

Village of Grafton Downtown Vision 2025 Workshop Report

Saturday June 12, 2010

On Saturday, June 12, 2010, the Village of Grafton held a Downtown Vision Workshop 2025 at the Village of Grafton Multi-purpose Senior Center. The purpose of this workshop was to allow those with a strong interest in Downtown to help formulate the future direction the Village will take in continuing to improve, redevelop, and sustain the quality of life in the Downtown for the next 15 years.

The twenty-one individuals in attendance at the workshop reviewed and critiqued the progress made since the last Downtown Vision Workshop was held in 1998. The critiqued process was an important component of the workshop because it allowed the audience to view the progress made in the downtown since 1998 and also comment on aspects of this overall redevelopment that has worked and area that need further attention. The results of the individual critiquing of projects are provided in this report.

In addition, a brainstorming session was held that required those in attendance to focus on the future of the Downtown. Five groups were formed and 5 main topics were discussed. Each group consisted of approximately 4 individuals.

The five topics included Redevelopment, Land Use and Linkage, Transportation and Parking, Architecture and Aesthetics, and Marketing. Within the parameters of each given topic the groups discussed two questions among themselves; 1) what do you like about the downtown that has occurred (as it relates to the main topic)? And, 2) what would you like to see improved in the future (as it relates to the main topic)?

Once these questions were discussed and answered within each group, a general discussion period occurred and each group was asked to provide their top 2 to 3 answers for each question. This process was continued for each of the five topics. The answers and ideas given by each group are provided in Part II - Brainstorming Session of this report.

Similar to the 1998 Downtown Workshop, the ideas that came out of this recent Workshop will be used to guide development in the Downtown for the next 15 years (2025).

Part I - Review and Critique of Downtown Projects

Project 1 – The Berkshire

Full redevelopment project – 66 unit elderly housing



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4.6** **Land Use and Linkage**
(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)
- 4.5** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)
- 4.7** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)
- 4.5** **Redevelopment**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 2 – Harris Bank Building
Full redevelopment project – Two-story bank and office building



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.7 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

4.1 Transportation and Parking

(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)

5 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”

4.9 Redevelopment

(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 3 – Cary Office Building
Full redevelopment project – Two-story office building



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4** **Land Use and Linkage**
(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)
- 3.8** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)
- 4.7** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)
- 4.2** **Redevelopment**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 4 – Village Center
Full redevelopment project - Two-story retail/office building



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4.9** **Land Use and Linkage**
(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

- 4.0** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)

- 4.9** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

- 4.8** **Redevelopment**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 5 – Paramount Plaza
Full redevelopment project – Downtown Plaza



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.8 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building or site fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

4.9 Cultural/Recreational Impact

(Has the project made a positive impact on the community as a gathering place and/or as a historical/cultural landmark?)

4.8 Transportation

(Has the project made traffic patterns safer in the Downtown?)

4.8 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

4.8 Redevelopment (Overall rank the quality of the development

Project 6 – Cary/Castner Office Building
Facade Grant project - Two-story office building refurbishment



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 3.9** **Land Use and Linkage**
(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

- 4.4** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)

- 4.4** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

- 4.4** **Redevelopment** (Facade Improvement and overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 7 – Ale House/Bridgewater with Riverwalk
Full redevelopment project – Mixed Use Development with Riverwalk



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.6 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building and site fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

3.9 Transportation and Parking

(Is the building or site location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)

4.6 Cultural/Recreational Impact

(Has the project made a positive impact on the community as a gathering place and/or as a historical/cultural landmark?)

4.8 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

4.5 Redevelopment (Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 8 – The Hutch Building
Facade Grant project – Bar/Restaurant refurbishment



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4.0 Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)
- 4.1 Redevelopment (Facade Improvement)**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 9 – The Hutch Parking Lot/11th Avenue Streetscape
Demolition of blighted structures, refurbished parking lot/11th Avenue reconstruction



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4.6** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)
- 4.3** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)
- 4.5** **Redevelopment (Facade Improvement)**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 10 – Last Drop Coffee Building
Facade Grant project - Refurbished two-story retail/residential building



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.6 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

4.5 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

4.5 Redevelopment (Facade Improvement)

(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 11 – Grafton Bowl Building
**Facade Grant project - Refurbished two-story restaurant, bowling alley,
residential building**



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.7 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

4.9 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

4.9 Redevelopment (Facade Improvement)

(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 12 – The Heritage of Grafton
Full redevelopment project, 44 units, market rate condominiums



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

- 4.8** **Land Use and Linkage**
(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

- 4.6** **Transportation and Parking**
(Is the building or location accessible in a safe manner to the general public and is there sufficient parking to support the development?)

- 4.6** **Architecture and Aesthetics**
(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

- 4.6** **Redevelopment**
(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Project 13 – Sandy Wirth Building
Facade Grant project – Retail/office building refurbishment



Before



After

Total Average Rank (5 highest to 1 lowest)

4.3 Land Use and Linkage

(Does the use of the building fulfill the goal of attracting people Downtown to live, work, shop, and/or recreate?)

4.4 Architecture and Aesthetics

(Rank the visual quality of the project? This should take into account the tangible difference between the “before and after”)

4.4 Redevelopment (Facade Improvement)

(Overall rank the quality of the development)

Part II - Brainstorming Session

This discussion consisted of 5 groups with 4 members each. The five topics included Redevelopment, Land Use and Linkage, Transportation and Parking, Architecture and Aesthetics, and Marketing. Within the parameters of a given topic each group discuss two questions among themselves; 1) what do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred (as it relates to the discussion topic)? And, 2) what would you like to see improved in the future (as it relates to the discussion topic)?

Redevelopment

What do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred?

- Ale House and other restaurants are destinations for the region
- Downtown has positive first impression for those driving by
- Walkability
- Large number of small businesses
- New residential units in the downtown
- Paramount Plaza is a local gathering place/destination
- Synergy (good relationship) of business owners and Village Board
- Bike trail leading into downtown area
- Streetscape = walkability and aesthetically pleasing
- Wayfinding signage
- General redevelopment and new development
- Improved building facades
- Façade grant program – draws in businesses and makes improvements
- Zoning and development guidelines

What would you like to see improved in the future?

- Perceived parking problem
- Maximizing year-round riverwalk usage
- Communication and signage regarding parking availability
- Old brewery site is an eyesore
- Need to move events downtown and close the streets off to vehicles
- Finding a way to define the downtown with unique name and signage
- Create sense of ownership with downtown businesses- create a business improvement district (BID)
- Linkage between assets- strengthen connections between downtown and other community assets
- Improve lumber yard site
- Make WIS 60 & 13th Avenue crossing safer for pedestrians
- Extend riverwalk to the north across WIS 60
- Work with property owners for renting and leasing second floor spaces
- Public relations for parking situation – that it is not a problem
- Focus on density and variety (mixed-use)
- Address empty storefronts
- People need to be patient – projects take time
- Increase recreational uses/activities in Veterans Park (canoes, warming house)
- Improve the exit from Village Center to 12th Avenue – access and visibility

- Wayfinding signage – develop kiosks with all community amenities and maps

Land Use and Linkages

What do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred?

- Existing zoning encourages desirable usages and limits undesirable
- Paramount Plaza and Village Center are destinations
- Implementation of master plan designs and architectural guidelines
- Good mix of residential and commercial
- Restaurants and entertainment use has improved
- Riverwalk, dam overlook and the bike trail brings walkers and bikers downtown
- Well designed, accessible for walkers and bikers
- Businesses working cooperatively
- Village does a good job of preventing big box retail developments and attracting small business to downtown

What would you like to see improved in the future?

- Encourage more retail use on ground floor levels
- Brewery site
- Develop southwest side of downtown with higher density and mix-use developments on the hotel, foundry and lumber yard sites
- Communication of master plan and include what is unique about Grafton in the master plan
- Create more connection to the 14th Avenue Grafton Mill buildings and look at the uses of that facility
- Work with Aurora with identifying what would be complimentary business in downtown and housing needs for their employees
- Development of south commercial district and linkage to downtown
- Traffic at 12th Avenue and WIS 60 needs to improve. Traffic is too heavy during peak traffic times. Consider a bridge to the north of the downtown.
- More community activities in downtown, more utilization of Paramount Plaza
- The wayfinding signage that is proposed will make a huge difference

Transportation and Parking

What do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred?

- 13th Avenue is one-way and the angle parking on this street
- Village public parking lots
- The parking study concluded that we do have adequate parking in downtown
- Parking signs on the north side of the Village Center parking lot for those businesses
- Paramount Plaza – parking and removing “5th leg”
- Parking is free
- Streetscape and Wisconsin Avenue bike path
- 13th Avenue and Bridge Street parking lot

What would you like to see improved in the future?

- The Ozaukee Interurban Trail needs more signage to direct trail users through the downtown

- Better signage and information to combat perceived parking problem
- Utilization of existing parking
- Better communication with business owners regarding parking
- 13th Avenue north of WIS 60 should be one-way heading north
- Traffic at North Street to WIS 60 on 12th Avenue
- Encourage employees to park outside congested areas by informing them of the parking options
- Try to change mindset of the perceived parking problem
- Better pedestrian crossing at 13th Avenue and Washington Street is needed

Architecture and Aesthetics

What do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred?

- Most buildings are unique
- Proper scale and proportion
- Components of downtown master plan are relevant and being implemented
- Streetscape
- Outdoor seating for eating and resting are integrated well
- Domino effect on residents to improve their own properties
- Facade Grant Program response and success
- Continued requirement of higher quality materials for building façades

What would you like to see improved in the future?

- Include requirements of maintenance for facade grants
- Integrate pocket green spaces in downtown
- Developing marketing materials for façade improvements including examples and new businesses
- More floral in downtown and coordinate usage
- Open to news quality designs to have more diversity – LEED designs and green roofs
- Encourage additional outdoor usage on first level
- Prevent dominance of parking on Main Street

Marketing

What do you like about the downtown redevelopment that has occurred?

- Other communities want to be like Grafton
- Giro d’Grafton
- “Catch the Current” Video
- Branding efforts
- E-mails individuals and the businesses send out
- Festivals
- Paramount Plaza, Paramount Records and honoring local history

What would you like to see improved in the future?

- Encourage more joint business and Village marketing
- Define/identify who is responsible at the Village for marketing
- Encourage all community members to market the community better

- Maximize web linkages
 - Businesses indicate parking location on their website
 - GPS parking locations for mobile devices
 - Google Earth
- Create welcome wagon bag to hand out at events
- Getting downtown businesses to participate in joint marketing efforts
- Finding ways for businesses to leverage marketing efforts
- Complementary events downtown during other festivals and progressive events that require participants to enter each business