

WASHBURN WISCONSIN



Wisconsin's Maritime Washburn Historic Water

1883, when the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad chose Washburn as its base of operation in the region. The tiny town was to become the new Chicago. Washburn would be a distribution hub for East and West for the Northwest. To achieve this, the company built a large coal dock in 1883, a merchandise dock in 1886, a 100,000-bushel grain elevator dock in 1886. These massive structures loomed directly in front of this sign. In 1888, a boat maintenance yard, and coal dock are now...



FOREWORD

A strong brand identity can help a community, like ours, differentiate itself from other, similar places in a positive manner that helps achieve our community development goals.

This community brand is focused on community identity, with a particular interest in expressing the experience of Washburn area residents and visitors in a way that would enhance collective community identity.

The primary objective of this brand strategy is to help stakeholders within the Washburn area to deliver a consistent message about our community that is grounded in statistics, examples and testimony. It is the hope of the Washburn Ad Hoc Branding Committee, the Washburn Chamber of Commerce, and the Division of Extension at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that this work will support growth and development by articulating a common identity that will benefit members of the Washburn community.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5** ● Identifying the Washburn Brand
- 14** ● Community Branding Goals
- 16** ● Brand Pillars
- 27** ● Community Identity Survey



Photos credits: Jeremy Oswald (pages 2, 4, 10 upper, 13, 15, 16 lower, 22 lower, 23, 24, 26 lower), Kellie Pederson (page 28), Jamey Penney-Ritter (pages 3 upper left, 11 lower & upper right, 12, 19 lower right, 21 upper & lower left), Bayfield County Tourism



Identifying the Washburn Brand



THE BRAND IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Why a Community Brand Strategy?

Communities in larger regions often find themselves in unspoken, friendly competition for attention and investment from stakeholders. A strong community brand identity *can help a community differentiate itself in a positive manner* which helps achieve community and economic development goals. A clear brand *can also help unify a core identity for communities with a diverse set of stakeholders.*

The primary objective of this brand strategy is to help stakeholders within the Washburn community *deliver a consistent message* about the community that is *grounded in statistics, examples and testimony.* It is the hope of the Washburn Ad Hoc Branding Committee that this work will support economic and community growth that will benefit those that work or live in Washburn.

How was the Washburn Brand Strategy Identified?

In the winter of 2020, representatives from the City of Washburn, the Washburn Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Division of Extension at the University of Wisconsin-Madison met to identify a diverse group of Washburn area residents with a wide-range of community perspectives, experiences, and connections, and invited them to participate in the Washburn Ad Hoc Branding Committee. The resulting Committee researched and drafted the brand strategy over a six-month period in 2021. The Project Team included:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Lynn Adams
- Bawaajigekwe Boulley
- Steve Cotherman
- Jeremy Oswald
- Amy Trimbo
- Marieke van Donkersgoed
- Jonathan Walberg

COMMITTEE ADVISORS

- Mary Motiff - Mayor, City of Washburn
- Melissa Martinez - Director, Washburn Area Chamber of Commerce

PROJECT COORDINATORS

- Kristin Runge - Community Economic Development & Branding Specialist, UW-Madison Extension
- Kellie Pederson - Community Development Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Extension

The ad hoc committee defined Washburn as a community that extends beyond the borders of the city to include all of those who live, work, or learn in Washburn. Community stakeholders were defined as residents, commuters, business owners, employers, and those who visit Washburn throughout the year. These stakeholders were foremost in the minds of the committee during the process, and, as a result, the committee conducted a *community identity survey of City of Washburn residents, school district residents, commuters, and visitors* through the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. This survey was supplemented by an analysis of commuting patterns and a trade area profile. Both of those reports were reviewed by the Washburn Ad Hoc Branding Committee and are available from the Division of Extension, through the City of Washburn, and through the Washburn Area Chamber of Commerce.

What did the Washburn Ad Hoc Branding Committee conclude?

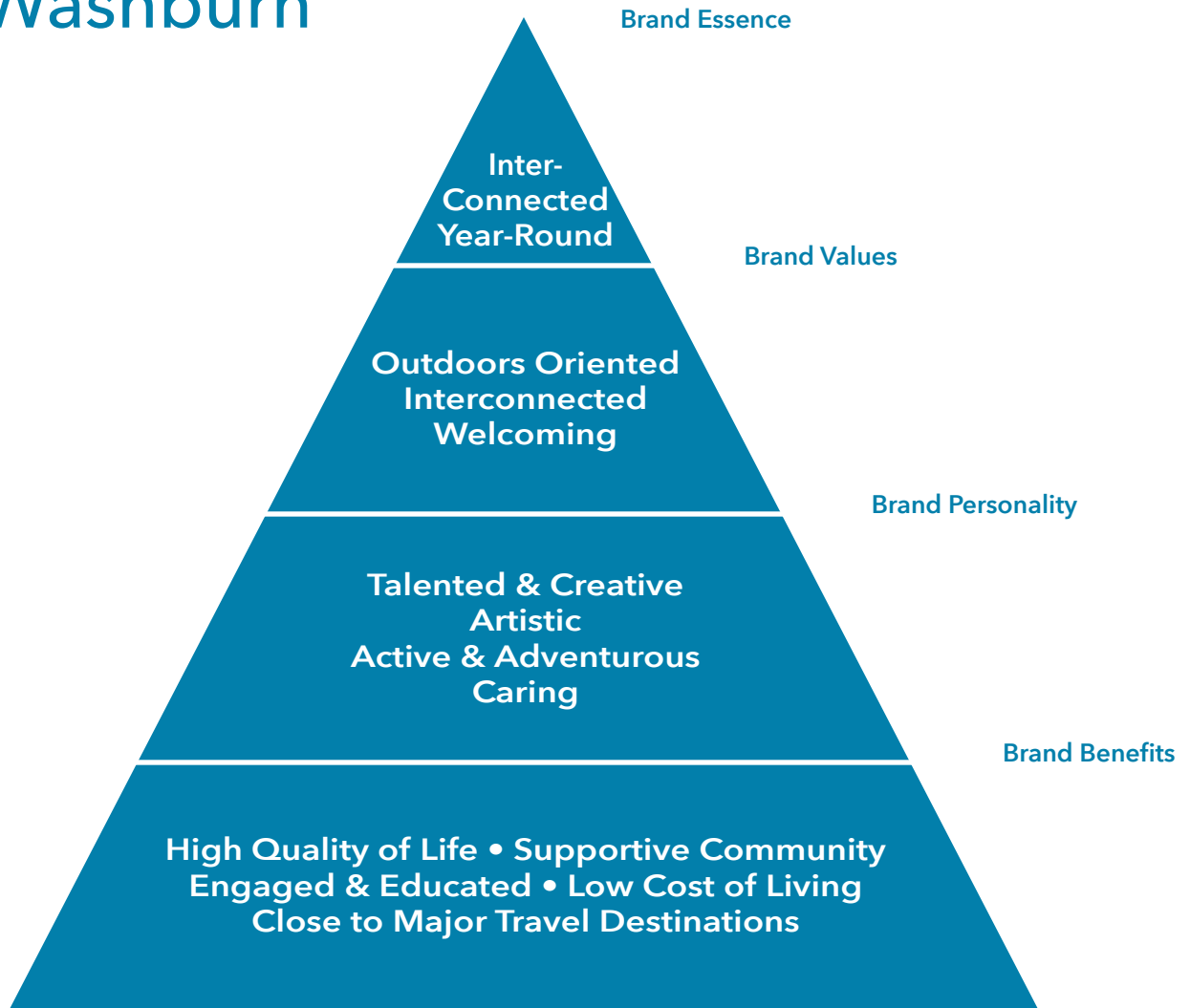
The community identity survey revealed that the *quality of the environment, access to outdoor recreation, and proximity to Lake Superior* were the items rated the highest when community members were asked which factors were important when choosing a place to live.

Comments and answers to survey questions indicate that *the community is welcoming and friendly*. Washburn community members distinguish themselves by the *relatively high rates of participation in community efforts, the degree to which community members believe their neighbors would help them, if needed, and the actual rates at which residents help one another*.

Although Washburn community residents appreciate the amenities and economic opportunities provided by residing near well-developed travel and tourism destinations, community members have a strong desire to maintain a separate identity as a little town on the big lake. *Washburn will thrive by asserting its identity as a resident-oriented, year-round community among many lovely travel and tourism destinations*.

This identity does not prevent the community from participating in the economic activity generated by tourism. Rather, it encourages the type of development that would benefit residents while also serving tourists. Washburn seeks to attract tourists who see themselves as “visitors” who are interested in becoming temporary members of the community, enjoying the community amenities alongside residents, and taking care of the community as if it was their home, too, rather than “tourists” who are seeking to consume attractions or amenities to the partial or full exclusion of residents.

Welcome Home to Washburn



The goal of community branding is to create a set of messages, images and facts that helps communicate...

What the community offers to different stakeholder groups

How the community builds and upholds a positive reputation

Why the community seeks to welcome others

BRAND ESSENCE

The City of Washburn is a interconnected, year-round community nestled among well-known travel and tourism destinations.

BRAND VALUES

- **Outdoors-Oriented:**

The proximity to Lake Superior, access to outdoor recreation, and the quality of the natural environment keep lifelong residents in Washburn and attract new residents and visitors who seek to live in a landscape they love.

- **Interconnected:**

Residents are connected to each other as strongly as they are connected to the outdoors. The Washburn community has high rates of participation in community activities, and community members have a strong reliance on one another throughout the seasons.

- **Welcoming:**

New resident experiences, and long-time resident testimony, provide strong evidence that the Washburn community is adept at welcoming newcomers to its ranks and quickly integrates new residents into the life of the community.

BRAND PERSONALITY

- **Talented & Creative:**

Residents are a blend of professionals, skilled tradespeople, entrepreneurs and artisans who are inspired by nature and the strong sense of place.

- **Artistic:**

Residents embrace and participate in the arts. Local amenities including Big Top Chautauqua, StageNorth theatre, the Washburn Cultural Center, and surrounding galleries offer abundant opportunities to participate in the arts.

- **Active & Adventurous:**

Community members spend significant time outdoors engaged in active leisure pursuits and the Washburn Community hosts many outdoor events throughout the year.

- **Caring:**

Residents help one another and actively support local businesses and civic organizations.

BRAND BENEFITS

- **High Quality of Life:**

An affordable, well-equipped small town, populated with welcoming residents, and set in a stunning landscape that buzzes with year-round activity, are some of the foundational reasons that residents of Washburn enjoy a high quality of life.

- **Supportive Community:**

The connection residents have with one another extends to supporting their local businesses. After the basics of home, healthcare and groceries, resident spending is highly concentrated on restaurant meals, recreation, and travel.

- **Educated & Engaged Residents:**

Forty-two percent of adult residents have at least a bachelor's degree, and 32% have completed some college or earned a two-year degree. This is about 10% higher, on average, as compared to education rates across the state of Wisconsin. Washburn residents are actively engaged in civic and community life, with high rates of participation in community activities.

- **Low Cost of Living:**

Homes in Washburn remain affordable and many jobs within the region pay living wages, resulting in a stable population with higher than average rates of home ownership.

- **Proximity to Popular Regional Travel Destinations:**

Direct visitor spending totaled \$54 million in Bayfield County in 2019, the last full, pre-pandemic year. Washburn is situated on a major tourist and commuter route that sees daily traffic averages between 4,800 and 7,000 cars, peaking significantly higher during high travel days and weekends in the summer.





A BLUEPRINT FOR COMMUNICATING

Because a community brand is a set of ideas, feelings and associations related to a particular place, a community brand identity is only useful if it is communicated to stakeholders. This requires effort on the part of those who are already invested in the community.

PROACTIVE

Washburn must be proactive in promoting its message to potential stakeholders

CONSISTENT

Using the Washburn Brand Book as a reference guide for communication will help ensure that a consistent and clear message is communicated to stakeholders.

POSITIVE

Relying on the Washburn Brand Book increases the chances that we will be successful in promoting positive associations related to the community.





COMMUNITY BRAND IDENTITY GOALS

We hope to communicate who we are as a community through this brand identity with the following goals:

Welcome talented residents and stakeholders interested in becoming a part of the Washburn community.

Differentiate Washburn's unique contribution to the region and appeal to visitors.

Encourage potential stakeholders to invest in Washburn and grow public and private community assets.

Leverage existing municipal and private investments in the community.

Attract and retain business and retail development that will enhance the resident and visitor experience.



WHAT IS A COMMUNITY BRAND?

A community brand expresses the enduring essence of a community, including its reputation, values, resident feelings, and community-wide expectations. A community brand helps us succinctly communicate the underlying promise of a community. In other words, a community brand is the expression of what makes a community special.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY BRAND PILLAR?

Community brand pillars are words or short phrases that succinctly express the brand identity. Community brand pillars are often the reasons residents and stakeholders have chosen to become, or remain, a part of the community. The community brand pillars in this book were carefully identified after reviewing results of a survey on community identity and discussions with various Washburn leaders and stakeholders. When possible, examples and statistics are provided as “proof points” to support the community brand pillars.





Washburn Community Brand Pillars

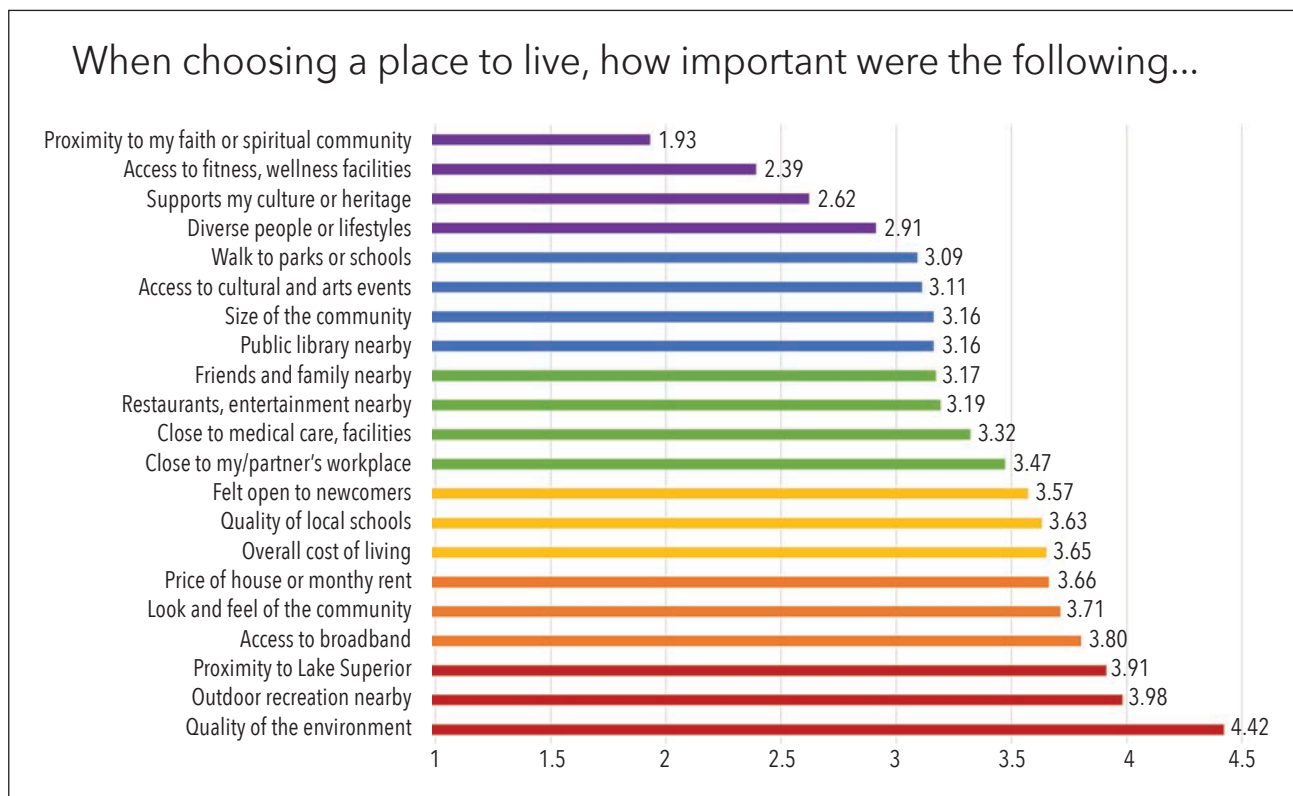
1. Outdoors Oriented
2. Interconnected
3. Active Year-Round



BRAND PILLAR 1: OUTDOORS ORIENTED

In Washburn, the geography of the Chequamegon Bay is the heart and center of the community. The change in seasons provides a rhythm to life for those in the community, with each season shaping leisure activities, work schedules, and economic opportunities.

Among residents, there is a strong sense that the community and the geography are connected and integrated into their daily lives.



74% of community residents responded that outdoor recreation nearby was “very important” or “extremely important” when deciding where to live.

70% responded that proximity to Lake Superior was “very important” or “extremely important” when deciding where to live.

91% responded that the quality of the environment (e.g. air, water, natural resources) was “very important” or “extremely important” when deciding where to live.





BRAND PILLAR 2: INTERCONNECTED COMMUNITY

Washburn community members share a strong sense of connection that is grounded in a love of place.

Evidence of strong resident connections can be seen through the higher rates of participation/contribution to community efforts, the degree to which community members believe their neighbors would help them, if needed, and the actual rates at which residents help one another.



In a survey of community residents, 90% of respondents agreed that “If something unfortunate happened to a community member, such as a serious illness, members of this community would get together to help them.”

77% of those surveyed reported that community members watch out for one another.

54% of community members report that they volunteer regularly for a local event or cause.

75% of community members report that they regularly contribute money or goods to a local cause.





BRAND PILLAR 3: ACTIVE YEAR-ROUND

The City of Washburn is home to people and businesses seeking a vibrant, full-service, and year-round small-town located among popular, seasonal travel destinations on the Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior.

Washburn is home to a variety of social events and community activities that embrace and celebrate each season throughout the year.

The Washburn Community School District is highly regarded among regional school districts, which may be one reason that 89% of community members agreed that Washburn is a good place for families.





WASHBURN WELCOMES VISITORS

The residents of Washburn welcome visitors to their community throughout the year. The City of Washburn is situated in Bayfield County, which recorded \$54 million in direct visitor spending in 2019, and supported 644 jobs across the county. Bayfield County ranks in the top 10 when comparing visitor spending per county resident, with visitors spending \$3,587 for every Bayfield County resident, as compared to the statewide average of \$2,357 in visitor spending across the state per Wisconsin resident.

Washburn's location among heavily traveled, scenic transportation routes along the Lake Superior shoreline provides a significant opportunity for businesses that seek to serve both residents and visitors.





COMMUNITY IDENTITY SURVEY

We conducted a survey of Washburn residents and asked, *If you could tell the world about Washburn, what would you like it to know?* Over 240 people shared their thoughts. This is a sample of what they told us...

- If you're into the outside, this IS the place to be.
- The Bay is beyond comforting with the water washing up on the shore on a quiet evening.
- Full of creative, interesting people in the middle of a beautiful environment.
- Great community support.
- An affordable community in which someone can live a safe and comfortable lifestyle while still having great access to parks and trails.
- Great arts community. Super school district with great, caring staff.
- Exactly the right size.
- Friendly "home town" feel. Surrounded by the beauty of nature. Recreational opportunities abound.
- Natural Beauty. Lake Superior. Lake Superior. Lake Superior.
- One of the most vibrant places for such a small population.
- Great place to raise children.
- Fresh air, good water, friendly people, good school, and beautiful surroundings.
- It's warm and welcoming.
- Supportive and healthy minded individuals paying particular attention to its youth, aging, and its impact on its surroundings.
- Fishing and friendliness.
- Friendly, easy to get around in, and easy to get to know the community, a safe place to live and raise a family.
- Many opportunities for seeing arts, crafts, music, and performances.
- Kindness lives here.
- Friendliest and most welcoming marina in the area. Great fishing year around.
- This community is a model for how to attract young families to a small rural town.

- Filled with residents who appreciate a simple life that co-exists with its surrounding environment.
- Undeveloped lakeshore for all to enjoy.
- Hardy year 'round residents that have carved their niche.
- Hidden gem. Don't tell!





A scenic view of a park in Washburn, Wisconsin. The image shows a paved walkway leading through a lush green park. Large, mature trees with dense foliage frame the scene. In the background, a fountain sprays water into the air. To the right, a brick building with a brown roof is partially visible. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

WASHBURN WISCONSIN

For additional information please contact
City of Washburn
Washburn WI 54891
715-373-6160