



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Belmont Visioning Project - Presentation of Draft Vision Statement**

**October 14, 2003**

#### **Honorable Mayor and Council Members**

On April 22, 2003, the City Council initiated the Belmont Visioning Project with the goal of creating a long-range vision statement for the community. Under the guidance of the Mayor and Vice-mayor, seven citizen committees, City staff and the consultants at MIG, Inc. have conducted nearly forty meetings about the future of Belmont. Most recently, a seven-member Editors Committee (drawn from the seven citizen committees) has worked to produce a draft statement that has been ‘tested’ with other members of the seven committees, at the Art & Wine Festival and over the City’s web page. At this point, the Editors Committee has completed their review and finalized their proposal for Belmont’s Vision. The Council is being asked this evening to approve the draft statement or provide other direction.

#### **Background**

At the beginning of the project, staff’s primary concern was identifying and channeling various community perspectives into a unified and singular vision-making effort. We began by identifying and confirming with the Mayor and Vice-mayor the following perspectives:

- **Community** (*Identity, Overall Character, Social Connections*) – Service, social and religious organizations, cultural and recreational groups, government, transportation agencies, County and regional groups
- **Economy** (*Regional Trends, Trade Area, Niche Markets, Fiscal Impacts*) – Chamber of Commerce, major employers, small businesses
- **Education** (*Student Demographics, Learning Trends, Campus Facilities, Community Connections*) – Public schools, private schools, Notre Dame de Namur University, support groups

- **Neighborhoods** (*Identities, Demographics, Seniors, Teens, Volunteers, Grass-roots politics*) – Neighborhood Associations, Senior residential facilities, Multi-family residences
- **Arts** (*Plastic Arts, Performing Arts, Education, Training, Events, Children’s Art*) – Arts Council, artists associations, performance groups, educational institutions
- **History** (*Events, People, Themes, Sites*) – Belmont Historical Society, long-term community institutions
- **Place** (*Study Area, Identity, Uses, Access, Boundaries / Edges, Security / Comfort*) – Project for Public Spaces, Belmont Planning Commission

We also prepared to communicate with larger community through a series of mailed newsletters and web-site updates.

When the project began, staff assembled a committee for each perspective from various community groups, while the consultant prepared a custom ‘tool kit’ for each committee. The initial committee memberships were as follows:

#### **Community Connections**

Rev. Kristi Denham (Chair)	United Church of Christ Pastor
Jill Aldrich	Central School PTA President
Karen Ali	Yaseen Foundation
Richard Bortoli	Recreation & Parks Commissioner
Pat Brown	Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center Manager
Linda Chiochios	Belmont Librarian
Mark Lewis	NDNU - Public Relations Dir
Lida Paetzke	Cipriani Neighborhood Association
Carolyn Selby	Carlmont Center Manager

#### **Economic Development**

Howard Mason (Chair)	City Treasurer
John Arthur	Jameco CFO
David Braunstein	Carlmont HS Teacher
Brad Clore	Belmont Hardware Owner
Ric Denman	Aegis Land Principal
Chester Fisher	Holiday Inn Express
Maureen Freschet	NDNU Comm. Relations Dir.
Dr. Tom Hannen	NDNU, Business School Dean
Charmaine Hope	Chamber of Comm Exec Dir.
Arno Jacobi	Harbor Ind'I Area Prop. Owner
Warren Lieberman	Finance Commissioner
Dave Long	Planning Commissioner

Dary Sepah-Mansour  
Phil Mathewson

Finance Commissioner  
Planning Commissioner

### **Youth & Education**

Anne Campbell (Chair)  
Pam Clarke  
Patrick Gemma  
Erica Goodwin  
Dr. Judith Greig  
Andrea Jenoff  
Eric Lassahn  
Steve Pomeroy  
Woody Shackleton  
Eric Shrader  
Steve Singer  
Marsi O'Malley-Riley  
Dr. Rosalie Whitlock

Belmont RS Superintendent  
Merry Moppet Pre-School  
Sequoia HS Superintendent  
Youth Commissioner  
NDNU Dean School of Education and Leadership  
Carlmont HS Principal  
NDNU Housing Office Dir.  
Ralston Middle School Teacher  
Belmont RS School Volunteer  
Belmont RS Board  
Rec & Parks Commissioner  
Library Youth Services  
Charles Armstrong School Head

### **Neighborhoods & Open Space**

Cori McKenzie (Chair)  
John Boykin  
Joan Dentler  
Ivan Fermon  
Warren Gibson  
Dave Hendershott  
Lori Jacobi  
Dianne Keogh  
Dan Murphy  
Craig Oeser  
Walter Shjeflo

Central School Principal  
Cipriani NA  
Outdoor Task Force  
Belmont Hts Civic Improv. Assoc.  
Planning Commissioner  
Outdoor Task Force  
NDNU Manager, Central Svcs  
Multi-family  
McDougal Park NA  
Cipriani School PTA President  
Rec & Parks Commissioner

### **The Arts**

Judy King (Chair)  
Christine Bennett  
Nancy Coe  
Judie Davis  
Mike Elkins  
Audrey Murray  
Bill Pound  
Marni Tuel  
Ruth Waters

Rec & Parks Commissioner  
NDNU Dean, School of Arts & Hum.  
Belmont RS School Volunteer  
Arts Commissioner  
NDNU Chair, Dep't of Theater Arts  
Arts Commissioner  
Sculptures Guild  
Kollage School for Arts Exec. Dir.  
Belmont Arts Council

### **History**

Denny Lawhern (Chair)  
Helen Cross

Belmont Historical Society  
Belmont Historical Society

Hartley Laughead  
Mike McQueen  
Lisa Simpson  
Ellie Woodard

Belmont Historical Society  
San Mateo County Hist. Society  
NDNU - Conferences Dir.  
Belmont Historical Society

### **Place & Urban Design**

Kenn Parsons (Chair)  
William Dickenson  
Ken Hall  
Bob Ledoux  
Mary Morrissey Parden  
Rick Rosenthal  
Kim Jansen  
Steve Simpson  
Liz Wiecha

Planning Commissioner  
Plng Comm / Sterling Dwms NA  
Architect  
Finance Commission  
Chamber of Commerce / Local Biz  
Central NA  
Homeview NA  
Architect  
CalTrain / ex-Plng Comm.

The task assigned to each committee was to prepare two community reports related to its particular topic: 1) an assessment of conditions, trends and values, and 2) a set of vision themes. We initiated this phase when the seven citizen committees were formed in May, and began their work with an orientation and training meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Our first newsletter was mailed in mid-June and the Visioning Project website was up on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

During the months of June and July, the seven committees met individually four or more times to discuss and sort what they believed to be the conditions, trends, values and vision themes for their topic. They met twice (July 9<sup>th</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup>) to share their work with each other and to prioritize the overarching themes that would be the basis for the vision statement. Average attendance among all committees exceeded 85%. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the City Council received a report on the work accomplished to date, including the initial vision themes developed by the Committees. The Second newsletter was mailed September 1<sup>st</sup> and the website updated September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

During a single Vision Day – Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup> - a community-wide event was held where all the committees' work was shared with the general public. During Vision Saturday, our consultants facilitated a dialogue for the entire audience to identify common threads, significant highlights and other themes that would provide the basis for a vision statement. The primary themes presented at the event were:

- Destination
- Education
- Arts
- Sense of Place
- Inter-connectedness/Partnerships
- Access
- Communication
- Publicity
- Visual Enhancement
- Small-town, Semi-rural feel
- Transportation
- Trees
- Hills

Approximately one hundred people attended; however, many of them were visioning committee members, Planning Commissioners and City Council members. Our estimate is that about fifteen to twenty people attended who were new to the project.

After Vision Saturday, an Editors Committee was assembled – one member from each of the seven Visioning Committees, selected by each committee’s Chair. This committee took on the task of preparing the draft vision statement from the work of the seven committees and from the feedback of Vision Saturday. The Committee met over two nights, September 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> – only two days after the Saturday meeting – and completed a draft statement which included a slogan and five major vision themes, with additional support statements.

The draft was made available for public review at the Art & Wine Festival on September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, as well as over the City’s website, beginning September 22<sup>nd</sup>. A postcard was mailed to all residents and businesses during the week of September 29<sup>th</sup> directing people to the updated website, where the draft statement could be reviewed and comments submitted.

We cannot possibly capture for this report all the ideas, perspectives and opinions presented at Vision Saturday, The Art & Wine Festival or over the Internet (or for that matter at all the citizen committee meetings and updates). However, three elements stood out from the public meeting: 1) The idea of Belmont as a ‘destination’ was desired by some participants, but troubling to others, 2) Arts and Education are highly valued in the community, and 3) There is a desire for more public gathering places, but there are many viewpoints on what such places should look like.

The Editors Committee met for the last time on Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup> to review all comments from the Art & Wine Festival, from the Web and from other sources. At that time, they made several changes to the draft and agreed on the recommended vision statement presented in this report.

### **Draft Vision Statement**

The vision statement, as recommended by the Editors Committee, contains five primary ideas, and twenty-three statements about Belmont. A copy is attached to this report.

The Council will observe that no slogan is included with the statement. The Editors Committee reviewed the responses to a slogan it had originally proposed and concluded that the particular slogan did not work well in the community. The Committee believes strongly that an effective, well-received slogan is important for the vision statement to be both complete and compelling. However, neither time nor the project’s current design allows for further work to be done on a slogan. The Committee strongly recommended that the City Council consider a separate initiative – perhaps a community contest or similar outreach effort – be undertaken in 2004 to conceive a proper slogan.

### **Recommendation**

Staff believes that the project successfully the met goals of a community-based effort to identify

the values Belmont residents hold about themselves and their community. We also believe that the work of the citizens committees and the community feedback have resulted in a statement that can guide the Council and community in updating the General Plan and in making other vital policy decisions about Belmont's future. We recommend its adoption by the City Council.

**Fiscal Impact**

None.

**Attachments**

- A. Draft Vision Statement
- B. Belmont Visioning Project Exhibits

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Planning and Community Development Director

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Jere A. Kersnar  
City Manager

# **BELMONT'S VISION STATEMENT**

## **Distinctive Community Character**

- Belmont prides itself on being unique.
- Its small-town ambience sets it apart as a tranquil, safe, and desirable place to live.
- We get involved in town matters because we care about living here.
- We connect with each other in all kinds of gathering places.
- Our strong sense of community and enjoyment of the town's assets and activities deepen as we become better informed and connected.

## **Natural Beauty**

- We choose to make our home among these beautiful hills, trees, parks, views, and open spaces.
- Our natural surroundings inspire us to play, create, and contemplate.
- Our actions today preserve and enhance Belmont's beauty to make it even lovelier for our grandchildren.
- Our wooded residential areas are diverse, peaceful and well maintained.

## **Thriving Culture**

- Belmont is a wonderfully safe and supportive place to raise a family.
- We facilitate lifelong learning in our academic, artistic, athletic, and social dimensions.
- Our schools and library are the pride of the community.
- Our university is intrinsic to Belmont's social, artistic and economic life.
- Our playgrounds and athletic fields are of high quality and in high gear.
- The arts thrive in this creative, appreciative town -- the arts hub of the Peninsula.
- Our history makes Belmont what it is, and we preserve that heritage for our children.

## **Thriving Economy**

- A charming, vibrant town center is the heart of our civic and economic life.
- Our economy prospers with a mix of attractive, successful businesses that fit with our community character.
- We look first in our own shops and restaurants for what we need.
- Education, arts and the economy flourish in concert.

## **Easy Mobility**

- We put a priority on getting out of, into, and through town efficiently.
- Bicyclists, walkers, and other nondrivers get where they're going easily and safely.
- We require safe residential streets and smooth-flowing thoroughfares.