

Community Visioning Process

Beginning in November 2001, and continuing through February 2002, the Village Board undertook an organizational assessment process to define the Village's mission, to determine Village customers and their values, to focus on achieving results, and to develop primary goals. They determined that the mission of the Brown Deer Village Board is "to understand and responsibly fulfill the community vision."

"Visioning" is a term used to describe a strategic planning process that develops an image of what a community would like to be in the future and an implementation plan to get there. This articulated community vision seeks to bring together diverse interests to reach agreement on this vision of Brown Deer's future. It asks four important questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?

Brown Deer's visioning process seeks first to understand and more clearly define what is preferred by the Village's primary customers: residents, property owners, and businesses. In order to do this, the Village of Brown Deer has used a participatory visioning process to determine how residents and other customers rate the quality of life and services in Brown Deer now, to identify forces and trends that are shaping Brown Deer's future, to discover what residents and other customers want Brown Deer to be in the future, and to suggest an implementation plan for getting there. The Village Board appointed and empowered a citizen Visioning Committee to lead these efforts and report the results.

The Village Board has asked the Visioning Committee to complete the following tasks:

1. Provide assessment of:
 - a. Service/program use and satisfaction
 - b. Customer wants and needs
 - c. Quality of life characteristics valued by community
 - d. Visual characteristics valued by the community
2. Create a Vision Statement
3. Develop a Visioning Plan including:
 - a. Goals and objectives
 - b. Strategies and possible actions
 - c. Estimated time lines

The Village Board fully empowered the Visioning Committee to reach out into the community through a community visioning workshop, a series of customer focus groups, and a village-wide survey. The information gathered was used to create this report's Vision Statement and Visioning Plan. The Visioning Committee hopes that community leaders, residents, and property owners can use this report to pro-actively create a better future together.

The Visioning Committee

A 13-member Visioning Committee directed the Visioning Process with the support of Village manager and staff. Visioning Committee members included:

Marty Ball	John Buckley	Barb Fleming	Margaret Hirschi
Jeff Bersch	Mary Fitzgerald	Mike Ganzer	Anne Lutz
Bob Oates	Wayne Parker	Rick Stone	Gregg Umipeg
Carrie Weddle	Russ Van Gompel, Village Manager	Todd Schmidt, Assistant Manager	Andy Pederson, Assistant Manager

Appointed by the Village Board to represent the interests of a broad spectrum of Village residents, the Visioning Committee met fifteen times from January to August to direct, consider, and discuss information gathered. They reported their progress and shared information gathered regularly with the Village Board. The Village Manager, assistant manager, and department heads assisted where needed. However, the Visioning Committee clearly remained in charge of the development of this Final Visioning Report, and it is their effort, ideas, and vision that are represented here.

The Visioning Committee based its visioning plan on information gathered from a variety of institutional and human sources of fact and opinion, including the following:

- The U.S. Census Bureau
- The Village of Brown Deer
- A Community Workshop held on March 1, 2003
- Community Focus Group sessions held on March 12, 2003
- A Community Survey sent to individual households in early June 2003
- Other community models of visioning processes, plans, reports, and survey tools
- Articles about other communities dealing with change in planned and unplanned ways.

Consulting Services

Public Management Partners, LLP (PMP) of Appleton, Wisconsin was chosen by the Village Board to facilitate the visioning process. PMP worked to assure that the process was coordinated, informative, constructive, and achievable. Barbara Grant and David Vaclavik, partners, facilitated Visioning Committee and focus group meetings; prepared meeting materials and recorded minutes; drafted, revised, and finalized community survey questions as directed by the Visioning Committee; analyzed focus group and survey data for Visioning Committee use; and drafted the final report.

PMP worked in association with VandeWalle & Associates of Madison, Wisconsin to develop, assist in promoting, facilitate, analyze and report on the issues and ideas shaped by participants in the Community Workshop.

Customer Focus Groups

Visioning Committee members chose nine customer categories from whom they wanted to find if there were issues that might be unique to their group's expectations and needs. The nine focus groups chosen were:

- Large service and manufacturing sector employers
- Commercial businesses providing general services and goods
- Hospitality sector businesses
- Developers and commercial property managers
- Realtors and apartment managers
- Health care providers
- Ethnic minority residents
- Senior citizens
- Youth and youth organizations

Visioning Committee members selected representative members to invite to participate. Invitations were sent out under the signatures of the Village President and Manager. On March 12, 2003, over 40 residents and business-owners participated in nine 45-minute focus group sessions facilitated by Public Management Partners, LLP. Those who were unable to attend were given a chance to comment in writing and several participated in this manner.

Community Workshop

Visioning Committee members helped to promote the community workshop developed and facilitated by VandeWalle & Associates. Articles were run in the newspaper, posters were placed strategically around the village, and committee members made personal invitations. On March 1, 2003, approximately 80 participants participated in a 3-hour vision setting workshop.

The first two workshop exercises focused on developing a shared understanding of the community's present profile. Participants were first asked to work alone to identify their personal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOTs) for the Village and then discussed and compiled their individual SWOTs by group to report to all workshop participants.

Reflecting on the results of the previous exercises, each group was then asked to identify and prioritize key elements of their ideal vision of Brown Deer in the future. In the final exercise, participants worked in small groups to develop a list of items that might be placed in an implementation plan for achieving the highest priority vision elements.

Community Survey

In order to broaden its base of community information, the Visioning Committee developed a 6-page community survey for distribution to all addresses in Brown Deer. Included in the survey were questions designed to evaluate and identify personal preferences and priorities in the areas of:

- Quality of life measures
- Community identity and participation
- Property investment and value
- Vision implementation items identified in the community workshop
- Village services
- Village funding alternatives

Visioning surveys were bulk-mailed as a lavender-colored newsletter insert to 5,377 Brown Deer addresses during the week of June 9th. Respondents were asked to fill in the survey, then fold, tape, and drop surveys in the mail or at designated drop off sites; return postage was pre-paid by the Village. A reminder post-card was bulk-mailed near the end of June. Additional promotion of an extended return date was covered in the newspaper and promoted at the July 4th community parade and celebration.

915 surveys were returned by July 10th, a response rate of 15.8 %. For comparison purposes, 915 surveys represent 17.8% of 5,134 occupied housing units (*U.S. 2000 Census*).