nice” restaurants
- No community festival, i.e. Reedsburg = Butter Fest, Sauk = Cow Chip

Lack of Communication Between the Community and ????

- Lack of communication with residents; (The newspaper is not an accurate source or valuable voice. Where are the banners, signs & social media?)
- We are manageable, yet large enough; we have lost touch in communicating with the community in a cohesive, organized manner.
- There is a need for stronger linkages between business/industry and the K-12 system as well as an understanding of the role of technical versus liberal arts education.

Misc.

- Lack of industry/good paying jobs
- No systematic method to evaluate rental properties. Run down, poorly managed properties detract from the livability of neighborhoods.
- By-pass– can businesses survive or will people drive by?
- Taxes in the city are quite high compared to the surrounding townships

Opportunities: Opportunities are outside factors or situations that impact Baraboo's economic development in a favorable way.

Strengthen Regional Partnerships to Promote Economic Development:

- Utilize regional expertise such as SCDC and MadREP to tap into regional economic development opportunities.
- Look for sustainable economic development partnership opportunities
- Ability to draw upon UW for assistance.
- Surrounded by large tourist attractions (Dells/Devil's Lake) bringing visitors/customers/potential residents and business owners to city

Target Specific Industry Sectors/Start Ups

- Determine what is lacking and bring it here. There are many people without work or low paying jobs. We are close to the Interstate system; need to get distribution centers in the area
- I know that the health care system needs to promote itself to the other communities. We are hardly mentioned in the papers
- Commissioners may act as liaison with their respective assigned sectors
- Challenge for start-up: Expertise and high capital investment

Expand on Infrastructure Assets for Future Development

- Plenty of land surrounding city for expansion/development
- Support countywide broadband connectivity.

Misc.

- Manufacturers are all interested in working with the schools in various ways to assist in the work/school efforts.
- The businesses I spoke to are interested in being listed online for a manufacturers' directory which most cities have (regardless of Chamber membership).

Challenges: Challenges are outside factors or situations that affect Baraboo's economic development in a negative way.

Providing Healthcare in an Aging, Rural Community

- Inability of administration and decision makers (at multiple levels) to see unique advantages and disadvantages to providing health care in a non-urban/mostly rural area. Trying to make what works "in the city" work out here.
- Lack of new patients/customers.
- High need customers (elderly, those with multiple medical problems) outstripping ability of health care to care for them—financial cost, provider availability and expertise.

Developing and Maintaining Infrastructure and Workforce:

- I believe we need a better planned out infrastructure growth plan for the city – planned for increments of growth in incoming corridors, highway/truck traffic, school locations, parks locations, industrial parks and so on.
- Acceleration of infrastructure decline such as roads which are vital to economic development
- Lack of decent paying jobs
- Outflow of young productive people without replacements from outside (due to lack of jobs, desire to live in more urban area, etc.)

Challenges with Surrounding Communities

- Aggressive neighboring cities going after existing/new businesses
- Rural townships surrounding city fighting growth/expansion

Lack of Government Resources (Demand for Additional Services vs. Fiscal Constraints)

- Financial constraints at every level of government operations
- Increasing challenges to law enforcement regarding the proliferation of drug use
- Communications with community, organizations and businesses.

Misc.

- Where is the growth? There is none.
- Don't see many new business opportunities or employers

APPENDIX D: HOPES, CONCERNS AND INITIAL VISION STATEMENTS

Economic Development Plan for the Baraboo Region

Hopes, Concerns and Vision

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) and key stakeholders brainstormed a list of HOPES and CONCERNS for their community (bulleted). The ideas have been organized but not prioritized. These hopes and concerns were utilized to develop the vision statements.

CONCERNS

Need for more reliable skilled workforce (skilled trades and young professionals)

- One of my major concerns is establishing a long term workforce. We need to establish a training program that will supply workers to all types of employment. We need to acknowledge retail and tourism as a viable force, but long term employment will lead to better schools and housing.
- Workforce development...when a company goes through 230 applications to get 21 employees, we are in a bad state of not having skilled workers for our area. We need to be ready to work with our major businesses to get them to use shared worker shifts to get some of those retired people back into the workforce for four hours a day/pair them up.
- Skill set of employees especially the trades. We have found it difficult to hire a full time plumber or electrician in the past.
- Workforce- how do we supply workers that want to work?
- Need to attract and maintain skilled workforce as well as attracting young professionals
- We seem to lack a workforce with the skills to be successful in the job opportunities that are available. For example, are we encouraging young people not only to the college track but also to the skilled trades?
- Insufficient infrastructure dollars to handle workforce, education centers, roads, old pipelines, etc. For a strong infrastructure to exist in an area, it is critical that there is adequate investment in both physical and social types of infrastructure; I am concerned we will not dedicate enough to make us competitive.

Deteriorating infrastructure and aesthetics

- I'm concerned that our physical environment, the roads, and housing, and the aesthetics of our businesses and their signs, etc. are poor. We are not seemingly concerned about the image that this sends to visitors and friends and family and those "shopping us" for their future. I'm all for easing the regulations and not burdening new developments, but let's establish some standards that we can be proud of and let those that cannot live up to even modest expectations go somewhere else. Let's challenge those that think our taxes are too high to support enough government that we can have adequate public services.

- The city needs to invest in itself. I don't believe that we can wait for improvements to happen with state or federal funds. The result may be an increase in taxes, but if there is growth it should offset these increases. The transportation infrastructure cannot be ignored.
- Insufficient infrastructure dollars to handle workforce, education centers, roads, old pipelines, etc. For a strong infrastructure to exist in an area, it is critical that there is adequate investment in both physical and social types of infrastructure; I am concerned we will not dedicate enough to make us competitive.
- Cost of Infrastructure vs. property tax- are there other funding sources?
- Road repair is a major concern for the Baraboo region.
- The City of Baraboo has fallen behind in maintaining adequate facilities for city services and infrastructure. This does not reflect in a positive way on the City as a destination for new businesses.

Reluctance to change

- A vast majority of the citizenry will look around them and say, "this is the way we have done it for decades, what's the problem; if it isn't broke no need to fix it" attitude that has struck down many communities that have great potential to have it even better than today.
- Too many people will continue to look at our unique natural features and allow that short sightedness to continue to not allow innovations that work with the natural features so we can have the better communication capabilities, have great new industrial areas, etc.
- Impact of By-pass for Highway 12.
- The by-pass is an issue. It seems like it is going to be difficult to get into Baraboo. I still hear people complain about the round-a-bouts. And I have seen people have difficulty maneuvering. I wonder if people will avoid Baraboo to avoid the round-a-bouts.
- How to grow economic development without radically changing the character of the community.

Need for stronger support for business expansion and efforts that encourage entrepreneurship

- I'm concerned that we will not have a balanced approach. I feel we need to have a modest effort in the business recruitment game, primarily utilizing SCDC. Our biggest effort should be devoted to existing businesses to support their viability and continued growth. Our second greatest effort should be devoted to providing the conditions and support necessary for entrepreneurial activity, including new business startups. Most new jobs are created from existing businesses and new startups and the greatest risk is not being attentive to the ones we have.
- Support from the city for new or expanding business- Land, \$\$ incentives, coordination.
- Baraboo has a reputation for being a tough city to do business in, creating a clear path or assisting new or expanding business in the process.

Need for greater regional cooperation in economic development

- Cooperation. We need to embrace West Baraboo, the entire county and the areas that surround us. It is a global economy that we live in. We cannot just look within our borders for the solutions. The Mayor has done a nice job at reaching out to our neighbors. We need to continue along this line.
- Better working relationship with surrounding governmental entities.
- Sauk County is one economic region, but there is competition rather than cooperation among municipalities (cities, villages, and townships). We need an example of the benefits to all parties that will demonstrate the advantages of partnerships.

Need for more living wage jobs

- Jobs that provide a living wage.
- It is my perception that there is a lack of jobs that pay a livable wage and provide benefits. It seems that many of the jobs currently available are service sector jobs or others which pay minimum wage and may not offer paid leave (e.g., so a parent can stay home with a sick child).

Need for greater emphasis on public safety and health

- Growing heroin related crime in county and city
- Public safety is also a high priority. While crime is not a major problem, we still need to address emergency medical transportation and availability.

Need for greater focus on quality of life as a tool for economic development

- I'm concerned that we are not devoting enough attention to enhancing and marketing our special quality of life. We are beginning to understand that the economic development rules are changing. Whereas we used to attract businesses that would attract people to work in them, today's reality is that communities need to attract people who will be the workforce that existing businesses need and that new businesses will come because of. The drivers are not land and buildings or incentives (although we need to be competitive with others on them), but quality of life assets that make this a robust place to live and work.

HOPES

A unified effort to better leverage the unique environmental, cultural and tourism assets located throughout the Baraboo region

- I hope that Baraboo does something to build on this extraordinary convergence of environmental assets—ICF, TNC, BRP, ALF, State Parks and Natural Areas, BAAP site, the River, City Parks and Trails, the new Boo-U Sciences Building, etc. When you throw them together with the cultural gems including the Historic Courthouse Square, Al. Ringling Theatre and Mansion, the Railway Museum, Circus World Museum, and more, there are some truly one-of-a-kind attractions and the combination is impressive.
- As a member of the Sauk County Economic Development Committee as well as a Baraboo School Board Member (sitting on BECD), my hope is that these individual silos of activity can be unified into a cohesive whole. Sauk County is looking at a process of “Place-making”: There are THREE major draws to our region each of a distinctive character and all of which run right by BARABOO. So our challenge will be to offer something non-competitive but integral to DRAW those varied visitors to Baraboo. It will be important for Baraboo to define itself as part of that process.
 - (1) Wisconsin Dells is the “Water Park Capital of the World” (FAMILY)
 - (2) Ho-Chunk Casino (gaming) between Baraboo and the Dells (ADULT)
 - (3) Devil’s Lake (and hopefully Badger Option 4) along with Leopold, Crane, and other Environmental Arenas (FAMILY)
- Better leverage not only our natural resources also leverage our proximity to the Dells.
- My HOPES for the Baraboo Region specifically are to enhance the “gems” which already exist here and were listed at the last meeting:
 - First and foremost, DEVIL’S LAKE as the primary focus of “tourist” to potential “residents” by finding a way to bring more people into the heart of Baraboo (I propose through developing the train-line linkage between Devil’s Lake, Baraboo, and North Freedom Train Museum. In addition, one day “commuter” rail service from Madison thru Sauk County (Rails & Trails) may become a reality which would fit nicely into this construct.)
 - Second, I believe our unique differentiation is in the abundance of ECOLOGICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL facilities within a “stone’s throw” of each other: The Leopold Center, Crane Foundation, and potentially the Option 4 Proposal for Badger as well as many others noted.
 - With home prices in Dane County going thru the roof, Baraboo offers an easy commute but also a “small town” atmosphere with excellent schools (including the unique positioning of UW Sauk/Baraboo across from the Baraboo High School). One of the reasons I am a proponent of the development of the Baraboo Cooperative Grocery Store (located in Downtown/Adjacent) is to address the needs of both our “ecological/environmental” visitors as well as to draw these to Baraboo as full-time residents, this increasing property sales and therefore home values ultimately adding to our tax base.
- Establish tourism as a major player in our local economy. We need to bring people in for short term visits and allow them to patronize our local stores. We have some nice ones that we can promote nationally

- Leverage the tourism at Devil's Lake and the Wisconsin Dells
- Unified environmental consortium that celebrates our unique environmental heritage

Greater support for business development, recruitment and expansion that offer living wage jobs

- Create a well laid out path for new or existing business to follow when looking to do business in Baraboo whether they are Sysco or a new yarn shop (these paths may be different, but we need to provide them direction).
- Out of the box thinking to attract manufacturing and that encourage entrepreneurial business startup.
- Draw companies (or nurture existing) to create higher paying jobs.
- Start a business incubator (e.g. Coulee Region Business Center).
- Entrepreneurial hotbed of small startups.
- Develop business incubators for small business startup.

Baraboo area employers have strong partnerships with regional educational entities.

- I hope that the Baraboo School District, MATC Reedsburg, and Boo-U can create a robust arrangement with the business community to support school-to-work programs for those for whom it makes sense. This can be done while supporting those that desire to achieve a higher degree.
- There needs to be a direct correlation between educational offerings and a living wage.
- Have a joint education summit put on by the SCDC but partnered with the local communities, school districts, UW-BSC and Madison College; all done in total partnership with our manufacturers and businesses. We all need to be talking to each other, not in little segmented groups...I have hope we can do this together.
- Partner with the schools to create a sustainable work force, career shadowing, career mentoring.
- Strong business ties to UW Baraboo/ Sauk County
- More cooperation among the city, the education stakeholders, and business
- An increased partnership between the city, businesses and the school district. Again, cooperation in development and placement of new housing has a major effect on the schools.
- Excellent educational opportunities for career education as well as life- long educational opportunities.

The Baraboo area is a great place to live - it is attractive, lively, inclusive and safe.

- A city that promotes clean, livable neighborhoods through equitable enforcement of dwelling codes. Non-compliant landlords need to be held accountable.
- I would like to see some additional housing stock being developed. This includes both multi-family as well as single family homes. Diversity in the housing stock is a key. It allows a family to begin here and move through the family cycle without leaving the community.
- Safe inviting family oriented community with strong parks and recreation offerings as well as quality community events.

- Economic development that enhances the livability of our city, makes it vital and engaging for community members while maintaining the charm and natural beauty. We need to think about the impact of sprawl and to plan carefully.
- Housing, affordable single family homes and fewer apartments. Apartments really hurt the tax structure that supports the schools.

The Baraboo area communicates a clear, consistent, cohesive marketing message.

- Increase communication to residents, potential residents, businesses, etc. (social media, print, Nixle, sky writers!)
- An image campaign for the community, I think we are off to a good start. This needs to include roads and entrances into the city.
- Need to be the voice on social media so we can attract those Gen X and Ys to our community to work in our facilities and to come here as entrepreneurs and begin a new phase of manufacturing in the community. I have the hope we will accomplish this. This may require some major changes to our ordinances to allow for the innovation that they can bring but don't fit into the normal zoning requirements of today's Baraboo.
- Establish a clear message for Baraboo "Business and Families call us Home" and use it consistently
- Establish a primary web home for Baraboo and make it great packed with information.
 - Business Info (land available/buildings public and private, lending resources, employment stats)
 - Housing information (educational options (including alt), rec programs, cultural (theatre programs, library, concerts, dance, button club!)
 - Explanation of tax use
 - Gems
 - Utilities – accessibility
- That we can unify the major players – Chamber, City, Downtown, county. To get everyone speaking the same language.

Improved infrastructure and aesthetics (including sustainable funding)

- Long term funding for public infrastructure. The roads leave a lasting impression. Making them drivable makes people happy to be here.
- Public transportation
- An exceptional library
- Develop better funding for infrastructure
- Well-kept rail, air and road system
- Attractive and welcoming entryways to the City

Greater focus on regional economic development

- We need to be an integral part of a regional economic development entity.

- Not working with West Baraboo as a partner for economic development. We cannot afford to have the two communities working at odds with each other. Both have strengths that can be used to a major advantage to grow and strengthen both communities. I have hope that both are strong enough and hungry enough that they will put the egos away when discussing economic vitality for our area.
- That we can find a common ground where economic growth, the natural features (environment) and neighboring communities can all work together to preserve but also have economic prosperity in the production of products.
- Leverage our proximity between the Twin Cities and Chicago.
- Develop more economic development partnerships

Emphasize local foods as a tool for economic development

- Having special opportunities locally where farmers' market booths sell produce and other products at a reasonable price (they have no middleman, the mark up should not be a lot more than a local grocery store); have many community gardens.
- Take advantage of our agricultural roots and work to build a farm to table culture that is a draw to young people looking for that quality of place.

Misc.

- I hope that we can look beyond anecdotes and proud, but parochial, interests to what are the real trends and majority interests. We need to see the big picture and set the community on a sustainable path (we do not do this when we make short-term decisions that benefit only a few or maximize the current return instead of the long-term).
- Diverse economy that compliments who we are
- Successfully blend the downtown and the river front area into a hybrid of mixed use district (arts, food, shopping, residential, entertainment, etc.
- Engage in planning that encourages the use of quality measurements. We need a dynamic planning document that focuses on major drivers.
- Less dwelling on the negatives and more concentration on what we can do to make our community a stronger, vibrant community that every type of person would want to live in, where every business would like to try their hand at being entrepreneurial in, where everyone would want to come back time and again to just experience what we have.
- I have hope that we will stop belaboring things we cannot change—jail location, speaking negatively about any business/manufacture in the community, telling developers that once they have begun development of certain area that we should have never allowed it. I am hoping that we will keep those companies and those developers and they will develop and bring that bigger tax base to Baraboo.

Vision for the Future

The vision is a description of what a community will look like if it achieves its full potential. It conveys a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future. BEDC and key stakeholders brainstormed a list of vision statements related to economic development for the Baraboo area (bulleted). The ideas have been organized but not prioritized.

The Baraboo area is business and family friendly with a thriving and diverse economy.

- Baraboo is a business and family friendly community with a thriving and diverse economy.
- I believe that our economic base should be well rounded and that employment should be targeted to medium sized business (100-250 employees). We don't want to be married to one company and enjoy their good times but suffer when their market is on the down turn.
- Mixed use centers with energy and synergy for new entertainment and retail ventures and new office park nodes with room for small ventures and big names are being developed throughout the community.
- BETTER hotels, not a ton, just better quality. Boutique hotels
- Vibrant box store corridor in West Baraboo
- Varied (ages and skills) workforce and varied employer base
- Diverse housing opportunities of high quality, including historic homes, affordable homes, rentals, condominiums and homes for the elderly and disadvantaged are available.
- Financial incentives from the City of Baraboo and Sauk County to drive new business to our town.
- There are ample opportunities for development; coordination exists between public improvements and private development, as well as a streamlined and clear development processes has been developed and is supported by the community and the political framework.
- The City values its business community and works hard to meet their needs—existing employers and emerging entrepreneurs; large and small businesses; those that serve the local market and those that have a global reach. The business community reciprocates by supporting those assets that make Baraboo special, especially its people who earn living wages.

The Baraboo area offers access to exceptional educational resources at all levels.

- I would like to see an effort to bolster the school system and to help increase their overall performance scores. Parents often look at the schools as a decision factor in selecting a place to live.
- All levels of education are available. Parents are involved.
- The reputation of the schools. I think it is better than what is portrayed. They may need an image campaign
- Making education a high city wide priority will benefit everyone. But it won't happen overnight
- The region needs to focus on just in time education as well as just in case. Just in case is a big gamble and does not meet the needs of both existing and future job creators.
- Technological changes provide easy access to information and education for all Baraboo residents. Nurturing our youth is a priority and youth are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of our community.

The Baraboo area offers exceptional infrastructure including roads, rail, air and public services.

- I would like to see a region that is adequately served by sufficient infrastructure which will include green alternatives as well
- The City's built environment emphasizes quality and aesthetic integrity.
- High quality services and infrastructure from the city and the county
- Improved infrastructure
- Baraboo is a community with a strong infrastructure of roads, rail, air and public services.
- A growing market of consumers and workers, and an improved infrastructure for consumer and service transportation needs is present.

The Baraboo area is a great place to live - it is attractive, lively, inclusive and safe.

- Linked downtown and riverfront area, lively. Activities all the time
- Cultural diversity creates challenges and local residents meet the challenge. General happiness, personal, spiritual growth, and families are encouraged and promoted.
- Cultural diversity enhances community festivals and events.
- It is a welcoming place that includes all voices in decisions, large and small.
- The riverfront is a focus of economic, entertainment and recreational activity
- Parks have adequate bikeways and walking paths. Neighborhood parks provide a focus for recreation; a range of recreation options is available.
- Continued focus on quality of life, bike trails, community events, public art, etc.
- Baraboo is a safe community with many public events and recreational offerings.

The cultural and environmental assets in the Baraboo area are supported and valued.

- Continued support for the arts
- UW-BSC provides a focus for cultural events which promote the value of the area.
- Public art, cultural events and activities, and museums are displayed and supported by the community.
- Cultural diversity creates challenges and local residents meet the challenge. General happiness, personal, spiritual growth, and families are encouraged and promoted.
- The Baraboo area is known for its unique cultural and environmental gems. People come to visit and to live here because it has such a significant quality of life including its educational opportunities; leisure activities; and opportunities to build businesses and pursue careers.

The Baraboo area clearly communicates its value to current and potential residents, visitors, and businesses.

- An agreed upon marketing plan for the area. In our SWOT meetings, we found many local groups were having the same "conversation". There is a need for better communication between groups for a common message.
- Markings from the bypass that clearly communicate Baraboo "has it going on!"

- I think an agreed upon marketing plan for everyone would be ideal. Each group will have its own variation, but a common message is needed.
- Good signage (communication) from major entry points into town alerting residence or travelers of a Baraboo's Gems (Maybe an App)
- Disconnect between City (all entities) and residents.

The Baraboo area is an integral part of a strong regional economy.

- I would like to see a region that aggressively partners with surrounding communities to develop a dynamic economic development plan.
- Culture of collaboration, partnership, and resource-sharing
- Because the community has this positive self-assuredness, it has welcomed neighboring communities as partners, and promotes itself as a more robust region because of this. The community's approach to community and economic development is a sustainable one. There are lots of partners that participate and help to shape the community's development.

Baraboo area employers have strong partnerships with regional educational entities. (Purpose?)

- Enhanced cooperation between education programs and employers.
- There is a strong business/school partnership.

The Baraboo area has a respected, reliable, skilled workforce.

Misc.

- Single contact point for economic development – a focused and dedicated service to gather information for businesses interested in the Baraboo area, well-publicized both within our community and outside.
- I would like to see the city develop and stay the course with a comprehensive financial plan. This includes adequate funding levels for the high priorities as established by the city. It will be difficult with levy limits and debt limits that the city faces. A long term financial plan that the city adheres to, will help in the long term.
- I would like to see a region that is served by fewer economic development organizations. We simply have too many.
- I would like to see BEDC become a position that citizens want to serve on. It may require that the organization "divorce" itself from the City and become a privately owned and operated Corporation. People often refer to Reedsburg and their economic development group as a nice model that does not include the city. It may be worth exploring if it gives us additional abilities to structure land sales.

APPENDIX E: AGENDA AND NOTES FROM FOUR COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

Community Discussions – Focus on Vision and Strategies

Agenda:

5 minutes	Welcome, Introductions & Overview of Planning Purpose and Process <i>Jenny Erickson, Community Development Educator, UWEX Sauk County</i>
20 minutes	Response to Baraboo’s Economic Development Vision Statements
60 minutes	Initial Strategy Development
5 minutes	THANK YOU & Next Steps

Draft Economic Development Vision for the Baraboo Area

The vision is a description of what a community will look like if it achieves its full potential. It conveys a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future. The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) and key stakeholders developed the following vision related to economic development for the Baraboo area:

The Baraboo area is a thriving, dynamic, and proud community where people want to live, raise a family, work, recreate and relax. It is a safe, attractive place with a diverse economy and a strong sense of community where all people are welcome and feel included. Baraboo is also forward-thinking and environmentally conscious.

- The Baraboo area is and continues to be a leader in a thriving regional economy founded on a respected, reliable, and skilled workforce.
- The Baraboo area offers diverse, innovative educational opportunities for all ages and stages in life. Education is defined not only as preparatory but also transformative; it is designed to help identify and unlock an individual’s passion as well as develop contributing members of society.
- Regional educational entities are actively engaged with the Baraboo area community in part through strong, innovative partnerships with employers and local government.
- The cultural, historical and environmental assets in the Baraboo area are supported, protected and celebrated.
- The Baraboo’s public services and infrastructure are properly staffed, well-maintained, efficient and interconnected, and the long-range fiscal and environmental impacts are thoughtfully considered in the planning process.
- The Baraboo area clearly demonstrates its value to current and potential residents, visitors, and businesses.

1.) Are any key vision pieces missing? Is there anything you strongly disagree with?

2.) What can Baraboo do to achieve the vision outlined above?

Example strategy: Partner with the Baraboo Area Chamber to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the City.

Community Discussion Meeting Schedule

Monday, June 16th 11:00AM - Noon at the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce

Tuesday, June 17th 6:00PM - 7:30PM at Baraboo High School

Wednesday, June 18th 1:00PM - 2:30PM at Baraboo Library

Thursday, June 19th 7:00AM - 8:30AM at St. Clare (Ho Chunk Room)

The following are the meeting notes from the community discussion that took place on June 16, 2014 at the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce. The participants offered feedback on the draft vision statement developed by BEDC and suggested possible strategies for moving forward.

Feedback on draft vision:

- Clearly state partnership with school districts (3rd bullet point)
- Rewording of last bullet point emphasizing the value and welcoming of teachers/residents/businesses
- A central, comprehensive events/communication resource
- Possible strategy: library as a host for an online community calendar
- Funding for additional security measures to reduce criminal activity
- Rephrasing and rewording of second paragraph of vision (e.g. “recreate”)
- Move “forward-thinking and environmentally conscious” to beginning of vision statement
- Further define the meaning of “value” (6th bullet point)
 - Additional language of the small town, rural atmosphere
- *Revise bullet:* Residents, visitors, and businesses find value at... (examples of community services that provide specific important values) (6th bullet point)
- *Flip the bullet* to make the statement active for employers and local government (3rd bullet point)
- General use of active vs. passive wording in the vision

What can Baraboo do to achieve the vision outlined above?

- Support the Baraboo Public Library as a key economic driver
 - Ex. Summer Reading Program
- Proactive continued and renewed interest to meet with and interview businesses
- Identify businesses and services that interest families and residents
- Marketing plan for the school to better showcase educational strengths of the Baraboo School District
 - Beyond the numbers, use more examples
- Partnership with employers and realtors to be a first point of contact and help recruit potential residents to Baraboo
- “Package” to communicate the value of the area as a home and workplace to potential residents
- A 100 gigabyte broadband service for the Baraboo Area
 - Partnership between the city and Charter services
- Reconsider development for the river front to consider smaller parcels
- Ensure protection of natural areas and environmental attractions in Baraboo despite increased traffic
- A strategy to better understand the needs and wants of the millennial generation
- City and school district partnership to boost the school’s athletic program
 - Emphasis on younger children and developing fundamental skills
- Greater cooperation between park and recreation, club, and school athletic programs

The following are the meeting notes from the community discussion that took place on June 17, 2014 at the Baraboo High School. The participants offered feedback on the draft vision statement developed by BEDC and suggested possible strategies for moving forward.

Feedback on draft vision:

- Revise vision to include affordable housing and good paying jobs
- Emphasis the importance of education in providing employable Baraboo residents
- Provide list of public services (5th bullet point)
- Educational entities are emphasized as a priority in the economic development of Baraboo
- Consider revising the 1st bullet point to future tense, and emphasize the “pushing of the envelope” and a continual progression
- Add “diverse” to 1st bullet point description of workforce
- Include the importance of charitable work and organizations to describe further the generous nature of Baraboo residents
- Reinforce the theme of partnerships and the idea of marching in the same direction
- Reinforce the idea of the school district, government, and economic development working cohesively
- Greater emphasis on, tie in, and draw for recreational and environmental opportunities available

What can Baraboo do to achieve the vision?

- Grant opportunities from partnerships discussed above
- Market to young professionals
 - How to become engaged in the community (leadership, volunteer, etc. roles)
- Make UW-Sauk County more attractive to out of city students interested in college education
 - Strengthen available coursework in natural resources and conservation
 - Way to further utilize the resources and services in the surrounding Baraboo Area
 - Transition from two-year schooling to four-year
- Small business incubators that draws innovative ideas to the community and removes barriers to small-business start up
- Schools and partnerships to prepare students as entrepreneurs and support system for those ideas following graduation
- UW-Sauk County and MATC work with the employers to make sure graduates are learned in skills necessary for jobs and over-arching life skills
 - Curriculum changes and over-haul
- Making sure we all have the same definition of work
- Stronger connections between family members and families with the community as a way to develop life skills and increase community engagement
- More opportunities for developing sense of self, leadership skills, and life skills in young students
 - Boys & Girls Club, 4-H, etc.
- Comprehensive marketing plan for residents and to attract potential residents, visitors, and businesses to Baraboo
- Walkable, sustainable community

- Further innovations of park and recreations locations and use of space
 - Tailor to different age brackets (children, teens, adults)
 - Increase number of parks in West Baraboo
 - New ways to introduce group sports, community recreational opportunities
- Support for the arts: mural paintings that showcase what community has to offer
- Affordable housing and city zoning
- Incentives to get business to come to Baraboo
- Working with surrounding communities to form a cohesive unit and rebuilding those partnerships

The following are the meeting notes from the community discussion that took place on June 18, 2014 at the Baraboo Library. The participants offered feedback on the draft vision statement developed by BEDC and suggested possible strategies for moving forward.

Feedback on draft vision:

- Strengthen the first paragraph and initial statement. Follow up with bullet points highlighting various strategies
- Emphasis on building a diverse economy through better marketing of the Baraboo Area to potential businesses
- Attracting and retaining businesses.
- Revise first paragraph to differentiate the Baraboo Area from surrounding areas
- Include an appreciation for agriculture and protection of farmland. Importance of maintaining a rural, close-knit community feeling.
- Importance of food-related resources for growing the community.
- Greater focus on health services as an economic driver.
- Better coordinate social networks, similar to the United Way in Dane County
- Looking for and making connections to engage the youth and young professionals in the community
- Develop a work force training program for poor, underserved, and disadvantaged Baraboo residents
- Revise vision statement to emphasize the uniqueness of the Baraboo Area
 - Tourism, Agriculture, Natural Resources

What can Baraboo do to achieve the vision?

- Targeting and recruiting larger employers
- Business example: car wash
- Develop a marketing plan unique to Baraboo
- Better understand the competitive advantages and disadvantages of starting a business in Baraboo (in comparison to other communities and regionally)
- Overall plan for city aesthetics, including buildings and landscaping in order to achieve a unified look
- Marketing plan to connect the best pieces of Baraboo, like agriculture, available natural resources, etc.
- A greater focus on the agricultural sector
- Utilize the resources, MAD-REP, WMC, and WEDC, as Baraboo
- Focus on infrastructure and pros and cons for Baraboo
- Demonstrate prosperity and continual growth as a community
- Planning to communicate what makes Baraboo a special place and why people should move here
- Emphasis aspects in Baraboo that make for favorable economic development
 - Access to broadband, airport, interstate/highway, and access to other metropolitan areas
- Strategies and services for business start-up
 - Revisiting these services and investigating barriers to

- Explore what financial resources the community of Baraboo has for beginning businesses
- Look into land acquisition for the city of Baraboo
- Potential for a growth plan with respect to preserving agricultural land and additional factors
- Stronger partnership with West Baraboo
- Continue looking into building design standards, use of building space, general city aesthetics etc.
 - With respect to city entry points
- Importance of work force development resources and similar services
 - Coordinate job training with job needs
- People Helping People

The following are the meeting notes from the community discussion that took place on June 19, 2014 at St. Clare Hospital. The participants offered feedback on the draft vision statement developed by BEDC and suggested possible strategies for moving forward.

Feedback on draft vision:

- Include statement on pursuing and encouraging business growth in Baraboo
- Stronger emphasis on robust business recruiting program
- Create an environment where people ages 18 to 25 want to stay
- Emphasis on maintenance of the small town atmosphere and protection of current resources, rather than growth
- Balance between seeking robust business recruitment and maintaining small town atmosphere
- Better utilize tourism market
- Change in diction of “workforce” to something more all-encompassing like “citizens”
- Stronger partnerships with surrounding municipalities

What can Baraboo do to enact the vision?

- Time-shares near the golf course as a tourism destination
 - And affordable condos
- Public transit within the community and nearby region
- More aesthetically appealing city entry ways, collaboration with West Baraboo
- How to bring together key community stakeholders regularly to collaborate and work towards the vision
- Investment in public spaces that are gathering and creative spaces
- Communicate what makes Baraboo unique and special to residents and potential residents. Emphasis on Community Pride.
- Maintaining non-chain, unique businesses that contribute to Baraboo’s sense of place
 - Including restaurants
- Program to support, foster, and educate new businesses
- Business incubator program
- Attract visitors through better showcasing Baraboo’s unique sense of place
- Incentive to reuse existing, empty spaces in Baraboo for further economic development
- Revisit city policies on infilling and reusing city spaces
- Issue around lack of middle sized retail spaces (20,000 ft²). Seek a mix of retail spaces with respect to size.
- Safer, easier routes between places of attraction and tourism destinations
 - Oak Park Place and routes to Devil’s Lake State Park
- More attractive downtown housing options
 - Next to the Civic Center, better utilize parking lot space
 - Warren Hotel