



The Camiros Group, who is conducting the Downtown study, met with local individuals who are part of the RA Smith/Envision 2030 Housing committee as well as City officials last week to present their latest findings and to offer some suggestions as to what could be done in downtown Fort Dodge.

Their research resulted in the following observations/findings:

1. The physical size of Fort Dodge's downtown area is scaled more for a population of 150,000, not the 40,000 that are in our area.
2. They suggested putting a large green space or other "incentive" project (such as a Recreation Center, Aquatics Center) in the area near Fareway that would act as a catalyst in downtown re-development. This would be a central location, and would eventually be accessible from the trail system that is being built in Fort Dodge. They noted that this initiative will have to come from the City – by acquiring the necessary land, either by purchasing the land or by eminent domain.
3. Camiros suggested re-routing 2nd Avenue South from the Karl King Bridge, to what is now 1st Avenue South. This newly re-routed road would maintain its US 20/Highway 169, and thus would be eligible for both state and federal highway funds.
4. Camiros suggested building a multi-unit housing on the street that goes from the back of the library to the river; perhaps taking advantage of the Bender building, or constructing town homes or row houses.
5. Suggested building housing units that would face the river, taking advantage of the views and the potential riverfront and trails activity.
6. Camiros will recommend guidelines for zoning, building specifications, etc, for the City to enact in order for set acceptable constructions and design standards.
7. Camiros noted that it would take 2-3 years for the City to acquire the land for developers, and that the public should expect the housing construction and development to take place over approximately 10 years.
8. The Camiros Group reiterated the fact that Fort Dodge does not have adequate or acceptable housing for the employees our new businesses have the potential to re-locate in Fort Dodge. They said that quality of life, updated rental housing and existing housing that haven't been updated for over 35 years, and accessibility to an attraction such as a large city park / Rec Center are crucial to the re-vitalization of downtown Fort Dodge.

9. They further stated that in today's work environment, many companies and employees can choose from a multitude of places to locate. Fort Dodge has a lot to offer (relatively low cost of living, lower than average housing costs, excellent schools, a top notch hospital, an excellent community college, easy daily living, etc), but so do many other communities. Fort Dodge has to distinguish itself from the many other communities in this country in order to attract and maintain the types of industries that will keep this area vital.

In order to aid the community in making these changes and investments, the Camiros Group along with Fort Dodge's Business Affairs and Community Growth Department will host an open meeting to provide information to local lenders, developers, landlords and contractors as to incentives that are currently available for this type of re-development. These incentives may be in the form of low interest loans, grants, HUD financing, etc.

The date of this meeting will be announced soon.