

Suefia Tabei

If I Were Mayor

What do the people of Cedar Falls need to make our town a better place? If I were the mayor of Cedar Falls, I would encourage restoring our infrastructure, strengthening our economy and making house prices more affordable.

Firstly, I would encourage investing in resilient infrastructure. Cedar Falls is a town that is prone to flooding. It's commonly known that Iowa is an agricultural state, with increased flooding and agricultural runoff also increase. This can create dead zones. Dead zones are areas in the water where there is absolutely no oxygen, so every living organism in its area dies. This also adds toxic chemicals to our everyday drinking water, which can make people ill. After 2008, CFU helped raise existing levees and create new ones to avoid major floods like that one again, but since that was a little less than 20 years ago, they need to be updated again. We can also encourage people to plant native vegetation, which can help absorb water and soak up rainfall, lowering the chance of a flood. We could create buffer zones along different waterways to naturally slow down the flow of floodwaters. We can also keep citizens reminded about safety plans in case there is a major flood again.

Secondly, I'd like to strengthen our local economic development. If we streamline development processes, we can make the building and development process faster, easier, and more cost-efficient. If we provide more business incentives, it can encourage new businesses to expand in Cedar Falls. We can raise Cedar Falls' profile through small businesses as well by encouraging our residents to shop locally. By encouraging local businesses, we can bring money back into Cedar Falls. Money is given back to the people who help pay our taxes and send their kids to our schools. When people shop at places like Target or Walmart, the money they earn isn't given to Cedar Falls but goes back to their corporations. Also, if we collaborate with organizations like Grow Cedar Valley, we can explore local needs and bring them into discussion, opening new opportunities for Cedar Falls. I would love to visit UNI's entrepreneurial and startup center again and visit professors like Bill Harwood and Kamyar Enshayan, who work in business and politics. They can help discover business strategies for improving our local economy.

Finally, if we use funds from the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) and HOME, we will rehabilitate housing and repair some of our programs and services for low to moderate-income households. We can also pursue grants from the state and federal government, which can help finance affordable housing projects. An average house in Wild Horse Ridge is roughly \$400,000-\$700,000. The average citizen of Cedar Falls makes around \$57,879. This might not be affordable for some citizens. People wouldn't be able to pay their mortgage and would lose their homes. If we continue to use and update the Cedar Falls Consolidated Plan and work with organizations like the Waterloo Planning and Zoning Department, we can make the city's goal for affordable housing and public transit possible.

In conclusion, if I were mayor, I would make it my goal for Cedar Falls to become a safe and affordable environment for everyone to live in and where citizens feel comfortable in their homes. I want everyone to feel loved and happy when living here.