

MORMON COULEE/TOWN OF SHELBY VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

A Visual Preference Survey was conducted for the residents from the Town of Shelby and Southeast La Crosse that attended the Public Informational Meetings held on October 18th & 20th, 2004. It was used as an opportunity for residents to identify preferred commercial and residential development characteristics. The City of La Crosse will be using the survey responses to assist in developing policies for a Future Land Use Plan.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

79 people took the Visual Preference Survey. Groups of images were presented in eleven categories: development scenarios, residential density, cul-de-sac design, house placement, residential streetscapes, open space, garage placement, commercial development, street design, multi-family housing, and commercial signage.

The attendees were first shown a series of five development scenarios, each consisting of three panels. The first panel in each scenario represents a parcel's current land use. The next two panels show possible future development options on the parcel. While both options have the same level of new development (e.g., the same number of houses, business, etc...), they differ in how that new development is sited on the parcel. The attendees were asked to choose the one development option in each scenario that best represented their preferences about how new development should be sited. The attendees were also given the option to choose current land use.

The attendees were then shown 22 slides that were divided into the remaining categories. Each slide contained visual images that provided different examples of that type of development. (e.g., multi-family housing showed an image of an apartment building, an image of townhouses, and an image of a duplex). They were asked to compare the images presented to them on that slide and select the image they preferred the most. The attendees were informed to leave the question blank if they did not prefer any of the choices presented to them.

The scoring sheet also had a space for “comments” giving them the ability to comment on why they preferred the image or scenario they selected.

Scoring was computed by calculating the percentage of people who preferred an image and comparing it to the other percentages for each slide of the survey. This was also compared to the percent of people who did not prefer any of the images from that slide.

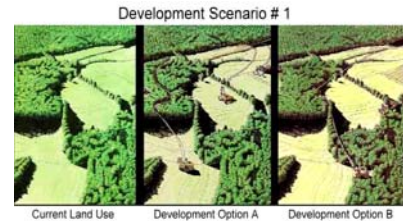
All images were shown to all the participants. Half of the images shown were photographed in the Town of Shelby and surrounding areas of La Crosse County while the other half included images from other rural communities.

SURVEY RESULTS

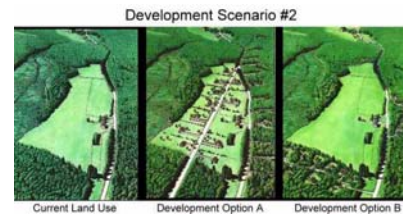
Development Scenarios

Participants were shown five examples of development scenarios. As stated above the first panel in each scenario represents a parcel's current land use. The next two panels show possible future development options on the parcel. While both options have the same level of new development (e.g., the same number of houses, business, etc...), they differ in how that new development is sited on the parcel.

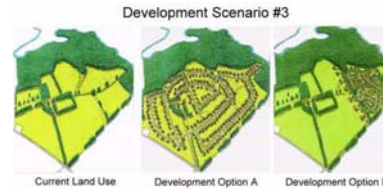
In Scenario #1, **67.1%** preferred Development Option B stating that by hiding the houses among the trees, this option better preserves the open space and agricultural areas and was more visually appealing.



In Scenario #2, **62%** preferred Development Option B stating that hiding the housing development among the trees and preserving the open space was a more efficient use of the land.



In Scenario #3, **54.4%** preferred Development Option B stating that this option allows for the preservation of open space. It is also important to note that **24.1%** preferred the current land use option.



In Scenario #4, **60.8%** preferred Development Option B stating that this option made better use of land to preserve open space by having less driveways off the main road.



In Scenario #5, **68.4%** preferred Development Option B stating that this option made better use of the land by maintaining thoroughfares and hiding parking lots in the trees.



Conclusion: The majority of the comments from the residents focused on preserving open space, agricultural areas and trees. It was stated that residents are willing to preserve open space as long as something is in place to make sure that it will always remain open space.

Residential Density

Participants were shown 3 slides relating to residential density. The images shown illustrated examples of residential developments with varying degrees of density. Two

examples show developments from a birdseye view and one example was from a ground perspective.



43% preferred option **A** stating that this option preserved open space while allowing residents to have 3-5 acre lots and privacy.



There was no majority decision for this slide. **32.9%** preferred option **A**, **31.6%** preferred option **B**, and **31.6%** preferred option **C**. There were no comments from the participants pertaining to these images.



53.2% preferred option **A** stating that this option gave residents enough privacy. Option **C** was viewed as too dense

Conclusion: The majority of the responses focused on having homes sit on 3-5 acre lots. Residents valued their privacy and feel having homes on big lots with lots of trees and greenspace is their idea of preserving open space.

Cul-de-sacs

Participants were shown two slides relating to cul-de-sac design and layout. One example was from the perspective on the ground and the other was from the air.



65.8% preferred option **B**. This design was thought to be much prettier with the landscaping and green in the middle. Islands were thought to be much more kid-friendly, environmentally sound, and attractive.

2)



51.3% preferred option **B**. It was stated that this was a good cul-de-sac design, which also incorporated an island in the middle, and made better use of the land.

Conclusion: With all the bluffs, valleys, and other natural features in the study area that may limit traditional development, cul-de-sacs will have a prominent role in future residential development. Residents prefer to have cul-de-sacs developed with trees and landscaped islands.

House Placement

Participants were shown two slides relating to the placement of homes on its lot. Images ranged from homes that were placed right up to the sidewalk and street to homes that were placed in the side of a hill with enormous retaining walls.

1)



55.7% preferred option **B** stating that they like to have the house sit back from the road. It was stated that a private drive from the main road to the house was very appealing as well as the absence of sidewalks.

2)



43.7% preferred option **C**. The house with a private drive back from the main road and no sidewalks was again stated as very appealing.

Conclusion: A low percentage of people favored the images of houses placed right up to the sidewalk and street. Residents preferred to have the house away from the main road with private drives.

Residential Streetscapes

Participants were shown 3 slides relating to residential streetscape design. Images included examples of residential streets with and without sidewalks, with and without trees in the boulevards, and narrow and wide streets.



39.9% preferred option **C** and **28.5%** preferred option **A**. The residents who preferred option C stated that the wide streets were good for biking and walking and gave a sense of openness. They also preferred not to have sidewalks and even suggested that there not be any curbs either. The residents who preferred option A preferred to have the sidewalks in order to walk somewhere other than the street. Use of trees in residential streetscaping was highly preferred from all residents.



68.4% preferred option **B** stating that trees were a primary factor in the selection of this image. Many preferred this image but stated that the street needed to be wider to accommodate on-street parking.



43% option **A** stating that the planting of trees in the boulevard is highly desirable.

Conclusion: There was an inconsistency with the preferred images selected in this category. The selection of option C in question #1 does not correspond with the preferred

images selected in question #2 and #3. The images from questions 2 and 3 depict a residential streetscape with sidewalks and narrow roads. The preferred image from question 1 depicts a residential streetscape with no sidewalks and a wider road. Residents who stated that they preferred not to have sidewalks and have wide streets for parking apparently did not apply those preferences when selecting images from question 2 and 3.

The rest of the comments from the residents stated for this category referred to the use of trees in the boulevards and the positive impact they have in neighborhoods in terms of appearance and safety.

Open Space

Participants were shown three slides pertaining to open space. They were shown examples of various types of open space that ranged from parks and open space to farmland and bluffs.



56.5% preferred option **B**. Trees and water were the primary reasons stated for selecting this image. Peaceful was another term used to describe this image.



41.5% preferred option **A**. Residents felt that this image was a good example of preserving farmland by utilizing the hill next to it for housing.



41.5% preferred option **A** and **39%** preferred option **B**. Parks were viewed as friendly and green and as a common area for neighborhoods. Option B was preferred for its farmland and bluffs in the background.

Conclusion: Residents prefer to foster open spaces that have bodies of water and green trees. While there may not be this particular scene in the study area, as some residents had pointed out, parks and future residential developments can incorporate natural areas such as this into their plans. Residents also encourage the preservation of farmland instead of turning it into homes and developments. They also support the development of parks and have stated that all new residential developments should be made to develop a park with it.

Garage Placement

Participants were shown one slide relating to garage placement on residential homes. The examples shown were of a garage attached to the front of the house and of a house with an attached garage in the back.

1)



70.3% preferred option **A** stating that having the garage out of sight was very appealing. A small minority expressed interest in having garages that were detached from the house.

Conclusion: Residents preferred to have more residential housing with garages out of sight from the main road.

Commercial Development

Participants were shown three slides relating to commercial development. Images were selected for this category that would show the types of commercial development that may occur in the study area. The first example was of gas station designs, the second example depicted various types of commercial development, (e.g. big box, strip mall), and the third example was of commercial parking lot design.

1)



86.1% preferred option **C**. Residents felt that this design was the best example that blended in with its environment.

2)



A

B

C

70.3% preferred option **C**. Residents stated that this image appealed to their senses and was more attractive. They felt that this type of commercial development gave a downtown feel and appearance.

3)



A



B

85.4% preferred option **A**. Residents felt that the trees and landscaping were important for appearances and to hide parking.

Conclusion: The vast majority of the residents stated that there should be no commercial development at all in the study area. They feel that their area should stay primarily residential. Any commercial development that occurs should be designed to fit into its environment and all parking lots should be well landscaped to hide any parking. If any commercial development is to occur, big box and strip mall type developments should be avoided.

Street Design

Participants were shown one slide relating to street design and aesthetics.

1)



A



B



C

62% preferred option **C**. Residents stated that the green median blended with the trees gave the street better visual appeal. Others felt that option **C** was good but that it needed space for on-street parking.

Conclusion: Many residents felt that option **C** was a good design but did not think that image, or any of the others, would be good for Shelby. The rest thought that option **C** would be good for residential neighborhoods as long as the street was wider.

Multi-Family Housing

Participants were shown two slides relating to various types of multi-family developments. Examples ranged from three story apartment buildings to townhouses and duplexes.



71.5% preferred option C. Residents felt that this was the best type of multi-family development that would best fit in with single-family housing. They also felt that this type doesn't look like urban sprawl and has a more natural look.



40.5% preferred option A and **40.5%** preferred option B. Residents who preferred option A felt that this type of multi-family development would be acceptable if the garages were either in the rear of the structure or turned to the side. Residents who preferred option B felt that this was a nice looking apartment complex that kept parking in the rear.

Conclusion: Most residents did not object to the development of multi-family housing as long as it had good architectural character and blended in with single-family homes. Most did not want to see large apartment complexes development and those that did wanted to ensure that it also blended in with single family homes and that parking was in the rear.

Commercial Signage

Participants were shown two slides relating to commercial signage.



82.3% preferred option **B**. Residents felt that this design was more appealing because it created fewer individual signs. Many stated that less is better and consolidated signage looks cleaner and more professional.

2)



82.3% preferred option B. Residents felt that this option provided better aesthetics. Many stated that less and small are better.

The percentage of residents who selected the less preferred commercial signage images expressed concern on not being able to see the signs while driving.

Conclusion: Many residents stated that commercial development is not very desirable. They stated that if any commercial development does occur, signage should be consolidated, when possible, small and low, but still visible.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

In comparing the preferences from the various categories, it was difficult to determine the resident's preferences regarding density. In reviewing the preferred development scenarios it appeared that the residents preferred the clustering of development to a higher density in order to preserve open space and farmland. However, in the residential density and house placement categories, the preferred images selected by the residents showed developments of a lower density with comments stating that they prefer large yards, long private drives, and homes that are not within 200' of each other. Perhaps the residents favor higher density developments to preserve open space and farmland as long as it is not intrusive on their own right to have a large house on a large acre of land.

The survey results show that the preservation of existing trees and green spaces and the creation of new trees and green spaces should be a primary factor in all future developments. The survey results also show that the residents feel very strongly about the preservation of open space and agricultural areas. Residents should be informed on the most ideal and successful practices of open space preservation from other communities.

The survey also shows that residents prefer to have homes that sit back away from the main road and hide their garages in the back of the house or turned to the side. Multi-family housing developments are acceptable as long as they have architectural character and blend in with single-family housing developments.

The survey results also show that commercial development is strongly discouraged in the Town of Shelby. If any is to occur, it must blend in with its residential surroundings through design and landscaping and commercial signage must be kept at a minimum.