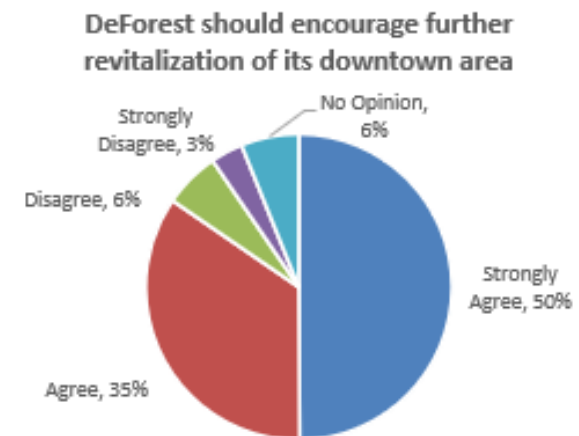




## Redevelopment Planning Questions and Responses (Q&R)

This Q&R shares information on the Village of DeForest's redevelopment planning efforts, which began in Fall 2021, and will be updated as the planning process continues into early 2022.

- 1. What is redevelopment planning?** Redevelopment planning is an approach to chart the best long-term future of parts of DeForest that may benefit from some change. These are areas that developed a long time ago, have been "underdeveloped" compared to their surroundings (e.g., old farm buildings), have experienced some decline in value or condition, or some combination.
- 2. What's the purpose of redevelopment planning in DeForest?** Redevelopment planning helps the Village carry out various goals in its 2015 Comprehensive Plan. These include securing a strong tax base; supplying goods and services through more shopping and restaurants; supporting high-quality housing and attractive neighborhoods; increasing the vibrancy of downtown DeForest; and promoting a land use pattern that contains a mix of land uses, grows the local economy, and enhances quality of life. Achieving these goals through redevelopment planning is also a smart way for the Village to grow because it makes use of existing roads, utilities, and services; guides investments to where people already live and spend time; and helps preserve farmland and open spaces.
- 3. Is there community support for redevelopment?** Yes. Redevelopment appears to be the top economic development desire of Village residents. As suggested by the 2020 community survey result to the right, 85% of Village respondents suggested that DeForest should encourage further revitalization of its downtown area. In community meetings since then, many Village residents have expressed interest in redevelopment or revitalization in places like the North/Main Street intersection area, the older parts of the commercial area east of the South/Main intersection, and the Holum Education Center site.
- 4. What is "redevelopment" anyway?** It can mean replacing existing buildings with new buildings—either for a similar use or a different use. It can also mean expanding, rehabilitating, or improving the appearance of existing buildings and sites. There is no "one size fits all" for redevelopment project areas.
- 5. How does redevelopment and revitalization happen?** Almost always, through the actions of private owners interested in changing or selling their property. The Village and CDA can get involved by preparing a redevelopment plan that uncovers new opportunities for an area, promoting that plan with property owners and developers, securing grants and other funds to use for local loans or grants for activities like home improvements or commercial building façade improvements, and acquiring land for later resale for redevelopment.





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6. **Under what authority can the Village do redevelopment planning?** The main authority is under Section 66.1333 of Wisconsin Statutes, which has been in place for many decades and been used by countless Wisconsin villages and cities, including DeForest since the 1990s.
7. **What is a redevelopment plan?** It is a tool prescribed by this Wisconsin Statute that allows the Village and its Community Development Authority (CDA) to engage in land acquisition, borrowing, and other redevelopment activities within designated redevelopment project areas. Within such areas, the Village and CDA may prioritize the reuse of existing buildings and sites for different purposes, the demolition of vacant or vacated existing buildings for new buildings and uses, or some combination. Still, many sites in each redevelopment project area will not change use at all, but instead provide contiguity and context for nearby sites that may redevelop.
8. **What's in it for property owners?** Being in a redevelopment project area doesn't change what one can do with their property today, its zoning, or ability to buy and sell property. (Some DeForest property owners may even be surprised to learn that they have been in a Village redevelopment area for almost 30 years!) Having property located within a redevelopment project area increases future opportunities by raising interest and funding potential to rehabilitate or redevelop property, or sell to a developer.
9. **But what if I am happy where I am doing what I am doing with my property?** Property owners in a redevelopment project area are welcome to participate or not in redevelopment planning or actual redevelopment. Existing lawful uses can remain as-is.
10. **Can the Village or CDA take my property for redevelopment?** First of all, no one can legally "take" any property without providing fair compensation. Second, the Village and CDA would focus on willing sellers for any potential acquisition for redevelopment. As one can imagine, compelling a sale for redevelopment is not popular, would require a lot of procedural steps and expenses, and is therefore avoided whenever possible.
11. **What parts of the Village is the CDA designating as redevelopment project areas?** In March 2022, the CDA and Village Board designated three redevelopment project areas. These include a downtown area extending from the North/Main Street intersection south along the railroad tracks to Holum Street then east to the Holum Education Center, commercial and vacant lands just east of the Main/South Street intersection, and the old Karow farmstead property along North Towne Road just south of the newer Kwik Trip. The Village determined that each of these three areas qualify under the State Statute that guides redevelopment planning, meaning that each area has a "predominance" of "blighted property" under a fairly broad Statute definition.
12. **What are the reasons for focusing on these three areas?** In addition to meeting the statutory criteria, the CDA and its staff have relied on the following factors in narrowing to the three candidate redevelopment project areas:
  - Adopted Village plans that support reuse, revitalization, or redevelopment in the area.
  - Known property owner interest in redevelopment or selling for redevelopment.



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- Public support for redevelopment or revitalization in the area—both through intensive outreach conducted mainly in Winter 2021-22 and through previous and follow-up efforts.
- Impediments for reuse/redevelopment by market forces alone, such the need to assemble smaller parcels or to make infrastructure improvements.
- Possible eligibility for tax incremental financing, grants, or other outside funding to support redevelopment.
- Opportunity for significant community impact, such as a highly-visible site, or probability to address an identified community need such as for housing; downtown revitalization; or retail, services, and/or hospitality development.

**13. Now that the CDA and Village Board have designated these redevelopment project areas, can redevelopment take place there?**

Technically, redevelopment can take place anywhere at any time if there is an interested buyer and seller, supportive Village planning and zoning policies, and Board approval. But, Village and CDA leadership in redevelopment planning would not commence in any area until there is also a redevelopment project plan adopted for each designated area. Each redevelopment project plan includes a conceptual plan, plus a potential playbook for turning something like that concept into reality.

**14. I see that the Village now has draft redevelopment area project plans. How were these prepared and who was/is involved?** For each designated redevelopment project area, during the rest of 2022 the Village, CDA, and their staff and consultants interviewed key property owners and tried to keep everyone informed. Several CDA, Village Board, and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings had discussions of draft plan materials. In December, the CDA authorized the draft redevelopment project plans to be forwarded for public review. A public informational meeting and public hearing are scheduled for winter 2023, preceded by notice to every property owner in each area.

**15. What is the CDA? How can I learn more about the work they're doing?** The Village Board created the CDA to take a comprehensive look at redevelopment and housing needs in DeForest. The CDA is examining changing population characteristics; discussing the housing needs of seniors, low-income, disabled and the local workforce; and will be determining residential and commercial opportunities in redevelopment areas. The CDA meets at 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Please visit the Village's website for more information.

**16. When is this redevelopment planning process going to end? What is the plan format?** The current planning process is expected to be completed in March 2023. First the CDA would need to adopt the redevelopment plan, then the Village Board would have to do the same. What these bodies will be asked to adopt is a "General Plan for Redevelopment," which is an umbrella of sorts that also covers a lot of State Statute requirements. Project plans for Redevelopment Project Areas A, B, and C are appendices to that General Plan

**17. Who can I contact at the Village if I have questions about the redevelopment planning process?** All inquiries can be directed to Community Development Director, Alex Allon. His phone number is 608-609-2070 and his email address is [allona@vi.deforest.wi.us](mailto:allona@vi.deforest.wi.us).