Summary Report
Cornucopia Independent Senior Living

January 17, 2025

Cornucopia Independent Senior Living
Community Design Charrette

In collaboration with:

Bayfield County
Bayfield County Extension
Bayfield County Housing Authority
Town of Bell
Town of Bell Senior Housing Work Group
The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension
Village of Cornucopia
WEDC Office of Rural Prosperity

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Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Community Vitality + Placemaking
Signature Effort

Design Wisconsin Team
A research-based approach to community **place**making

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Introduction

The Cornucopia Independent Senior Living Design Charrette, held on September 26-27, 2024, brought together community members, local officials, and professionals from the University of Wisconsin Extension and other institutions to explore and plan for the future of senior housing in Cornucopia. Visiting professionals were experienced in conducting surveys, community development work, land use planning, design, and architecture. This report summarizes the key outcomes and recommendations from the charrette, aimed at addressing the housing needs of the town's aging population while preserving its unique character.

Background

Cornucopia, in far northern Bayfield County, is Wisconsin's northernmost village, home to miles of shoreline with beautiful sandy beaches, a picturesque harbor, and world-renowned sea caves. The community, with deep roots in logging, farming and fishing, is also a recreational gateway to Lake Superior and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The waterfront is lined with seasonal shops and galleries, a public pavilion, a local history museum, and sandy trails down to the beach. A short walk is all that's required to visit two marinas, artesian springs, and the downtown area complete with a general store, picnic tables, and eateries where neighbors and friends connect. Three churches (Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox) have served the community since its inception and are part of Cornucopia's unique story. Cornucopia is known for its independent, laid-back vibe and summer celebrations of art, live music, and food, supported by the local business community.

Like much of rural northern Wisconsin, Cornucopia is experiencing a demographic shift with an increasing number of retirees choosing to settle in the area. A booming outdoor tourism economy, accelerated by the pandemic, has resulted in the rapid growth of short-term rentals. This shift has reduced the availability of housing for year-round residents, making it hard for local employers to recruit or retain workers. Due to a lack of new development, there are limited options available for seniors who wish to downsize from their single-family homes without leaving the community.

	Village of Cornucopia	Town of Bell	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Population	103	355	16,220	5,893,718
Median Household Income	$49,063	$82,250	$69,609	$74,631
% Population Over 65	70.20%	49.70%	30.30%	19.20%
Median Age	71.8	64.8	54.1	40.5
% Occupied Housing Units	34.30%	38%	56.20%	89%
% Vacant Housing Units	65.70%	62%	43.80%	11%

Based on 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and the 2020 Decennial Census

The pursuit of new senior housing in Cornucopia began in 2018, but did not gain traction until the Senior Housing Work Group began meeting regularly in 2023. The group has kept the Town Board apprised of its activities, and in late 2023, the Town adopted a resolution supporting continued work with the Bayfield County Housing Authority (BCHA) in development of proposals for independent senior housing in Cornucopia. To learn more about community needs and sentiments, a housing survey was developed and released to the community in August 2024. The survey received a robust response and generated additional interest and support for the initiative.

This workshop was organized by members of the Town of Bell Senior Housing Work Group, in collaboration with the BCHA, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Office of Rural Prosperity, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. The goal was to develop community-driven solutions for independent senior living that align with the Town's comprehensive plan, values, and future vision.

Funding

Community Involvement

- <u>Local Volunteers</u>: The success of the charrette was largely due to the efforts of local volunteers who promoted the event, organized meals, hosted tours, provided hospitality, and participated in discussions. Their contributions were invaluable in building awareness of this work and creating a welcoming and productive environment.

- <u>Community Feedback</u>: The community's input was crucial in shaping the planning and design alternatives. Through participation in the community survey and facilitated workshops, residents shared their preferences, concerns, and ideas, ensuring that the outputs reflect the unique character and needs of Cornucopia.

Professional Contributions

- <u>Design Wisconsin Team</u>: The team of professionals from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension and other institutions brought valuable knowledge and experience to the charrette. Their insights into community development, housing design, and economic planning were instrumental in developing the planning and design alternatives.

- <u>Interdisciplinary Approach</u>: The diverse backgrounds of the team members, including architecture, landscape architecture, community economics, and marketing, allowed for a comprehensive and holistic approach to the planning process.

- <u>State Agency Partners</u>: As part of the Thrive Rural initiative, economic development staff from WEDC assisted the committee with asset mapping, benchmarking progress, and engaging key stakeholders.

The Community Design Charrette

Design Wisconsin is a community design "charrette" that features fast-paced planning and design workshops with intense public participation. *("Charrette" is a term used by planners and designers to describe a fast-paced and intense process with robust community involvement.)* Each Design Wisconsin charrette is customized to meet the local needs. In some cases, the charrette will cast a large net to address multiple community issues and opportunities ranging from physical planning, economics, housing, childcare, transportation, leadership, etc. To address those needs, experts from a variety of fields are required. Some communities limit the focus to a particular site and/or topic. In the case of Cornucopia, the emphasis was on physical planning and design and required expertise in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and community planning.

Schedule

The Cornucopia charrette was a 2-day process. The first day was dedicated to gathering information using a variety of methods. Planning and design alternatives were developed the second day and shared with the community that same evening. The fast-paced nature provides nearly instant results for community participants to assure accuracy and intent while generating interest and energy needed for implementation. The schedule for the 2-day charrette is featured below.

Thursday, September 26, 2024

12:00 PM	UW Extension folks met for lunch downtown
1:00 PM	UW Extension folks set up space with local volunteers
2:00 PM	Design Team met & went on site tours
4:30 PM	Design Team met to review the large group process
6:00 PM	Reviewed survey data with the broader community over supper
7:00 PM	Visioning session with broader community
9:00 PM	Adjourn. Design Team reviewed visioning session outputs

Friday, September 27, 2024

8:00 AM	Design Team work session (Bell Town Hall)
12:00 PM	Working lunch and supper provided
6:00 PM	Design Team rehearsal
7:00 PM	Public presentation
8:30 PM	Q & A
9:00 PM	Adjourn

Community Insights

This Community Insights section delves into the valuable feedback and perspectives gathered from Cornucopia and Town of Bell residents during the design charrette, including the community's definition of independent senior living, the infrastructure and emergency services needed to support it, and the survey results that highlight the demand and preferences for senior housing in Cornucopia. Additionally, it covered the prioritization exercise that identified key themes and community values guiding the development process.

Independent Living

The community's focus is on providing housing that allows seniors to live independently with minimal assistance, while also considering the potential for incorporating community spaces for healthcare and social services. The focus of this effort is on independent living, not "assisted living".

In the Town of Bell's Comprehensive Plan (2010-2029), this was identified as a key goal moving forward:

> *"Provide elderly and assisted living residences and services within the Town of Bell. The Town of Bell will pursue resources that will allow the aging population to remain in their homes or in their community."*

Infrastructure & Capacity

When planning new development in Cornucopia, it is vital to consider the community's existing infrastructure and capacity to support development and residents' quality of life. Concentrating housing within the existing sanitary district is crucial to reducing development costs, while incorporating principles of universal design will enable seniors to age in place with reduced risk of falls and social isolation. Improved safety in living conditions and ease of access for emergency responders will help alleviate some of the potential strain on limited volunteer emergency medical services (EMS).

- Utility Infrastructure: Adding a concentration of housing will have impacts on Cornucopia's water, sewer, electrical, and internet infrastructure. Locating new development within the community's existing sanitary district and near utility connections is critical. A congressional appropriation for upgrading the sanitary district is pending, which would help support necessary infrastructure improvements.

- Supporting Independent Sustainable Living: The proposed housing will be designed to include features that support independent living, such as wheelchair accessibility, single-level design, and community spaces that can be utilized for healthcare services and reducing social isolation. Ensuring that the infrastructure and services in Cornucopia can support year-round living for seniors is essential. In addition to the aforementioned access to healthcare, this includes transportation and other essential services. Locating senior housing in proximity to downtown Cornucopia with sidewalk and trail connections will also support independent living.

- Emergency Medical Services: Concerns were raised during the charrette about the capacity of local volunteer emergency services to support the increasing senior population. The need for additional resources and support from the community and local government for EMS was highlighted as a critical factor in planning for any new development. It is important to repeat here that the Town of Bell Senior Housing Work Group is focused on housing to facilitate downsizing and accessibility improvements for existing senior residents, not new resident recruitment.

Community Survey

The survey conducted as part of the Cornucopia Independent Senior Living Design Charrette revealed significant community support for the development of independent senior housing. A notable 71% of respondents expressed a preference for a greater variety of housing options, indicating a strong desire for more diverse living arrangements within the community. Among respondents aged 60 or older, 39 individuals indicated they would likely move into independent senior housing if it were available, with 13 stating they would definitely move and 26 probably moving. This highlights a clear local demand for senior housing within this age group.

Additionally, 49% of all respondents, regardless of age, expressed interest in moving into independent senior housing, with 19% definitely and 30% probably considering the move. This broad interest underscores the community's recognition of the need for such housing options.

The survey also identified key themes related to independent living, including the importance of transportation services, infrastructure updates, and enhanced emergency medical services (EMS). The community emphasized the need for housing that was suitable for seniors to age in place in order to reduce the risk of falls that could result in EMS calls. There was also significant desire for local businesses, such as a year-round grocery store, that could contribute to a high quality of life.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate strong community support for independent senior housing and highlight the specific needs and preferences that will guide the development process.

Note: Current Census data (2020 decennial, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) suggests that only 34.3% of housing units in Cornucopia are occupied by year-round residents, while the remaining 65.7% are utilized as seasonal/recreational homes or short-term rentals. More than 70% of Cornucopia's residents are over the age of 65, compared to a statewide average of 19%.

A 2006 survey conducted by UW-Extension and the Town of Bell Planning Committee illustrated the longevity of some key concerns related to housing in the community. At that time:
- 46% favored more housing options for elderly residents who wished to remain in the community
- 89% prioritized maintaining the Town's rural character
- Only 26% of survey respondents were year-round residents
- 71% of all housing units were considered "vacant" with 94% of those in use as seasonal or recreational units
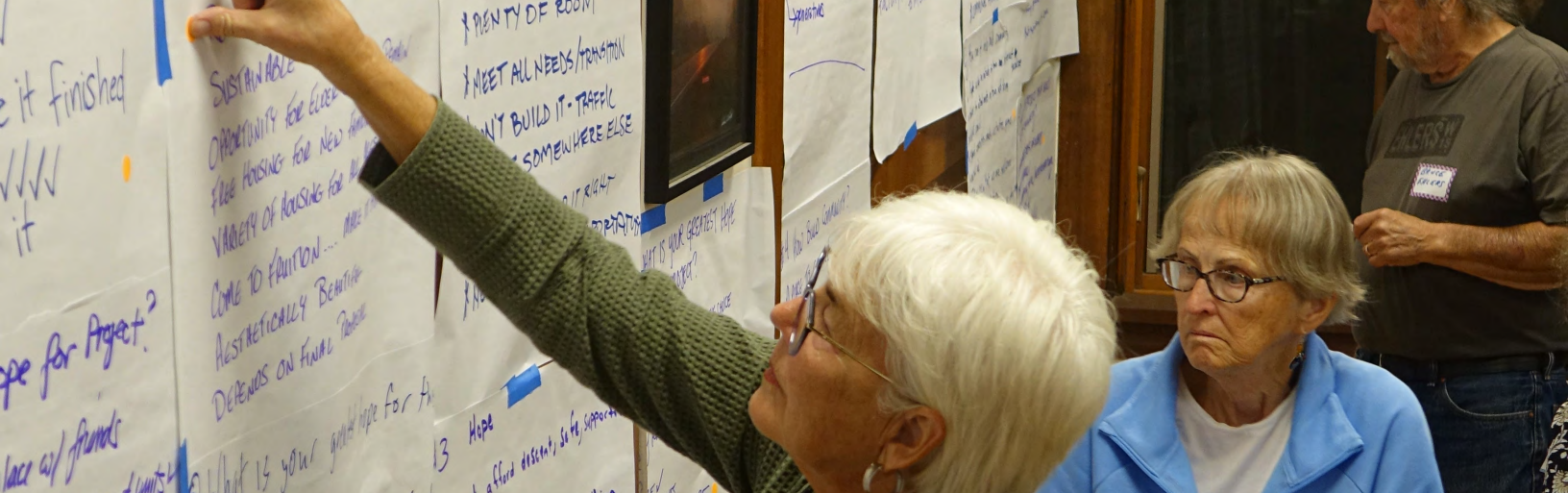
Visioning Workshop

During the charrette, a visioning workshop involving approximately 80 participants was conducted to gather community input on key themes for the proposed senior housing development. Through a group process, participants anonymously shared and recorded answers to select questions. Attendees then placed dots on statements that resonated most with them, helping to identify the community's core values and concerns.

1. **Why do you want to remain in Cornucopia as you get older?**
   - Love people & community (10 dots)
   - Have found joy & meaning from people & environment (10 dots)
   - The lake (9 dots)
   - Friends & nature (8 dots)

2. **What makes Cornucopia special?**
   - Residents/Friends/Neighbors/People (13 dots)
   - Nature, trees, water, & animals (9 dots)
   - Caring, kind community & helpful (5 dots)
   - Natural beauty (4 dots)

3. **What is your greatest hope for this project?**
   - Retains the character of Cornucopia (10 dots)
   - Ability to afford decent, safe, supportive housing (6 dots)
   - Place to age in place with friends (5 dots)
   - We actually build it (5 dots)

4. **How could independent senior housing help build a sense of community?**
   - Allow residents an opportunity to share and care for one another (15 dots)
   - Societies do better with inter-generation balance & context (6 dots)
   - Support for friends as they age (5 dots)
   - It won't-No services to support (4 dots)

5. **Aside from independent senior living, what else could we be working on in Cornucopia?**
   - Strengthening EMS (6 dots)
   - Grocery store > Year round (5 dots)
   - Closer Medical care (5 dots)
   - Assisted living (5 dots)

The Design Team synthesized all the data collected (surveys, tours, interviews, visioning workshop, etc.) and developed the following community value statements.

- Intergenerational Balance and Community Preservation: The community values a balance between different age groups in the community. Ideally, Cornucopia will be a place where seniors can remain active and engaged members of the community, while younger residents can provide support and future leadership. There is a strong desire to preserve the character of the existing community, emphasizing the importance of keeping current residents in Cornucopia.

- Support and Care for Seniors: The community recognizes the need to support seniors so they can remain part of Cornucopia. This includes providing housing options that allow for aging in place. A significant theme was the importance of residents sharing and caring for one another, fostering a supportive and connected community.

- Comfort and Security for Younger Residents: Younger residents expressed comfort in knowing that they will have a place in Cornucopia as they age, highlighting the importance of planning for future housing needs. Residents are hopeful that new senior housing will free up single-family homes in Cornucopia, providing much-needed housing options for younger families.

- Reasons for Staying in Cornucopia: Many participants found joy and meaning in the people and environment of Cornucopia, with the natural beauty and close-knit community being major draws. The proximity to Lake Superior and the overall quality of life were frequently mentioned as reasons for staying in the area.

- Hopes for the Housing Development: There is a collective hope that the proposed housing development will come to fruition, providing safe, supportive, and pleasant homes for residents. Participants hope that the development will allow people who appreciate the community to stay in Cornucopia and that it will retain the town's unique character.
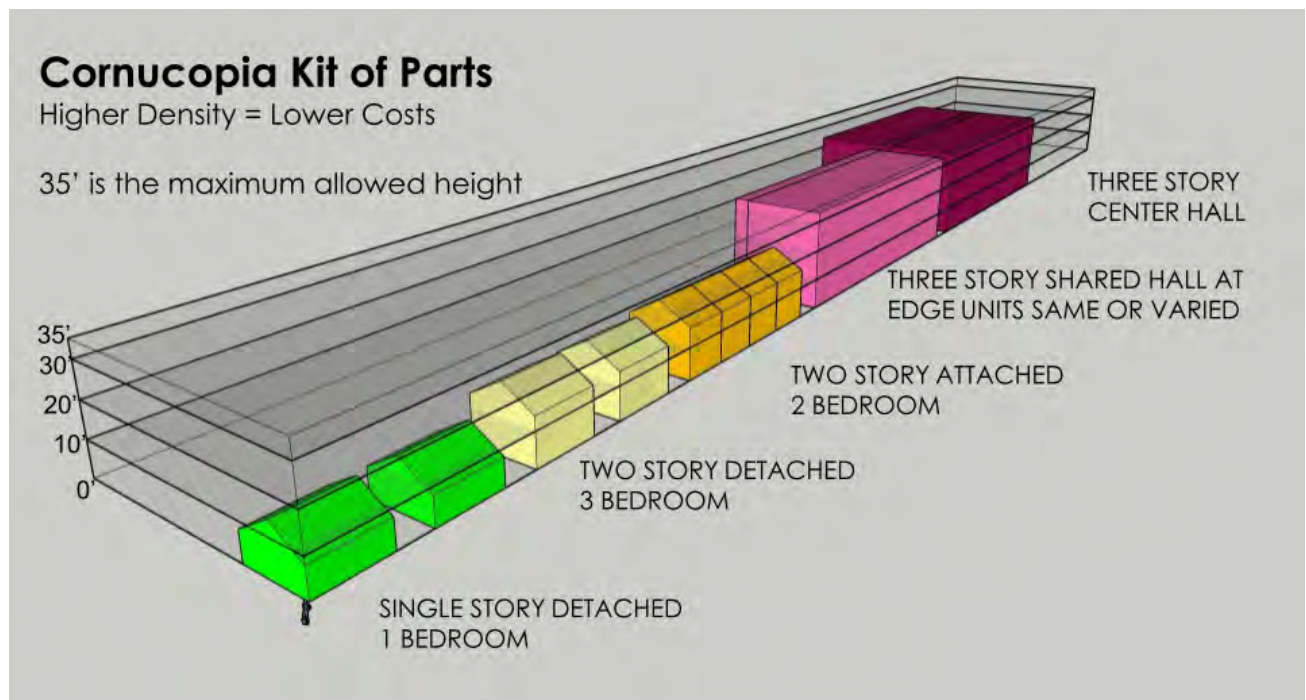
Planning & Design Alternatives

The information generated from the visioning process as well as the site tours and other input was used to develop the following planning and design alternatives. The alternatives are a sketch of a vision that ultimately will require more detail and planning to become real. These concepts were developed with the community's input and aimed to balance density, affordability, and the unique character of Cornucopia. In addition, the following design principles should be considered as well.

Scale

Economies of scale play a crucial role in developing affordable housing options by reducing the per-unit cost of construction and operation. When developers build housing on a larger scale, they can purchase materials in bulk at discounted rates, streamline construction processes, and utilize more efficient technologies. This leads to significant cost savings, which can be passed on to residents in the form of lower rents or purchase prices. Additionally, larger projects can attract more investment and government support, further driving down costs. By leveraging economies of scale, developers can create more affordable housing units, making it easier for low- and middle-income families to find suitable homes.

Cornucopia Kit of Parts
Higher Density = Lower Costs

35' is the maximum allowed height

THREE STORY CENTER HALL

THREE STORY SHARED HALL AT EDGE UNITS SAME OR VARIED

TWO STORY ATTACHED 2 BEDROOM

TWO STORY DETACHED 3 BEDROOM

SINGLE STORY DETACHED 1 BEDROOM

Micro-climate & Orientation

Considering the micro-climate of a site is crucial when designing a building, as it directly influences energy efficiency, comfort, and sustainability. In Cornucopia, Wisconsin, the presence of Lake Superior to the north acts as a natural air conditioner during the summer months, providing cooler breezes that can reduce the need for artificial cooling. By orienting the building to maximize these cooling effects, designers can create more comfortable indoor environments while lowering energy consumption. Additionally, the southern exposure offers significant solar gain, which can be harnessed for passive heating during the colder months. Properly designed windows and thermal mass can capture and store this solar energy, reducing the reliance on heating systems and further enhancing the building's energy efficiency.

Maintaining views of Lake Superior is not only aesthetically pleasing but also adds substantial value to the development. The scenic vistas can enhance the occupants' quality of life, providing a sense of connection to the natural surroundings and promoting well-being. From a financial perspective, properties with unobstructed views of the lake are often more desirable and can command higher market prices. Therefore, strategic placement of windows and outdoor spaces to preserve these views can significantly boost the overall appeal and value of the development, making it a more attractive investment for potential buyers or tenants.
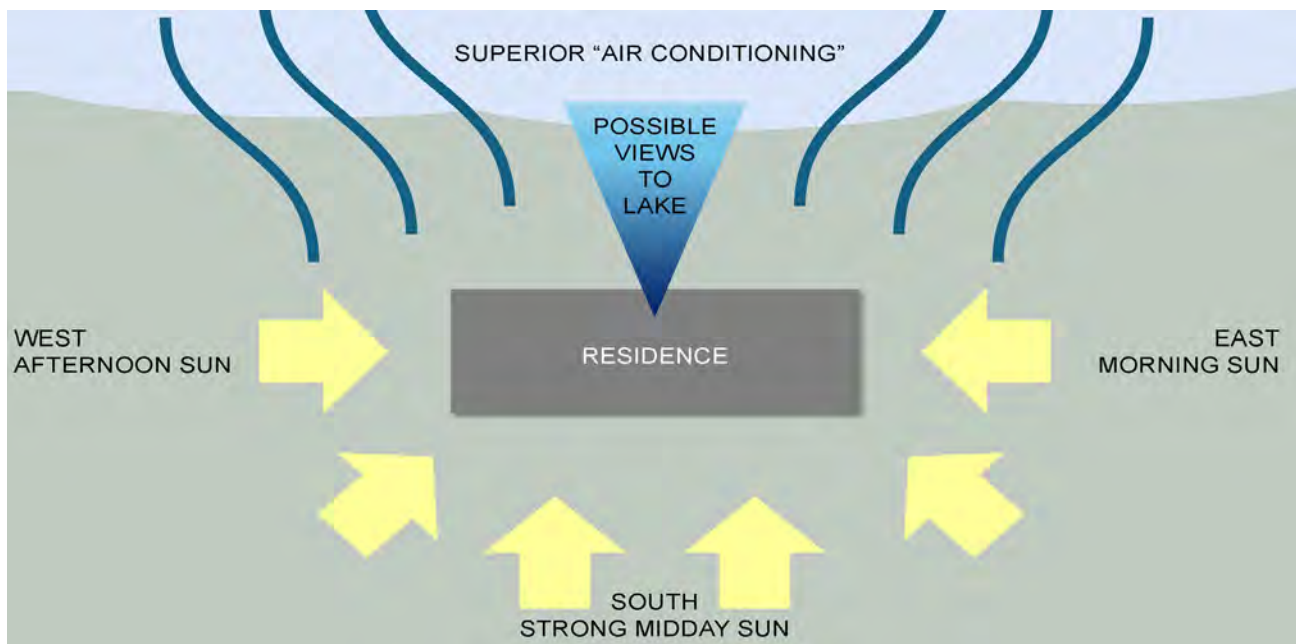
Construction

In the design of new housing units, shared exterior walls and communal amenities significantly contribute to cost savings. By constructing multi-family buildings or row houses with shared walls, developers can reduce the amount of building materials needed, such as bricks, insulation, and siding. This not only lowers construction costs, but also improves energy efficiency, as shared walls help maintain consistent indoor temperatures, reducing heating and cooling expenses.

Shared Amenities

Additionally, incorporating shared amenities like laundry facilities, recreational areas, and community rooms can further drive down costs. Instead of each unit having its own set of amenities, which would require more space and resources, these shared facilities optimize the use of available space and reduce the overall cost per unit. Shared systems, such as centralized heating, cooling, and plumbing, also contribute to economies of scale by lowering installation and maintenance costs. By focusing on these design elements, developers can create housing that is both cost-effective and sustainable, benefiting residents and the broader community.
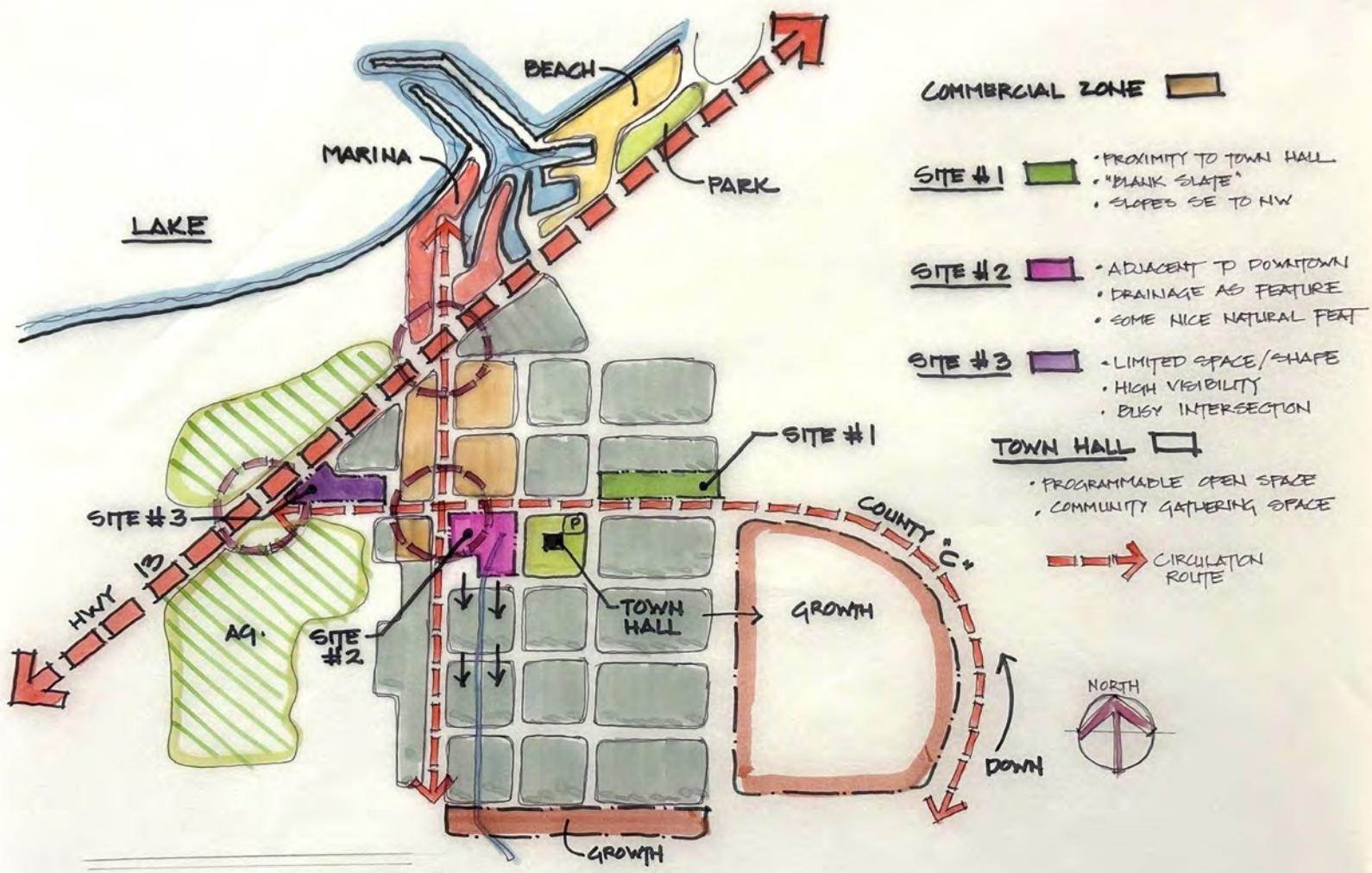
Conceptual Schemes

The Design Wisconsin Team presented several planning and design concepts/schemes for potential senior housing developments in Cornucopia, focusing on three key sites: Northeast of the Community Center, West of the Community Center, and the Village Inn area. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate the numerous possibilities and considerations that were available, not to suggest a singular design solution.
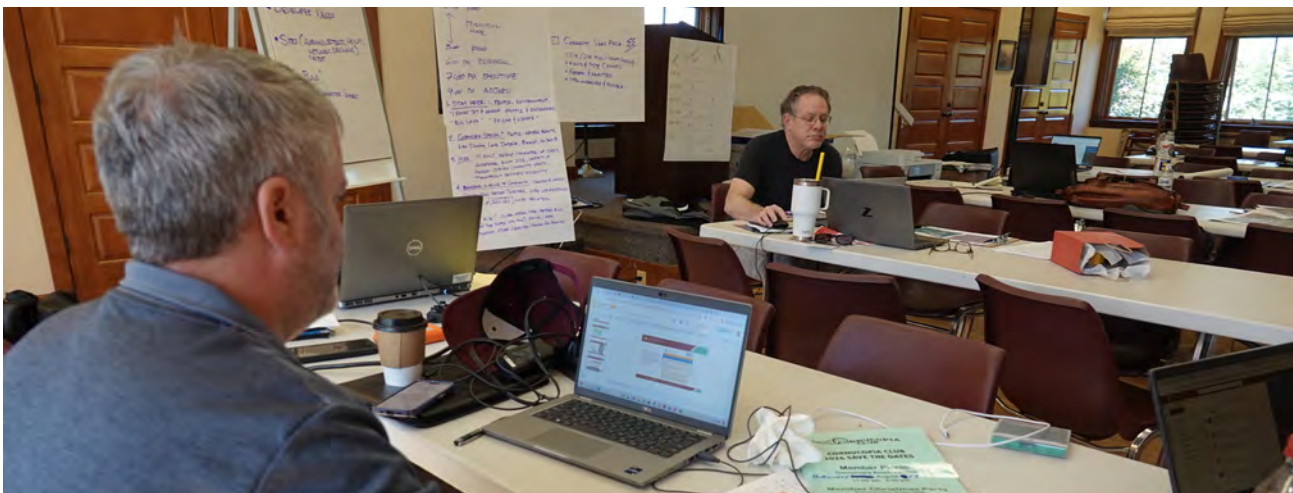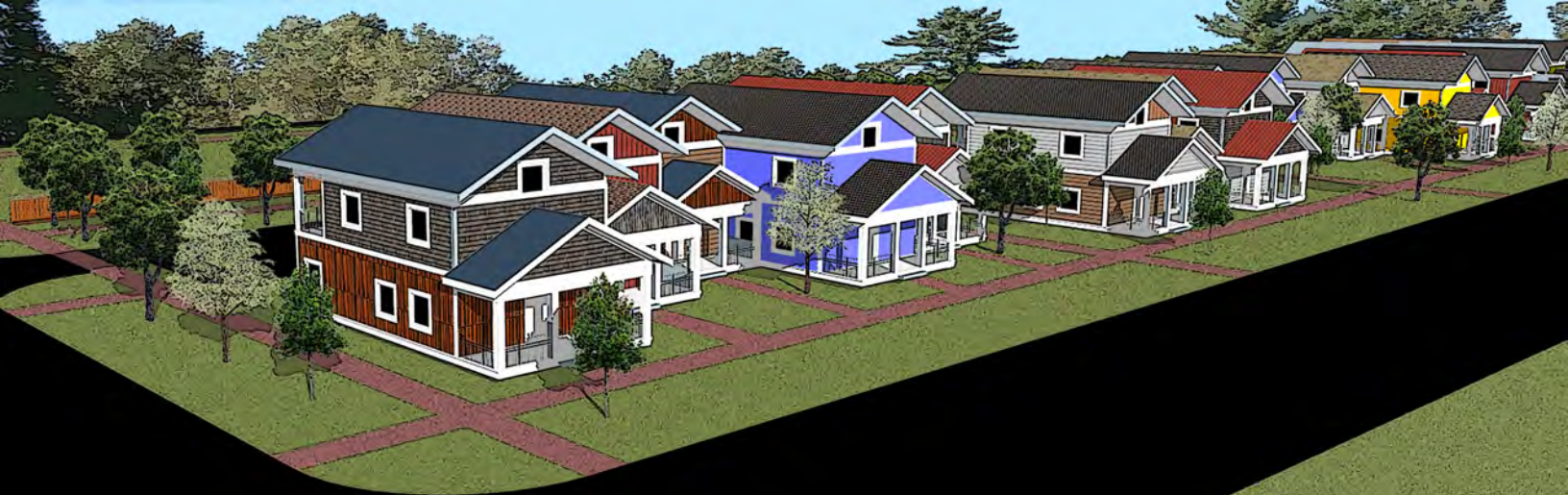
Site 1: Northeast of the Community Center

Located on County C, "Site 1" was considered for its close proximity to the Community Center and its potential to integrate well with the existing community fabric. The team developed three planning and design alternatives for this site, each offering different configurations and amenities.
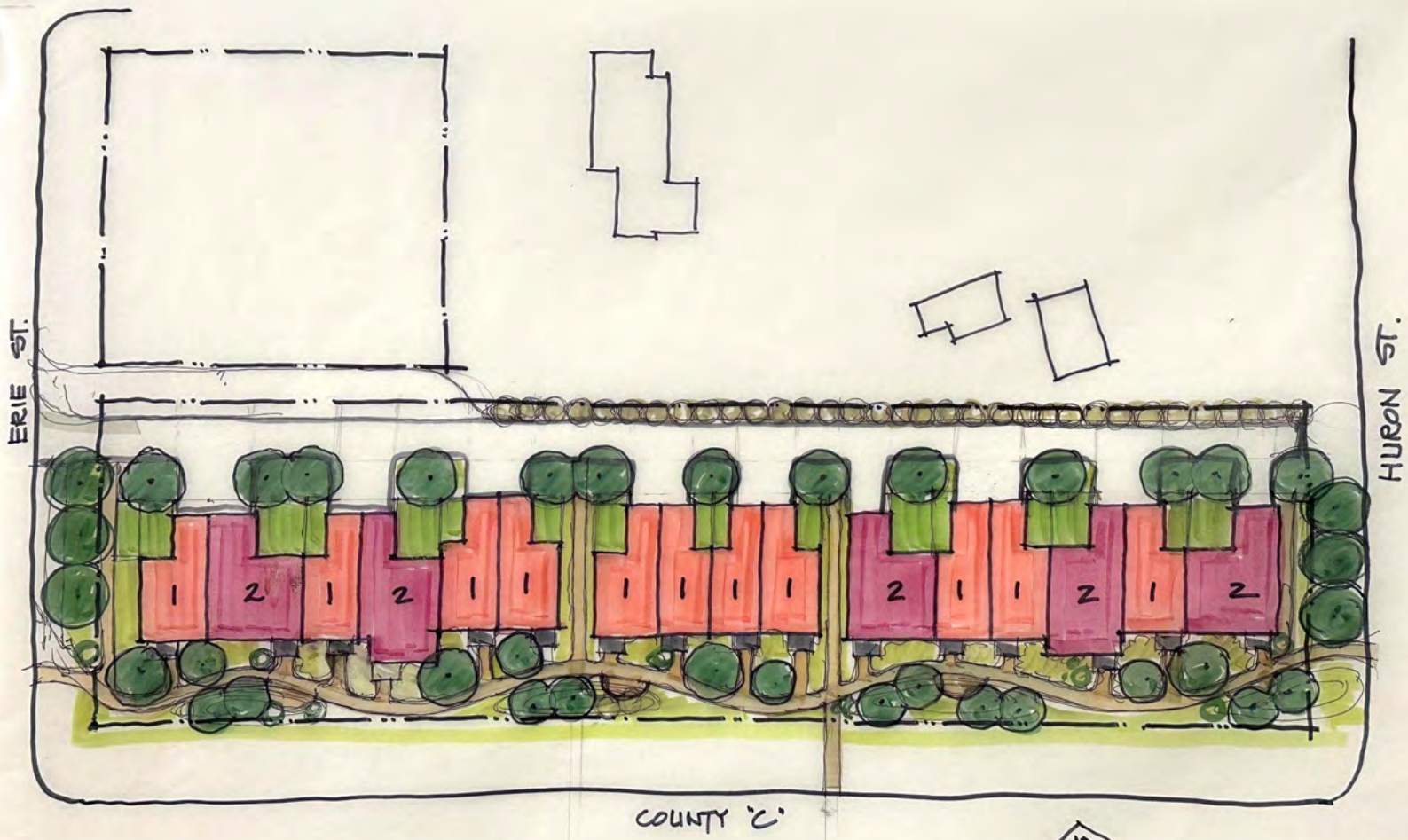
Scheme 1A

This scheme features 18 townhome-style homes with attached garages and lake-facing patios. The homes are designed to maximize views of Lake Superior, providing a scenic and appealing living environment.

- Amenities: The focus is on individual unit amenities, with minimal common spaces. This design aims to offer privacy and direct access to outdoor spaces.
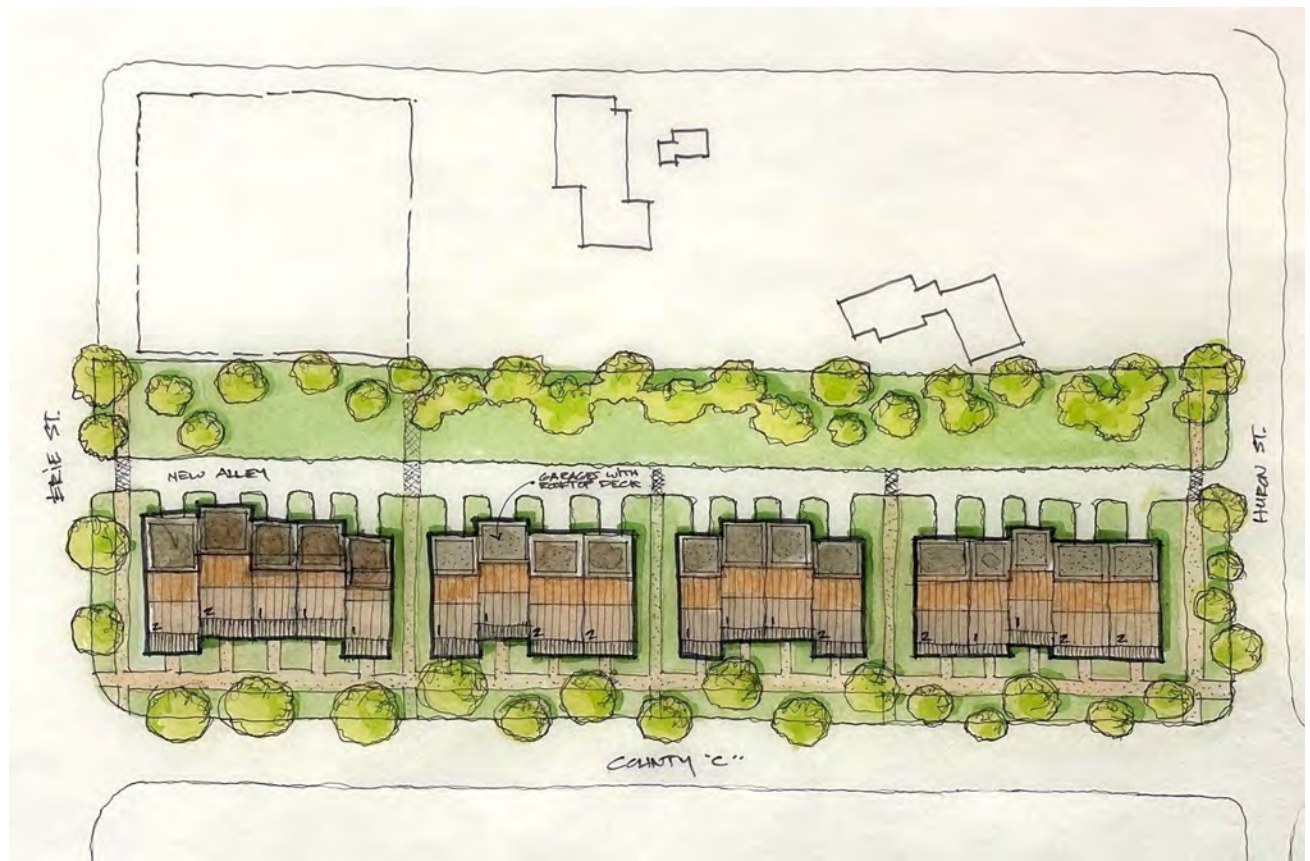
Scheme 1B

This scheme includes 16 homes with attached garages, arranged in a linear fashion along County C. The design incorporates generous landscaping to create a buffer from the road and enhance the aesthetic appeal.

- <u>Amenities</u>: Minimal common amenities are provided, focusing on creating a pleasant streetscape and outdoor environment for residents.
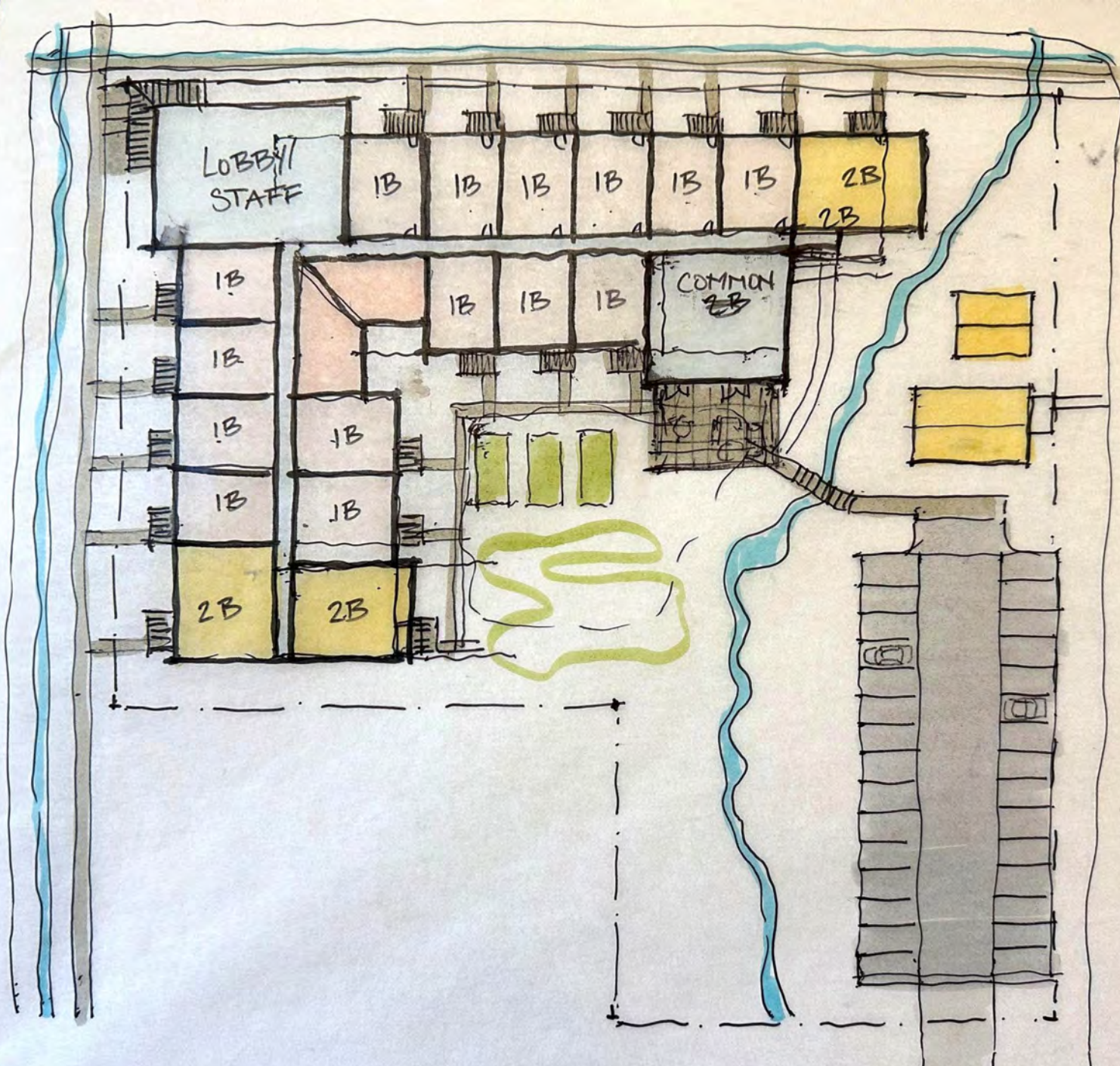
Scheme 1C

This scheme proposes 13 homes clustered near a shared community space. The homes have attached garages and are designed to promote social interaction among residents.

- Amenities: A community building and neighborhood plaza are included, providing spaces for social gatherings and events.

Site 2: West of the Community Center

Located across the street from the Community Center, "Site 2" offers a central location with easy access to town amenities. The site includes a small intermittent (seasonal) stream, which was considered both a feature and a challenge in the design process.

Scheme 2A

This scheme features 20 homes connected by a common corridor, with surface parking provided for residents. The homes are arranged to face a central courtyard, creating a communal outdoor space.

- Amenities: Indoor and outdoor amenities are included, such as a lobby, mailroom, and garden beds. The design aims to foster a sense of community while providing practical living spaces.
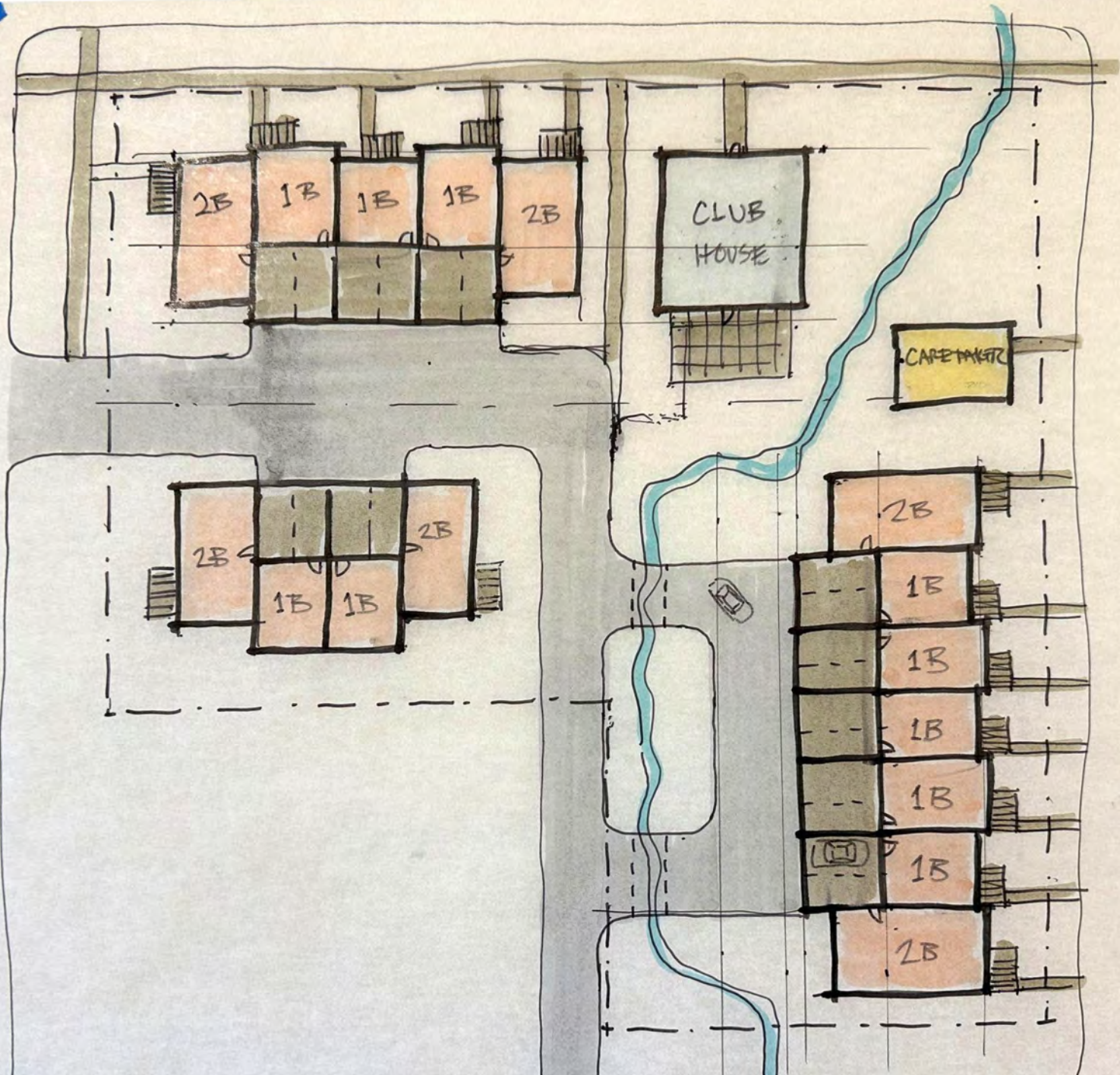
Scheme 2B

This scheme includes 19 homes with attached garages, most of which are connected by a common corridor. The homes are arranged to maximize natural light and views of the surrounding area.

- Amenities: Indoor and outdoor amenities are provided, including a common room for social activities and gatherings.
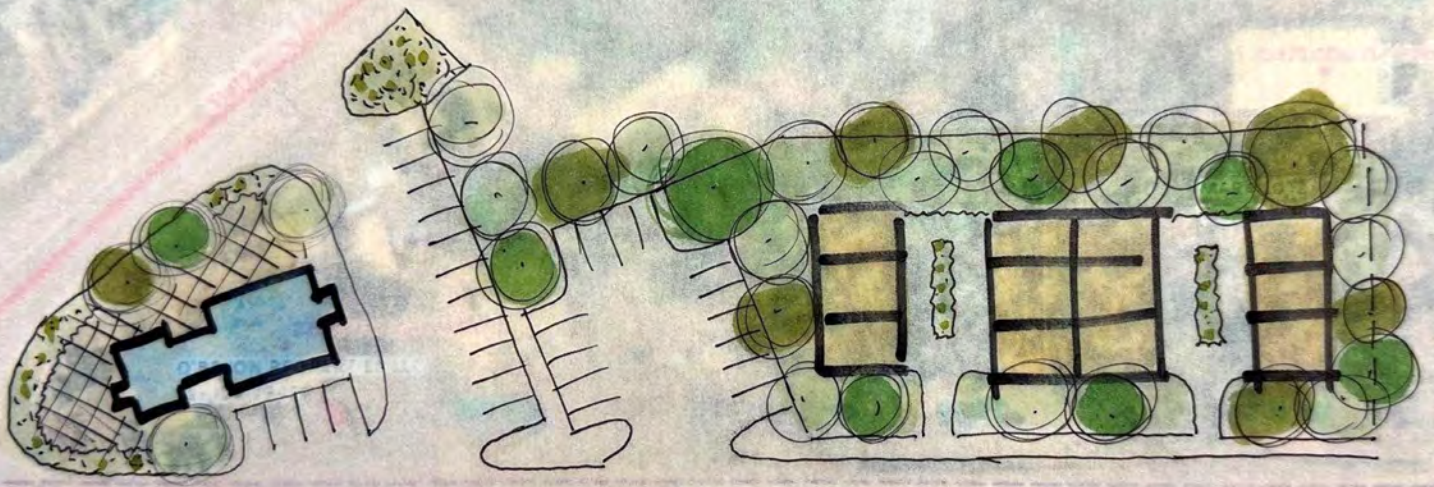
Scheme 2C

This scheme proposes 16 homes in a cluster style, with attached garages and a detached clubhouse. The homes are designed to create a village-like atmosphere, encouraging interaction among residents.

- Amenities: The detached clubhouse serves as a central gathering space, offering opportunities for social activities and events.

Site 3: Village Inn Area

Located at the Village Inn area on the intersection of County C and State Highway 13, "Site 3" is culturally significant to the community and serves as a gateway to Cornucopia. The design proposals for this site aimed to preserve the existing character while providing new housing options.

Scheme 3

The existing Village Inn building is retained, with four apartments above and enhanced landscaping for outdoor dining. This approach preserves the historical and cultural significance of the site. The scheme features 12 new homes, proposed for seasonal workers or seniors, designed to complement the existing community fabric. The homes are smaller in scale, suitable for seasonal or short-term occupancy. The design includes enhanced landscaping to create a welcoming gateway to the town. Outdoor dining areas and green spaces are incorporated to improve the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the site.

Community Feedback

The following is a summary of comments made following the presentation of the planning and design concepts.

- <u>Artistic and Creative Designs</u>: Participants emphasized the importance of making the housing units artistic and creative, reflecting the unique character of Cornucopia. Suggestions included using varied materials, colors, and styles to avoid a "cookie-cutter" appearance.

- <u>Density and Cost Balance</u>: The trade-off between density and affordability was a key consideration. Higher density can reduce costs but may not align with the community's preference for maintaining a small-town feel. The designs aimed to find a balance that meets both financial constraints and community preferences.

- <u>Community Spaces</u>: The inclusion of community spaces was a recurring theme in the design proposals. These spaces are intended to foster social interaction and create a sense of community among residents. Examples include community buildings, neighborhood plazas, shared gardens, and common rooms.

- <u>Environmental Considerations</u>: The designs took into account environmental factors such as solar access, prevailing breezes, and potential views to the lake. These considerations aimed to create comfortable and sustainable living environments.

- <u>Practical Concerns</u>: Community members raised practical concerns, such as the need for roofs to be designed to prevent snow accumulation over entryways and to reduce the potential for wildlife interactions. These concerns were noted for further refinement in the design process.

The design proposals for all three sites reflect a thoughtful approach to balancing density, affordability, and community character. The next steps involve refining these concepts based on further community input and market research to ensure the designs meet local needs, demands, and preferences.

Implementation

This section outlines the actions required to move forward with the senior housing project. This includes refining design proposals based on community feedback, developing a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) to be approved by the Town Board, addressing infrastructure needs, and planning for long-term sustainability to ensure the project's success and alignment with community values.

1. Refining the Proposals: The senior housing work group will continue to gather feedback from the community to refine the design proposals. This iterative process will ensure that the final plans align with local needs and preferences. Conducting additional housing market research will provide valuable data on the demand for different types of senior housing, helping to attract developers and secure funding.

2. Developing the RFP: The Request for Proposals (RFP) will include clear guidelines and criteria to ensure that developers understand the community's vision and requirements. Offering incentives such as reduced land costs, expedited permitting, and potential funding sources will make the project more attractive to developers.

3. Addressing Resident Needs: Providing amenities such as community gardens, walking paths/ trails, golf cart paths, and healthcare services will enhance the quality of life for senior residents and make the housing development more attractive. Enhancing local transportation services and emergency medical services will be critical to supporting independent senior living. This may involve securing additional funding and resources from local, state, and federal sources.

4. Recapturing Single Family Homes. Partnering with CheqBUILT, a nonprofit community land trust, will help ensure that housing vacated by local seniors in favor of the new development remains affordable and available to local residents. This approach will prevent existing residential properties from being converted into short-term rentals or vacation homes.

5. Rural Community Succession Planning: Rural community succession planning is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and vitality of small towns like Cornucopia. This process involves addressing key areas such as housing, leadership, and business continuity to maintain community vitality and support economic growth.

   - Housing: Developing senior housing is a critical component of community succession planning. It allows seniors to age in place, maintaining their independence while remaining active members of the community. This type of housing can stimulate local economies by creating jobs and attracting businesses that cater to seniors' needs.

     - Communities can also consider philanthropy and charitable giving to fund housing projects. By understanding the wealth within the region, communities can capture it to build endowments that support local impact investing. Establishing a dedicated fund in partnership with organizations like the Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation can provide a sustainable source of funding for housing initiatives. An example of this is Valley County, Nebraska, where residents were encouraged to contribute 5% of their estates, creating a sizable fund to address local needs.

     - Local philanthropy and charitable giving can also be a source of resources to aid EMS. The community could alleviate or eliminate costs associated with emergency medical technician (EMT) training/certification, fund paid EMT positions, or offer other valuable incentives such as housing or incidentals.

- Leadership: Effective leadership succession planning ensures that community leadership remains strong and capable. Developing a leadership succession guide can help retiring leaders transition their roles to new leaders smoothly. Creating a welcoming climate for new people and businesses and establishing mentorship opportunities, can further support leadership transitions, preserve community character, and ensure community growth.

- Business Continuity: Supporting small businesses is vital for the economic health of rural communities. Business succession planning helps ensure that businesses remain viable when owners retire. Communities can support business succession by identifying transition resources, raising awareness about the importance of succession planning, and providing incentives for new business development.

- Community Engagement: Engaging the community in succession planning is crucial. Identifying a local champion, such as the Cornucopia Business Association, can help drive these efforts. Conducting assessments of local needs and building broad-based community support ensures that the community is invested in the plan's success.

Potential Partners and Resources

The following list of partners and resources should be considered moving forward. The list is not exhaustive, but serves as a starting point.

- CheqBUILT (cheqbuilt.org): The Chequamegon Bay United Impact Land Trust is a nonprofit affordable housing organization, known as a community land trust (CLT). Incorporated in December 2023, this new nonprofit is dedicated to increasing the inventory of permanently affordable homes for residents across Ashland and Bayfield Counties. A CLT is a nonprofit, community-based organization that removes land from the speculative real estate market with the intent of preserving long-term housing affordability and other community benefits. A CLT home can never operate as a vacation home or short-term rental.
Cornucopia seniors who wish to downsize and relocate to new senior housing can sell their home to the land trust to ensure it stays available and affordable for year-round residents.

- Cornucopia Business Association (visitcornucopia.com): The Cornucopia Business Association (CBA) is a nonpolitical, nonsectarian, nonprofit organization, comprised of business owners, artists, and nonprofits in and around the village of Cornucopia. The CBA was founded to promote business development that will foster a strong and vibrant community. Their mission is to improve business conditions, promote higher business standards, attract new businesses and entrepreneurs to the area and provide a better understanding of issues and problems that affect the entire community, with a focus on the role of local businesses. The CBA strives to promote civic, cultural, economic and social betterment to the residents of, and visitors to, the village of Cornucopia and surrounding area. Collaboration with the CBA could help attract businesses to support an aging population and ensure continuity of existing businesses as current owners retire.

- Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (dsacommunityfoundation.org): The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (DSACF) works to improve lives and communities in northeast Minnesota, northwest Wisconsin, and the seven sovereign nations in the region. They provide grants that finance good work in the region, scholarships to further education of people

of all ages, and leadership on important community issues. They oversee the Apostle Islands-Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund, which supports nonprofits in Bayfield and Ashland Counties of northwest Wisconsin.

DSACF could provide seed funding or technical assistance to the Town of Bell in establishing a dedicated fund for community benefit, including affordable housing and other community development initiatives. They could also offer support in capacity building and workforce development.

Request for Proposals(RFP)

Issuing a well-structured and comprehensive RFP is a critical step in attracting qualified developers for the independent senior housing project in Cornucopia. By providing clear guidelines, reducing uncertainties, and offering incentives, the community can ensure that the proposed development aligns with its vision and meets the needs of its aging population. The collaborative efforts of local volunteers, community members, and experts will be essential in successfully implementing the RFP process and achieving the project's goals.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the Request for Proposals (RFP) are to:

- Attract Qualified Developers: Identify developers with experience in senior housing and a commitment to community values.

- Ensure Community Alignment: Ensure that the proposed development aligns with the community's vision and needs.

- Promote Sustainable Development: Encourage designs that are environmentally sustainable, climate resilient, and economically viable.

- Provide Clear Guidelines: Offer clear and comprehensive guidelines to address community priorities, reduce uncertainties, and attract competitive proposals.

Components

The following components should be considered when developing a Request for Proposals (RFP).

- Project Overview: Briefly introduce the project, its goals, and the importance of senior housing in Cornucopia. Provide context about Cornucopia, including demographic trends, community values, and the need for senior housing.

- Project Scope: Detailed descriptions of the proposed sites (Northeast of the Community Center, West of the Community Center, and Village Inn area), including site maps and key features. Outline the design requirements, including the number of units, types of housing (e.g., townhomes, apartments), and any specific design elements that reflect the community's character. Highlight the importance of sustainable design practices, such as energy efficiency, use of renewable materials, and environmental impact considerations. This may involve incorporating green building practices and renewable energy sources.

- Community Vision and Values: Emphasize the community's desire to achieve an intergenerational balance and support aging in place. Stress the importance of preserving the unique character of Cornucopia, including architectural styles and community aesthetics.

Highlight the need for housing solutions that reduce maintenance burdens and provide safe, supportive environments for seniors to age in place.

- Developer Qualifications: Specify the required experience in independent senior housing development, including examples of past projects. Require evidence of financial stability and the ability to secure funding for the project. Encourage developers to demonstrate their commitment to community engagement and collaboration.

- Proposal Requirements: Detailed design proposals, including site plans, architectural renderings, and descriptions of materials and construction methods. Comprehensive financial proposals, including cost estimates, funding sources, and proposed pricing for units. A detailed implementation plan, including timelines, key milestones, and strategies for managing construction and minimizing disruption to the community.

- Evaluation Criteria: Proposals will be evaluated based on their alignment with the community's vision and values; the quality and creativity of the design, including how well it integrates with the existing community fabric; the extent to which the proposal incorporates sustainable design practices; the financial viability of the proposal, including cost-effectiveness and funding strategies; the developer's experience, financial stability, and commitment to community engagement.

- Submission Process: Clearly state the deadline for proposal submissions. Specify the required format for submissions, including the number of copies and any digital submission requirements. Provide contact information for questions and clarifications.

- Incentives and Support: Highlight any incentives related to site control, such as offering the land at a reduced cost or providing site information (e.g., boundary surveys, geotechnical, or environmental information). Outline any available development incentives, such as grants, low-interest loans, or secondary financing options. Describe the support available from the community and local government, including assistance with permitting and access to local resources.

Steps

The following steps should be considered when developing a Request for Proposals (RFP).

1. Conduct a Market Study: Conduct a comprehensive market study to quantify the demand for different types of senior housing and identify potential price points. Analyze comparable local developments to understand market trends and inform the RFP.

2. Engage the Community: Continue gathering feedback from the community to refine the design proposals and ensure they meet local needs and preferences. Hold public meetings to discuss the RFP process and gather input from residents.

3. Develop Clear Guidelines: Develop clear design guidelines that reflect the community's vision and values. Establish clear evaluation criteria to ensure a transparent and fair selection process.

4. Provide Site Information: Conduct boundary surveys and environmental/geotechnical studies to provide detailed site information to developers. Ensure clear title to the property and provide title search information to developers.

5. Identify Funding Sources: Identify potential funding sources, including grants, low-interest loans, and charitable contributions. Engage local investors and community foundations to support the project financially.

6. Develop Incentives: Consider offering the land at a reduced cost or providing other incentives to attract developers. Offer assistance with the permitting process to reduce uncertainties and expedite development.

Conclusion

By leveraging community input, expert guidance, and strategic planning, Cornucopia can create a sustainable and supportive environment for its senior residents, ensuring they remain an integral part of the community for years to come. The collaborative efforts of local volunteers, community members, and experts have been instrumental in shaping the design proposals and ensuring they align with the unique character and needs of Cornucopia.

As the project moves forward, continued community engagement, thorough market research, and strategic planning will be essential to successfully implementing the proposed senior housing development. By addressing infrastructure needs, providing incentives for developers, and ensuring sustainable development practices, Cornucopia can create a thriving and supportive environment for its senior residents and young families, while preserving the unique character of Cornucopia for generations to come.

Leading Positive Community Change

Implementation is work, but it doesn't have to be painful. Ideas are realized when a group of people come together to get something done, take deliberate steps to bring folks into the process, provide clear and consistent communication, and celebrate success.

The ideas generated during the charrette provide opportunities for community members to come together to create something that benefits the entire community. Use these ideas to identify common interests and energy. Convene a series of planning meetings to identify why people are interested in the idea, what they can offer, and what's left to figure out. Start with simple "quick wins." Build capacity and confidence to take on larger more complex projects.

Positive Community Change

Creating and sustaining positive community change requires planning. When developing action plans, consider the following elements:

- Recipe for Success: Reflect on past community projects that were successful in: volunteerism, communication, ideation, fundraising, and leadership. As a team, document what aspects of each local example made it successful and what lessons can be learned and applied to future projects.

- Community Change Structures: Document existing community structures/organizations for change and identify resources needed to move forward. Consider the relationship of formal and informal groups, businesses, and individuals who "make things happen". What is the path of least resistance? Who is equipped to support change? What barriers exist that need to be removed, repositioned, or bridged to support change? What new community resources or relationships might be needed to support change?

- Positive Change Workforce Assessment: Identify local community assets and resources that can create and sustain positive community change. Ask community members to provide information needed to assess what types of skills, associations, and interests are available to make change happen. Using a simple form, individuals document what they "bring to table" to help make positive change happen.

- Prioritization: Allow community members to "self-sort" themselves into similar interests and explore ways in which their group can make positive change happen.

- Action Planning: Describe the purpose and character of the desired change and create a basic action plan for executing that change. The action plan should address the following questions:
  - What is the proposed activity/project and what is its purpose?
  - What does success would look like? How would we measure it?
  - Who needs to be involved in the activity for it to be successful?
  - What do we need to get started?
  - What to we need to sustain it?
  - Who will co-lead this effort?

- <u>Celebration & Reflection</u>: Community members should consider how they will evaluate the success of their effort. This might double as opportunity for celebration and benchmarking.

Leading Change

Dr. John Kotter describes the steps for making change happen in a community in two books, "Leading Change" and "The Heart of Change."   He recommends the following steps:

Step 1: Establish Sense of Urgency
- Examine market and competitive realities
- Identify and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities

Step 2: Form a Powerful Coalition
- Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort
- Encourage the group to work as a team

Step 3: Create a Shared Vision
- Create a vision to help direct the change effort
- Develop strategies for achieving that vision

Step 4: Communicate the Vision
- Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
- Teach new behaviors by the example of the Guiding Coalition

Step 5: Empower Others to Act
- Remove obstacles to change
- Change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
- Encourage the risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

Step 6: Plan for and Create Wins
- Plan for visible performance improvements
- Create those improvements
- Recognize and reward people involved in the improvements

Step 7: Change Improvement Checkpoints
- Use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision
- Hire, promote, and develop people who can implement the vision
- Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

Step 8: Institutionalize New Approaches
- Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and organizational success
- Develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession

Kotter, J. P. (1996). Leading change. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press. Kotter, J. P. and D. S. Cohen (2002). The heart of change : real-life stories of how people change their organizations. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press. Boston, Mass., Harvard Business School Press.

Acknowledgments

UW-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking
Signature Effort

The UW-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking Signature Effort is a group of UW-Extension county educators and state specialists who research, create, and test community placemaking curriculum in response to the challenge set forth by the Wisconsin Idea. Design Wisconsin is one of several community placemaking programs offered by the group. Current members include:

Barry Hottmann, Community Development Educator, Iowa County Extension

Brandon Hofstedt, CED Program Manager, UW-Madison, Division of Extension

Brian Gauthier, Community Development Educator, Lac du Flambeau Extension

Christa Van Treek, Positive Youth Development Educator, Marquette County Extension

David Timmerman, Editor/Journalist/Photographer, Grant County Herald Independent

Ed Freer, Landscape Architect & Urban/Waterfront Designer, Madison, WI

Katie Livernash, Community Development Educator, Portage County Extension

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Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Community Vitality + Placemaking
Signature Effort

Extension

The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension provides statewide access to university resources and research so the people of Wisconsin can learn, grow and succeed at all stages of life. UW-Extension carries out this tradition of the Wisconsin Idea – extending the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state.

Who We Are

With an office in each Wisconsin county, Extension develops practical educational programs tailored to local needs and based on university knowledge and research. We deliver our expertise to the public, addressing a wide range of needs to people, plants and animals, in both urban and rural areas of the states.

What We Do

We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

The Wisconsin Idea

"The University of Wisconsin's direct contributions to the state: to the government in the forms of serving in office, offering advice about public policy, providing information and exercising technical skill, and to the citizens in the forms of doing research directed at solving problems that are important to the state and conducting outreach activities."

– Jack Stark, "The Wisconsin Idea: The University's Service to the State", p.1

Contact

For more information about the University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Vitality & Placemaking Signature Effort and the Design Wisconsin program, please contact:

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TIMELINE

- September 2018: Regional elected officials begin meeting to discuss issues related to housing.
- February 2019: The Chequamegon Bay Regional Housing Coalition is established.
- February 2020: The Coalition secures funding to conduct a regional housing study and survey. Fourteen municipalities, including the Town of Bell, contribute matching funds in exchange for more detailed information.
- November 2020: The Coalition is selected as one of three "pilot communities" for WHEDA's Rural Affordable Workforce Housing Initiative (RAWHI).
- May 2021: The regional housing survey is completed.
- December 2021: The regional housing study is completed.
- May 13, 2022: Town officials meet with Bayfield County Housing Authority (BCHA) Commissioners to discuss the potential for working with BCHA to develop new housing in Cornucopia and tour potential locations.
- October 11, 2022: BCHA Commissioners answer questions from the Town Board. The Board decides to survey residents about their housing needs. Listening sessions are held at the Community Center to gather community input related to new housing development.
- March 14, 2023: Town Board adopts a resolution to form a senior housing work group to explore opportunities and develop a Request For Proposals.
- April 11, 2023: The work group is joined by the Bayfield County Extension Housing Educator.
- June 14, 2023: The Executive Director at BCHA joins the work group.
- October 10, 2023: Town Board adopts a resolution of support for continued collaboration with BCHA in development of a senior housing proposal, unanimously approved.
- December 27, 2023: BCHA Board of Directors approves a resolution of support for an application to WEDC for Thrive Rural funds to assist in senior housing development in the Town of Bell.
- January 9, 2024: The Town of Bell adopts a resolution of support for the BCHA Application for Thrive Rural Funds, unanimously approved.
- February 6, 2024: The BCHA is awarded one of ten awards statewide by WEDC's Office of Rural Prosperity as part of the Thrive Rural Initiative to pursue new senior housing development in the Town of Bell.
- August 2024: A new housing survey is released in the Town of Bell.
- September 26-27, 2024: Design Wisconsin leads a two-day design charrette in the Village of Cornucopia.

Town of Bell

Bayfield County, WI

Resolution of Support

For study and development of a plan to provide senior housing in the Town of Bell

Whereas, an ad-hoc group of interested citizens has formed a group to study senior housing in the town of Bell; and

Whereas, the said Group has discussed utilizing the Bayfield County Housing Authority(BCHA) to manage the property, and believes BCHA is attractive because they are established, local, and can lead project development; and

Whereas, the BCHA will not consider projects that lack community support, and a resolution of support for continued study and development of a proposal will provide such support; and

Whereas this Resolution of Support is limited to the Group's study of options and eventual recommendation(s) to the Board of Supervisors; and

Whereas the Group has no authority to make any commitment or expend any funds without express approval of the Board of Supervisors; and

Whereas, the Town of Bell Board of Supervisors has decided to support to the Group;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Bell Board of Supervisors hereby expresses its approval and support for the Group's continued study and development of senior housing proposals.

Read and signed at a properly noticed Town Board Meeting October 10, 2023.

Town of Bell

Bayfield County, WI

Resolution of Support

For Bayfield County Housing Authority Funding Application

Whereas, the Town of Bell has previously adopted a resolution to support the efforts of an ad-hoc group of citizens (the "Senior Housing Group") to study the feasibility of developing senior housing in the Town of Bell; and

Whereas, the Senior Housing Group has obtained the commitment of the Bayfield County Housing Authority (BCHA) to assist it in its efforts; and

Whereas, the BCHA has become aware of an opportunity under the Thrive Rural Wisconsin initiative of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (the "Thrive Program") to obtain technical assistance that would help the Senior Housing Group and the BCHA in studying the feasibility of a senior housing development in the Town of Bell, including, but not limited to, facilitating community-wide discussion and evaluation of senior housing options, developing a work plan, project management support, identifying and pursuing project financing, exclusive opportunities for future pre-development grants, and referrals to consultants and government partners; and

Whereas, the Town of Bell Board of Supervisors has agreed to support the BCHA's application for technical assistance under the Thrive Program;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Bell Board of Supervisors hereby expresses its approval and support for the BCHA's application under the Thrive Program.

Read and signed at a properly noticed Town Board Meeting January 9, 2024.

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