

**Village of Arena
Town of Arena
Town of Clyde
Town of Wyoming**
Community Vision Plan

Iowa County

**A Summary of Public Input
January 2003**

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On Wednesday January 8 the Village of Arena and the Towns of Arena, Clyde and Wyoming participated in a community-visioning program called: ***“Community Vision: Looking to the Future.”*** This visioning exercise took place at the VFW Hall in Arena, Wisconsin. Paul Ohlrogge of the UW-Extension Office and Scott Godfrey of the Planning and Development Office from Iowa County facilitated this program.

Communities today face any number of pressing concerns, including requests for rezoning, demands for affordable housing or the loss of a major employer. Unfortunately, decisions about these issues are frequently made in the absence of a real vision of how the residents want their communities to look in the future.

Planning for a community’s future can be a difficult, time consuming and costly job. Residents are often more concerned about daily tasks rather than think about a vision. Residents want good schools, decent jobs, safe and clean environments and safe neighborhoods in which to live. Without a vision, however, communities limit their ability to make decisions about these issues – somewhat like driving across the country without a roadmap.

Who should determine a community’s future, other than its residents? Should it be a consultant hired to develop a plan, a state or federal agency making decisions on highways or wetlands preservation, or a private developer constructing a shopping mall or a residential subdivision? All these could have a large impact on a community without input from a broad range of residents. Residents need to participate in and actively envision the future of their communities – or other groups and individuals will determine it for them.

The community-visioning program lasted approximately three hours with good healthy discussions on what folks of these four municipalities envisioned their future to be. The program was broken down into three sections. The first section concentrated on: “Our Current Condition”. The second portion focused on: “Challenges and Opportunities.” The third portion focused on: “The Future.”

What follows is a summary of information gathered during the visioning session on a series of questions posed to the group of citizens in attendance. This information, along with other information gathered from a recent written county-wide survey, will be used to assist the Regional Planning Commission in drafting a comprehensive plan for the participating jurisdictions. This visioning session will help guide the future of the participating town and village Plan Commissions in their efforts to work toward comprehensive planning.

Section 1: Our Current Condition

The following three questions were asked to the group regarding our current condition:

1. What do you like about living in this area of Iowa County?
2. What are some of the community values?
3. What is unique about your community that is not found anywhere else?

What do you like about living in this area of Iowa County?

- The views
- The people and the community
- It is quiet
- Biking opportunities
- Clean air
- Rural Atmosphere
- Good schools
- Agriculture
- Rural traditions
- Local government is accessible
- Lake Louis Beer Brewed in Arena
- A good variety of recreation opportunities
- Wisconsin River is close by
- The artisans
- Lack of traffic
- Wildlife abundant
- Topography
- Changing seasons
- Governor Dodge State Park
- Unique history
- Good Post Office
- Good highways and good roads
- Dark night skies
- Proximity to a larger city

What are some of the community values?

- ◆ Pride in the ownership of property
- ◆ The cemetery is well kept and looks beautiful
- ◆ Availability of many different churches
- ◆ Farming and family farms exist here
- ◆ Solitude
- ◆ Community often gathers at the park
- ◆ Home talent teams and games
- ◆ Concern for quality schools
- ◆ Caring neighborhoods
- ◆ Ambulance and fire service are good
- ◆ Good clean neighborhoods with good garbage pickup
- ◆ Recycling is valued here
- ◆ The VFW is very helpful in the community
- ◆ Local government is valued
- ◆ Spring and fall clean-ups – community wide

What is unique about your community that is not found anywhere else?

- Taliesen is in the area
- Artistic enclave
- Folklore Village
- American Players Theatre
- The Springs Resort
- House on the Rock
- Farmers Market on Highway 14
- Cheese factories in Arena
- Bethel Horizons
- Organic food producers
- Large blocks of forested land
- Forestry cooperative
- Hartung Brothers and the vegetable production
- Unity Chapel
- Arena Manor (residential senior housing facility)
- Chapel in the Pines
- Tower Hill State Park
- The Wisconsin River
- Unglaciated landscape

Section 2. Challenges and Opportunities:

The second portion of the Visioning Program focused on the Challenges and Opportunities facing the Village of Arena and the Towns of Arena, Clyde and Wyoming. The following questions were used to facilitate discussion on the upcoming challenges:

1. What are some of the challenges and concerns facing your community?
2. What some opportunities for your communities in the future?
3. What type of development or redevelopment should occur in this area?
4. What type of development should not occur?

What are some of the challenges or concerns facing your community?

• Pollution of the groundwater	• Preservation of the farmland
• Becoming a bedroom community to Madison	• Transitioning out of agriculture
• Economic opportunities for farmers	• Keeping farming affordable
• Handicapped accessibility	• Control over commercial development
• Maintaining a transportation system	• Noxious weed control
• Youth programs and opportunities	• Transportation for the elderly and the handicapped
• Scenic preservation	• Maintaining a deer population
• Safe bicycling on county roads	• Maintaining rural character and rural way of life
• Land valuation	• Job opportunities need to be attracted to the Village of Arena
• Maintaining sense of community	• Keeping schools open and keep the elementary school in Arena
• Maintaining low crime rate	• Providing good emergency services

What are some opportunities for your communities in the future?

Preserve what we have	Look at alternatives for farmers
Increase the quality of life	Local governments working more closely together
Take advantage of local talent that is here – find a way to keep the talent here (much of the talent commutes out everyday)	Smart Growth is an opportunity and creating our own Plan Commissions
Involve younger generations in decision making	Smart Growth provides an opportunity to simplify all Zoning stuff, make it user friendly and easy to understand
Opportunity for Iowa County to plan for the entire county	Coordinated plan with all municipalities

<i>What type of development or redevelopment should occur in this area?</i>	<i>What type of development should not occur?</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A commuter rail system 2. Preserve the Lower Wisconsin Riverway 3. Transportation for the elderly and the handicapped needs to be improved 4. Accessibility for the disabled 5. Thematic name from the Village of Arena needs to be explored and used to promote the area. 6. Expanded homes for the elderly –assisted living facilities 7. Alternative funding for government services instead of taxes – more tax relief 8. Development should occur along areas that have the capacity and existing infrastructure 9. Encourage land stewardship 10. Development of some type to assist farmers 11. Development of more community services 12. Compensation to avoid rural development (explore PDR) 13. Encourage voluntary scenic easements 14. Recreation and more outdoor trails 15. Sustainable jobs with a living wage 16. Adult group homes in the area 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large lot sizes for rural residential development 2. Lack of cluster development 3. Large scale industrial farms 4. Rural subdivisions 5. Large factories 6. Developments with low paying job 7. Commercial development in rural settings 8. Commercial traffic should not occur on small local roads 9. Some touristy attractions would be good 10. No 4-Lane Highways on Highway 14 like what happened on Highway 12. 11. No Riverboat gambling 12. Rural homes that conflict with agriculture

Section 3. The Future

The final segment of the visioning process was to look ahead at a preferred vision of the future. Visioning is *a process* by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it. Through public involvement, communities identify their purpose, core values and vision of the future. The following questions were asked to encourage discussion on the community’s vision for the future.

1. What words do you want your grandchildren to use to describe your community?
2. What do you want to preserve?
3. What do you want your community to look like in 2022?

What words do you want your grandchildren to use to describe your community?

•Home	• Quiet	• Safe
•Garden Space	• Comfortable	• Bike riding place
• Beautiful	• Place where there are farmsteads	• Where there are seven generations that have lived here
•Place where there is a balance between all peoples	• Friendly	• Unique
• Eagles are seen here	• It is still the country	• Grandma you live in the middle of nowhere
• Look at the stars tonight	• Place to hunt and fish	• Grandchildren will say thank you
• Interesting	• Well thought out	• Good planning

What do you want to preserve?

- Trees and forests
- Country in general
- Natural values
- River Road
- Both of the Arena Parks
- Sense of Community
- Rural way of life
- Agriculture
- Clean air
- Water
- Use Value Assessment
- Wisconsin River
- Bike Trails
- Wildlife opportunities
- Scenic Scape and limits on signage on the roads
- Keep crime rate low
- Affordable housing
- Taliesen Area
- Diversity of native landscape – environmental health and balance

What do you want your community to look like in 2022?

Clean Air	Separated from Madison not a suburb of Madison
Less government bureaucracy	Forested land remains
As rural as we can stay	Same view of the landscape
Corridors for landscape and wildlife	Thriving farming community
More organic farming	Healthy land and water
Increase in agricultural related jobs	Place to hunt and fish
Shift to sustainable farming	More service for the disabled and the handicapped
High quality schools remain here	Sustainable resources