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### **Neighborhood Planning Process: High School Focus Groups February 27, 2009**

At the January 24<sup>th</sup> Neighborhood Planning Process meeting participants indicated they were interested in knowing what high school aged residents of Cedar Rapids felt about neighborhoods. The City contacted all of the high schools and was invited to do focus groups at Kennedy, Washington, and Metro High. The following are results of the focus groups.

#### **What is your ideal neighborhood in the next 5 years?**

- Central park within neighborhood – utilize parks w/ art and schools within
- Parks with swings and playground equipment – not only grass – Zoo like Bever
- Gathering place – Pool or center
- Well maintained streets
- Downtown (like a pedestrian mall) – better stores
- More appealing apartments
- Restaurants (chains) to go out more
- Amphitheatre
- Sidewalks
- Downtown is too “adult” oriented, not family oriented
- Landscaping by sidewalks, benches, trails
- Neighborhood retail and commercial biz
- Better, inexpensive housing (for just out of school)
- Fix up old buildings
- A familiar neighborhood restaurant/bar
- Nightlife – bars, clubs, dancing
- Hang out spots, retail (like coffee shop)
- Public recreation center with diverse options
- Downtown (restaurants and shopping) right now there is no place to hang out at

#### **What is your ideal neighborhood after 5 years?**

- Mixed use buildings
- Space – trees bright
- Grocery store nearby
- Walkable businesses
- Nice, well maintained neighborhood
- Clean neighborhood – covenants agreements
- Trains (less usage of cars)
- keep safe (which is why we come to Iowa)

## What other neighborhoods have you visited or seen that you find appealing?

- Iowa City for its walkability and ample stuff to do
- Madison because it has mixed use buildings – shops and a town square
- Aquarium (Baltimore)
- Kids stuff to do
- Madison because it has bike lanes and is accommodating to college students
- Clubs to go to
- Chicago because it has a better nightlife and big shows to go to
- More museums, not always about culture
- Good concerts
- Need to fix up to make “destination” like Czech area used to be
- Cedar Rapids or Sebring Florida because it is safe and easy to find solitude – fewer cars, quieter, lots of color
- Watson, LA because of the ease of getting to bigger communities
- Nashville, TN because there is more stuff to do like horse back riding and shopping is better
- Grandview, IA because it is safe and secure
- Atlanta, GA because it is more for teens – free indoor skate parks
- Marshalltown, IA for because it has big park
- Sandusky Ohio because it has a roller coaster park
- Las Vegas Nevada for its gambling and unrestricted fun
- Minneapolis/St Paul because it has a huge mall that doesn't smell funny
- Birmingham, AL because of the Science Center
- Badlands because you can walk everywhere
- Lake Placid NY for the motocross, skating and other affordable recreation

## What does Cedar Rapids need to keep you here?

- Cedar Rapids needs an identity
- Pool Hall
- More paramount like things
- A better skating rink
- Unique places
- Affordable to teens
- 24 hour restaurants
- Downtown does not have diverse retail options
- Downtown not geared towards teenagers
- Clean bodies of water – lakes and rivers
- Accessibility to green space
- Employment opportunities
- Good farmers market
- Rollerblading
- McGwain center (like a science center)
- Could get anywhere walking
- Skate parks
- Fishing
- Walkable shopping
- Snowmobile/atv tracks and trails
- Ice fishing/use the river in winter
- A beach
- Shopping
- Flowers to brighten the community
- Drive in Movie Theater
- Free indoor skate park – if supervised (\$5)
- Indoor/outdoor volley ball
- Teen meeting places/hang outs with vending machines, trash cans
- Dance Clubs
- Roller Rinks
- Secure/safe buildings
- Good views
- All age music venues
- Community art center
- Skate shops
- Places to snow board
- Library downtown
- Civilian input
- Less sand on streets
- Walkable grocery stores
- Town event that is bigger than the freedom festival and for all ages

### **What does Cedar Rapids need to keep you here (continued)?**

- Outdoor ice rink
- Beach access to swim and hang out
- Theme park
- Paintball
- Simple fun
- Spencer's store
- The stores are too spread out
- More food options
- Colors
- BMX track
- Abercrombie store
- Hollister store
- Bike trails for off-roading
- Buses that run 24hrs

### **What do you like about Cedar Rapids?**

- Education
- Close proximity to things – doesn't take 1 hour to drive somewhere
- Not as crowded...less traffic
- Family
- We want to get out after being here our age group is restless
- Mudding at the roller dam
- Parks
- The pool at Noelridge
- Sidewalks lit at night – need more of them though
- Better looking street lights
- Well kept yards and homes
- Pools in neighborhood
- Public use buildings
- Small local shops
- Frisbee golf at Schaeffer

### **What should Cedar Rapids #1 priority be a place to live?**

- Better shops
- College life
- Appealing lifestyle
- Downtown restaurants
- Entertainment/unique
- Utilize old buildings
- Establish an identity
- Make Mall of Iowa
- Schools
- Emphasize the colleges
- Make the US Cellular Center better
- Riverfront Dining
- Amusement park
- More things for old teenagers to do – more interactive gaming – go carts, paintball, activities for groups
- More boutique shops fix up the street