



## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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**Public Notice of the City of Sun Prairie**, pursuant to Section 19.84, Wisconsin Statutes, is hereby given to the public and to the news media, that the following meeting will be held:

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2019**

TIME: **6:00 PM**

LOCATION: **COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
300 EAST MAIN STREET  
SUN PRAIRIE, WI 53590**

To consider the following:

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - A. May 22, 2019
3. **OLD BUSINESS**
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. REVIEW AND DISCUSS CHAPTERS 1 & 2
  - B. DISCUSS CULTURAL RESOURCES REWRITE
  - C. DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVE EDITS
    - MADE TO HEARING DRAFT
    - TO BE IDENTIFIED IN STAFF REPORT
  - D. CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION OF DRAFT PLAN TO PLAN COMMISSION AND DISCUSS PRESENTATION
5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Posted: June 20, 2019

Posted: Sun Prairie City Hall  
300 East Main Street

Sun Prairie Public Library  
1350 Linnerud Drive

Sun Prairie Utilities  
125 West Main Street

*Paul T. Esser - Chairperson  
Jorge Hidalgo  
Drew Kuehl  
John Muller  
Janet Rosseter  
Bryant Stempski  
Eder Valle*

*Kalvin Barrett  
Don Hooser  
Emily Lindsey  
Terrell Outlay  
Erin Ruth  
Theresa Stevens*

*Peter Dettmer  
Curt Klinkner  
Stephanie Manthey  
Dan Presser  
John Schulze  
Angela Thomas*

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*NOTE: It is possible that members of and a possible quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.*

J/planning/comprehensiveplansteeringcommittee/agendas/2019/PAG06262019.doc



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
SUN PRAIRIE, WISCONSIN 53590**

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 22, 2019

**TIME:** 6:00PM

**LOCATION:** COMMUNITY ROOM  
300 E. MAIN STREET  
SUN PRAIRIE WI 53590

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Committee Chairperson Mayor Paul Esser called the meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to order at 6:03 pm. Attendance sheet attached.

Staff present: Scott Kugler, Tim Semmann, Philip Gritzmacher, Jr.

Others Present: Jason Valerius (MSA), Steve Tremlett (MSA), Joe Chase

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- A. Motion to adjourn the May 8, 2019 meeting minutes by Hidalgo (1<sup>st</sup>), Manthey (2<sup>nd</sup>) / approval by voice vote.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- A. Joe Chase said that after his review of Chapter 3, Cultural Resources, he believes that the text is not entirely accurate or current. Further, he said that tourism was not mentioned in the plan and thought it should be added. He advised that he would bring recommendations forward to the committee with changes to the chapter.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. None

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. REVIEW OF PROJECT SCHEDULE: Valerius reviewed the project schedule, advising that another meeting may be needed on June 26, depending on how much information was covered in this meeting.
- B. DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK: Valerius provided an overview of the feedback from the public meetings. Generally, the feedback was supportive of the direction of the plan, particularly housing and transportation policies, including the sidewalk policy.

He said that a major developer in the community – FC Lands – submitted formal comments on the plan. The primary comments from the developer were that they were concerned about height restrictions, requirements for ground floor units to have entrances on streets, general

encouragement of affordable housing, language surrounding the design of drive thrus, and language encouraging screening/hiding of parking.

A property owner near the corner of Bird Street and Egge Road provided feedback that they wanted an increase in residential density near the area. Valerius said that the new plan already made this request possible.

Council President Connors provided feedback about the housing, transportation, and land use elements:

- Housing: Connors believes that the city should encourage development of neighborhoods where the balance is tilted towards single-family development. The committee disagreed. He also recommended removing a recommendation to create a design review board. The committee agreed.
- Transportation: Connors questioned whether a policy of having all streets be “complete streets” made sense for the city. Kuehl said that the definition should be expanded upon. Semmann recommended modifying the recommendation to read “Continually progress towards a network of complete streets.” The committee agreed. Connors believed that the sidewalk policy was too strict and should be loosened. The committee disagreed. Connors questioned whether it was wise to have a recommendation to “enable winter biking” if it meant more plowing. Gritzmacher recommended modifying the recommendation to “enable winter biking on commuter transportation corridors as identified in the Active Transportation Plan.” The committee agreed. Connors said that VV should connect to the neighborhood south
- Land Use: Connors sought clarification on a recommendation that stated that the city would “discourage low-density development in the urban area.” Valerius explained that it was meant to focus on rural development in the city’s urban service area and recommended modifying the recommendation to read, “Strongly discourage rural development in the city’s urban reserve areas that would impede future city growth.” The committee agreed. Connors asked if there should be a policy modification regarding the residential homes on Main Street. Valerius recommended adding language stating, “Main Street should be evaluated as part of a detailed urban design planning process to determine if the development format should be maintained or allowed to change.” The committee agreed. Connors said that he believed that the parcels north of the Main Street Shopping Center should be modified to mixed use. The committee agreed.

#### C. REVIEW OF CHAPTER 10, V.2 – IMPLEMENTATION:

- Update Frequency: Valerius asked the committee for a recommendation on how frequently the plan and official maps should be updated. Further, he asked how frequently the zoning map should be updated and whether or not developers should be allowed to ask for changes. He said that MSA recommended modifying the currently policy to limit modifications of the zoning map to once per year. Esser said that he believed it would stifle development. Kuehl said that updates should occur quarterly. Gritzmacher recommended adding language allowing the planning director to use discretion for flexibility. The committee agreed.
- Priority Actions: Valerius asked if the priority implementation actions seemed correct. Kugler said that the boundary agreement should not be in the top 14 actions and that sustainability, the library, the relocation of the Public Works/Sun Prairie Utilities buildings, and branding. A member of the committee questioned whether the multicultural center feasibility study should be on the priority list. The committee believed it should. Another committee member recommended adding a Public Market feasibility study to the list. The committee agreed.

- D. REVIEW OF CHAPTERS 1 & 2: Moved to next meeting.
- E. ENTIRE PLAN REVIEW AND DISCUSSION: Moved to next meeting.
- F. CONSIDER COMMENDATION OF DRAFT PLAN TO PLAN COMMISSION: Moved to next meeting.

**6. DISCUSS NEXT MEETING DATE**

- A. The next meeting date will be June 26, 2019 at 6:00 pm.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Motion to adjourn the May 22, 2019 meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee at 8:05 pm by Kuehl (1<sup>st</sup>), Hidalgo (2<sup>nd</sup>) / approval by voice vote.

*Recorder: Philip L. Gritzmacher, Jr.*

*Mayor Esser - Chairperson  
Jorge Hidalgo  
Eder Valle  
John Muller  
Janet Rosseter*

*Peter Dettmer  
Don Hooser  
Curt Klinkner  
John Schulze*

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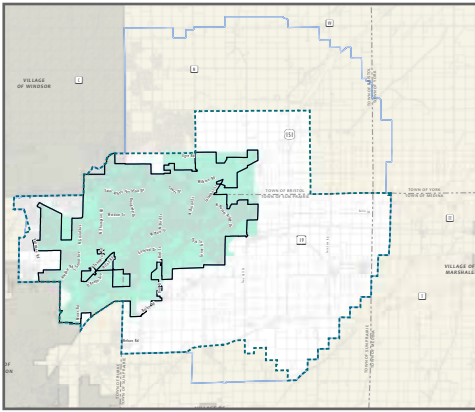
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ATTENDANCE**

Date: 5-22-2019

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Mayor Paul T. Esser - <b>Chairperson</b>	X	
Kalvin Barrett		X
Peter Dettmer	X	
Jorge Hidalgo	X	
Don Hooser	X	
Curt Klinkner	X	
Drew Kuehl	X	
Emily Lindsey		X
Stephanie Manthey	X	
John Muller		X
Terrell Outlay		X
Dan Presser	X	
Janet Rosseter		X
Erin Ruth		X
John Schulze		X
Bryant Stempski	X	
Theresa Stevens		X
Angela Thomas		X
Eder Valle	X	

Others: Jason Valerius, Joe Chase, Steve Tremlett

Staff: Gritzmacher, Semmann, Kugler



*P.1-4 - Planning Area*

CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE  
Comprehensive Plan 2019-2039

# Volume 1: Community Indicators Report

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 1-2 INTRODUCTION

- Purpose and Intent
- Statutory Requirements
- Planning Jurisdiction
- Regional Context
- Local Government Profile
- Key Community Indicators
- Other Planning Documents

# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION



Cannery Square

*Welcome to the City of Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan! This plan is intended to guide decisions and actions affecting the growth and development of the City of Sun Prairie over the next two decades and beyond, consistent with the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001.*

*This chapter provides the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan, describing the purpose of the plan, requirements of state law, and definition of the planning area. The chapter also provides demographic history and projections and a summary of previously completed plans and studies.*

*This is Volume 1 of the plan, providing background data and analysis to inform the creation of the policy content of the plan found in Volume 2.*

## **Purpose & Intent**

The Comprehensive Plan is a resource for managing the growth of the City of Sun Prairie. It is designed to be a working document used by City officials to direct community development decisions, to assist with capital and operational budgeting, and as a tool to focus and stimulate private housing, business and industrial investment in the community.

A Comprehensive Plan functions as an umbrella document that considers most issues affected by City government, and it is to be used in coordination with other documents and ordinances. The plan refers to many other plans and studies that address specific topics in greater detail.

The plan is implemented through the use of ordinances, especially the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance. This plan is intended to help the Plan Commission and City Council apply those

ordinances; in fact, State statutes require that certain decisions must be consistent with this Plan. In some cases it may be necessary to amend those ordinances to ensure consistency with this Plan.

## **The Plan as a Living Guide**

The plan represents the City's best effort to address current issues and anticipate future needs, but it can and should be amended as conditions warrant reconsideration of policies in the plan. Volume 2: Chapter 10 describes how the plan will be amended to manage and maintain its relevance as policy and development guide.

## Statutory Requirements

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning law [§66.1001 Wis. Stats.] was adopted in October of 1999. The law requires that if a local government unit enacts or amends any of the following ordinances, the ordinance must be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan:

- » Official maps
- » Local subdivision regulations
- » General zoning ordinances
- » Shoreland/wetland zoning ordinance

Wis. Stat. 66.1001 does not mandate specific land use policies communities must adopt, rather it requires that certain topics must be addressed, and the procedures for plan creation, adoption, and amendments.

## Comprehensive Planning Elements & Organization

Wis. Stat. 66.1001 Law outlines nine elements that must be included in a community's comprehensive plan:

- » Issues and Opportunities
- » Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources
- » Utilities & Community Facilities
- » Intergovernmental Cooperation
- » Economic Development
- » Housing
- » Transportation
- » Land Use
- » Implementation

Each of these elements is included in this plan (Chapters 2-10), in each of two volumes.

Volume 1 contains the background data and information necessary to understand the current planning context within the community at the time of preparation of the plan, including a summary of public input.

Volume 2 is the "policy" document - it describes the goals, policies and actions intended to guide the orderly growth of the City and its environs over the next 20 years.

## Planning Jurisdiction

The study area for this plan includes all lands in which the City has both a short-term and long-term interest in planning and development activity. The planning area includes all lands within the current municipal limits and those unincorporated lands within which the City has some form of authority over development.

Figure 1-1 illustrates the City of Sun Prairie and its extraterritorial jurisdiction area (Sun Prairie ETJ) in relation to surrounding communities. The City's growth and authority are constrained to the north, west and south by other municipalities and by agreements with these neighbors. This area is not a planned growth area - it is the area within which Sun Prairie has or could have some influence in terms of future development, and as such the City has a strong interest in studying this area closely as part of this planning process.

The City is approximately 8,012 acres in size, and the planning jurisdiction is approximately 24,688 acres.

## WHY PLAN?

The purpose of this plan is to establish a shared vision for Sun Prairie to guide future actions and decisions. This guidance improves the City's ability to achieve desired ends and act with consistency over time.

## PLAN MAINTENANCE

The plan can and should be amended from time to time to adjust to changing conditions, and it should be fully updated with new data at least every 10 years.

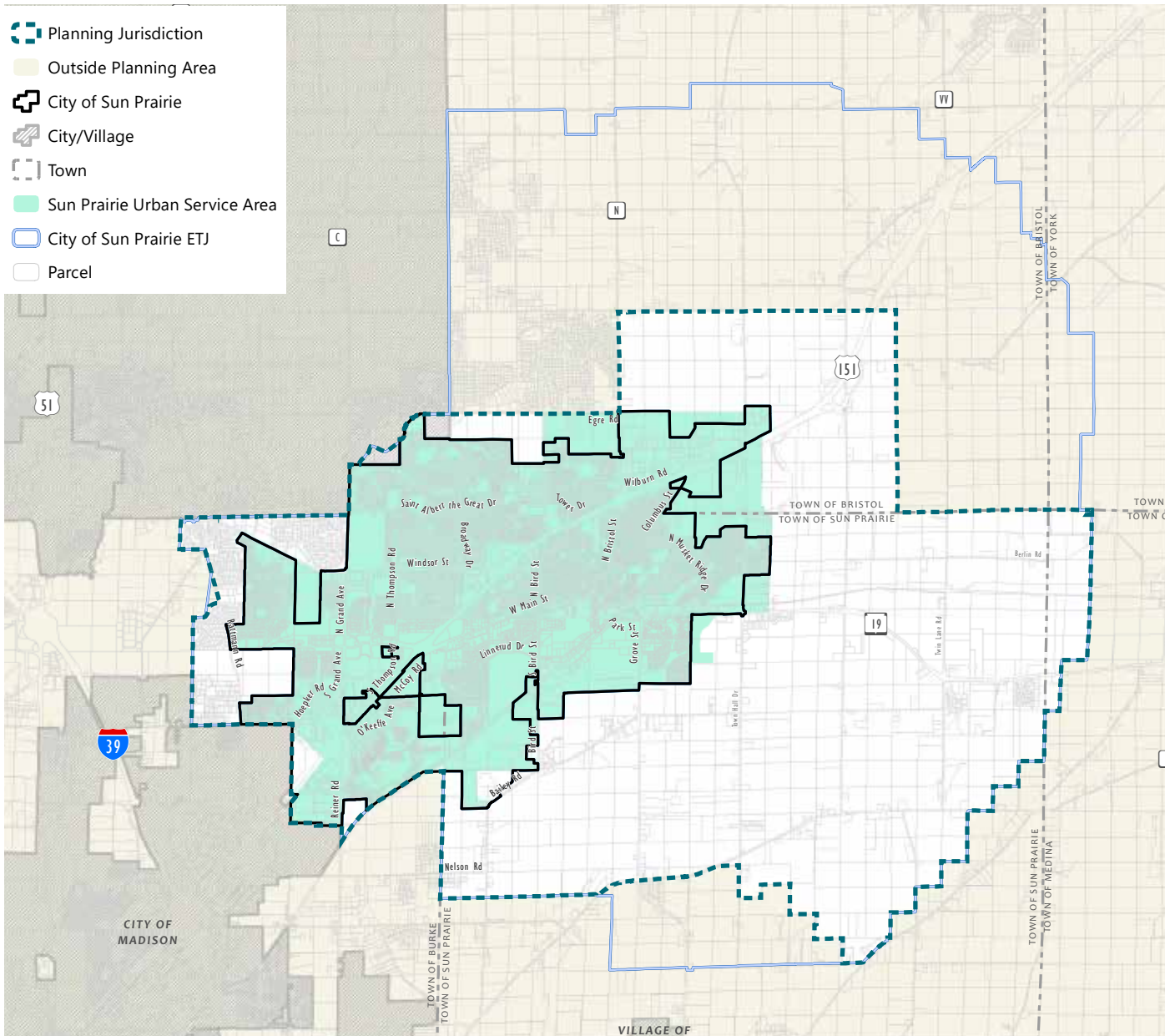
## ORGANIZATION

This plan is organized into a data document (Volume 1) and a policy document (Volume 2). Each volume has chapters that generally align with the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law.

## WHAT IS THE PLANNING JURISDICTION?

The Planning Jurisdiction is the geographic area in which the City has the greatest ability to affect land use decisions over the next 20 years. This area is defined either by the statutory limits of the City's extraterritorial plat review authority (3 miles from the City limits) or by agreements with neighboring jurisdictions that define certain growth boundaries.

Figure 1-1: Sun Prairie Planning Area



## Regional Context

Sun Prairie is a community of about 34,000 located immediately northeast of the City of Madison, Wisconsin. The City is well-situated regionally, with excellent access to major transportation routes and facilities. It is located 75 miles west of Milwaukee, and 155 miles northwest of Chicago. Known for local traditions such as Cornfest and Groundhog Day events, and as the birthplace of artist Georgia O'Keefe, Sun Prairie is part of a growing region with a strong economy. Anchored by State government and the University of Wisconsin and major employers such as Epic Systems and American Family Insurance, the Madison-area economy attracts people.

Sun Prairie is well-served by regional transportation facilities with United States Highway (USH) 151 and State Highway (STH) 19 passing through the City, and Interstates (I) 39, 90, and 94 located two miles west and five miles south of the City. The City is also well-served by the Dane County Regional Airport, located about five miles west within the City of Madison. This has had many positive impacts on Sun Prairie, which is home to several corporate headquarters and has enjoyed success in developing a high quality business park with a diverse mix of employers.

Sun Prairie has become known in the region for its high quality of life, its excellent parks and recreation programs, its exceptional public school system, and a practical approach to the development and redevelopment of the community. These factors have helped to make the City a very attractive location for families moving into the Madison region.



*Regional Location*

## Local Government Profile

The former Village of Sun Prairie incorporated as a city in 1958 and operates under a mayor-council form of government, with a full-time City Administrator. The Common Council consists of eight alderpersons elected by district, with two representatives from each of four voting districts serving staggered two-year terms. The Mayor is elected at-large and also serves a two-year term.

The Council operates via a committee system that includes four primary Council Committees: the Committee of the Whole, the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Public Works Committee. In addition, there are several appointed City boards and commissions that deal with specific issues in the community. Among these are the Plan Commission, the Parks and Recreation Com-

mission, the Transit Commission, the Police and Fire Commission, and the Tourism Commission, all of which deal with issues that are very relevant to this Comprehensive Plan. The current organizational chart for the City government is shown in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2: Sun Prairie Organizational Chart

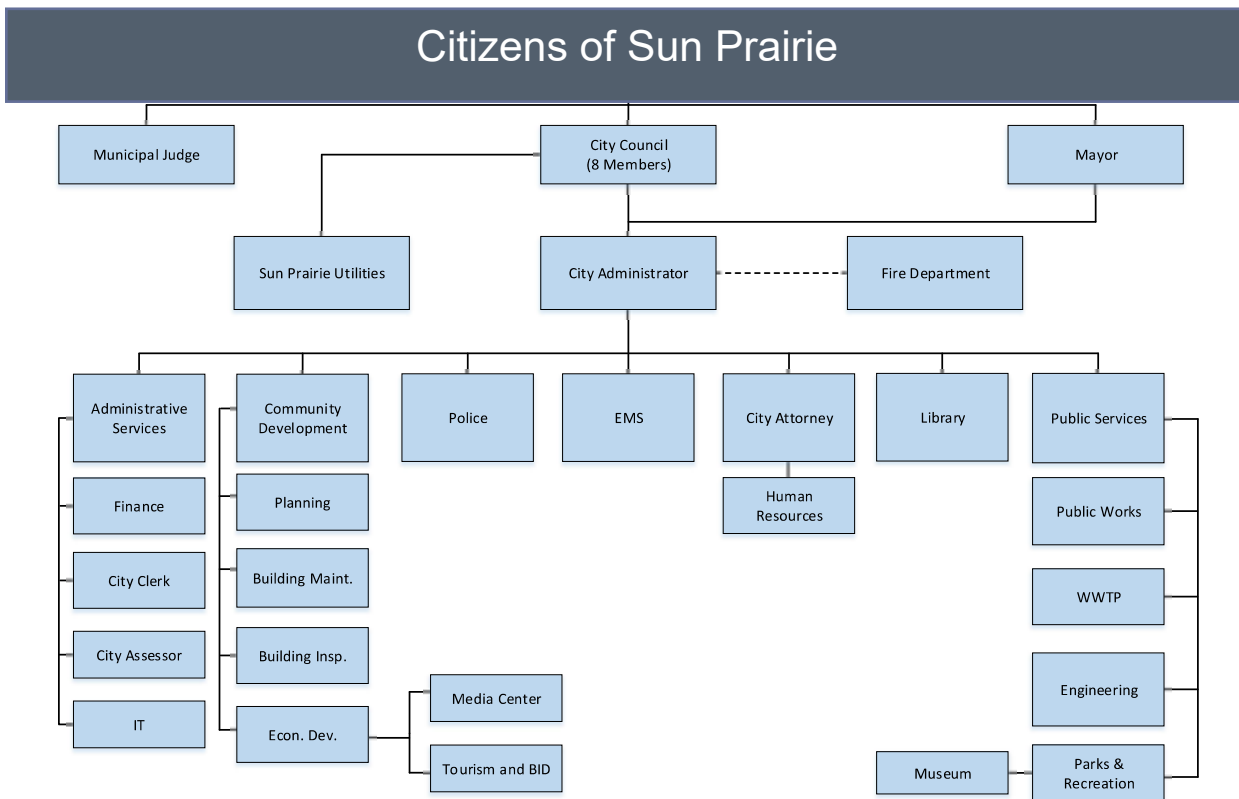
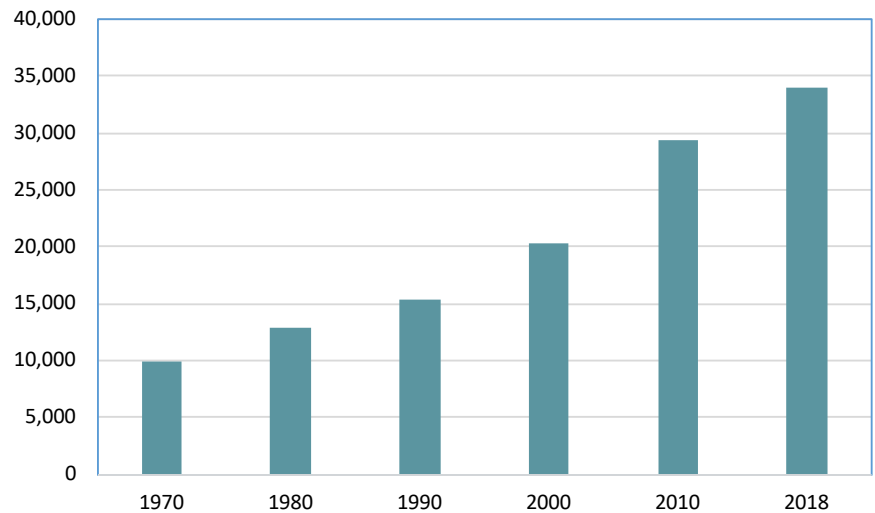


Figure 1-3: Population Trends - Sun Prairie



Source: 1970 - 2010 Census, WI DOA Estimates

## Key Community Indicators

### Population Trends

The City of Sun Prairie has experienced strong population growth since its transition from a village to a city in 1958, undergoing a transformation from a relatively small community of less than 4,000 people to a substantial suburban edge city with an estimated 33,966 people in 2018 (based upon Wisconsin Department of Administration (WI DOA) estimates). The highest rate of population growth occurred between 1960 and 1970 when the population grew from 4,008 to 9,935 persons - an increase of 147.9%. The City's population grew by 30.2% during the 1970's, 18.7% during the 1980's, 32.7% during the 1990's and by 44.2%

from 2000 through 2010. The slowest growth over the past 60 years occurred in the late 1970's and early 1980's, when sanitary sewer treatment plant issues and national economic conditions constrained new housing development.

Beginning in the late 1990's, the City experienced a surge in new residential building activity and population growth. Sun Prairie has been one of the fastest growing communities in the state since the 2000, according to the US Cen-

sus. This rate has slowed since the 2010 Census, reflecting the lingering regional effects of the Great Recession, but the City is still one of the fastest-growing communities in Wisconsin. According to DOA estimates, the City of Sun Prairie ranked second in the state in persons added from 2010 to 2018 (4,602) and third in the state in terms of percentage growth (15.7%) over this period, when compared to all communities with populations over 10,000 persons. Dane County has been the fastest-growing county in the state, and

### A NOTE ABOUT CENSUS DATA

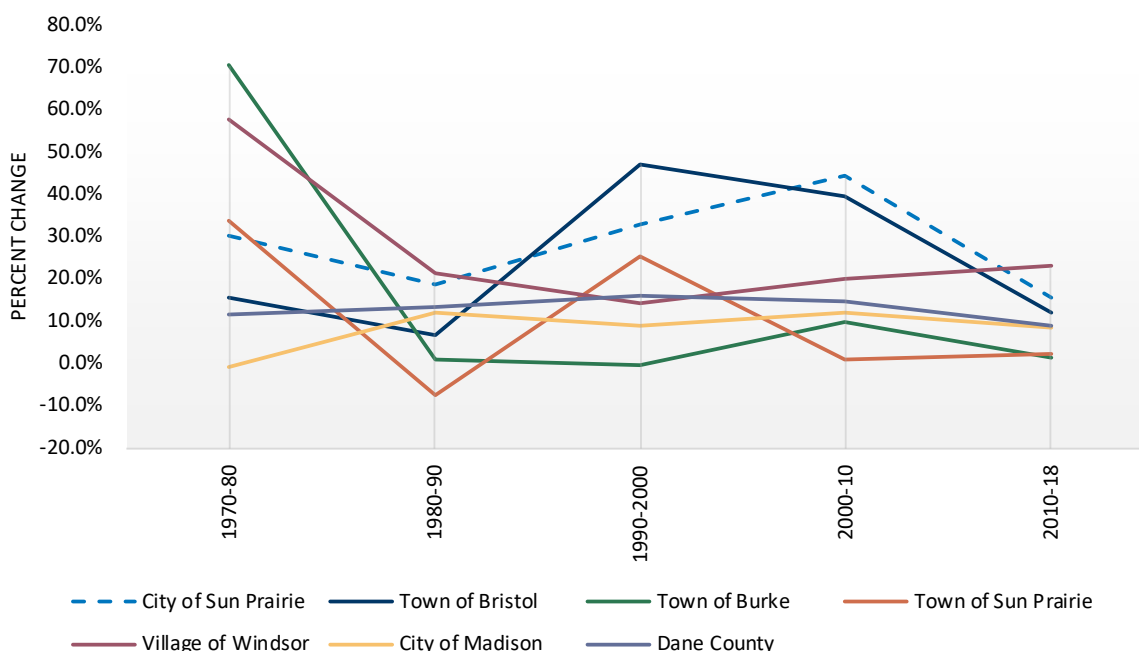
One of the important sources of data in this plan is the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau collects basic data every 10 years as part of the federal population census, but it also collects much more information every year through the American Community Survey (ACS). That data is collected using a relatively small sample of the local population, which is then reported not as a snapshot in time, but as a reflection of conditions over a five-year sampling period. The data are reported as “estimates” and every estimate has a certain amount of error calculated based on the number of responses in the sample. Wherever ACS data is used in this plan, it is presented as a range, indicating that the actual amount is somewhere in that range. For example, the number of housing units in Sun Prairie was estimated by the ACS for the period 2013-2017 as 13,500 plus or minus 386. This plan shows that the ACS estimate is 13,114 - 13,886 housing units.

Table 1-1: Population Trends - Sun Prairie and Surrounding Communities

	City of Sun Prairie	Town of Bristol	Town of Burke	Town of Sun Prairie	Village of Windsor	City of Madison	Dane County
1970	9,935	1,491	1,742	1,490	2,415	171,809	290,272
1980	12,931	1,723	2,967	1,990	3,812	170,616	323,545
1990	15,352	1,835	3,000	1,839	4,620	190,766	367,085
2000	20,369	2,698	2,990	2,308	5,286	208,054	426,526
2010	29,364	3,765	3,284	2,326	6,345	233,209	488,073
2018	33,966	4,221	3,327	2,381	7,795	252,546	530,519

Source: 1970 - 2010 Census, WI DOA Estimates

Figure 1-4: Percent Population Change by Decade - Sun Prairie and Surrounding Communities



Source: 1970 - 2010 Census, WI DOA Estimates

Sun Prairie has seen a substantial share of this growth over the past decade.

### Population Forecasts

It is difficult to accurately project population growth for communities with fewer than 50,000 residents, and accuracy drops the further out you try to project. Unforeseen changes in the local or regional economy, outside influences such as land use and development decisions made by adjacent communities, or significant demographic trends can dramatically alter population growth in small areas. However, planning for the future requires an attempt to anticipate what that future may bring.

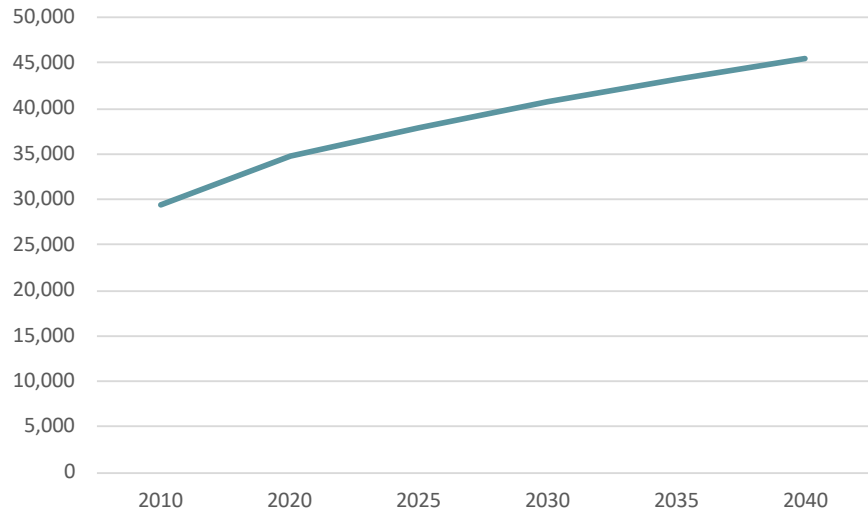
The Wisconsin DOA prepares population projections for all municipalities in the state. The DOA projection method (described in detail on their website) starts with an overall population projection for the state, which is then allocated to the 72 counties. County projections are then allocated to each municipality, with some consideration of local factors and trends.

According to the DOA's 2013 projections (most recent available), the City of Sun Prairie will reach a population of 45,580 in 2040, or a 55% increase from the 2010 US Census population of 29,364. This equates to a population increase of about 18% per decade.

### Diversity/Ethnicity

A comparison of race and ethnicity data from the 2000 Census and the 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) reveals a gradual diversification of the City's racial makeup. According to 2013-2017 ACS estimates, residents identified as roughly 82% white, 8% African-American,

Figure 1-7: Population Projections - Sun Prairie



Source: 2010 Census, WI DOA Projections

Table 1-2: Population by Race and Latino or Hispanic - Sun Prairie

Race and Latino or Hispanic	2000	Avg. 2006-2010	Avg. 2013-2017
White	85.4%	87.5 - 91.0%	80.6 - 84.2%
African-American	6.1%	2.6 - 5.3%	6.4 - 9.1%
Asian and Other	3.7%	2.1 - 3.6%	3.9 - 6.2%
Native-American	0.3%	0.0 - 0.1%	0.0 - 0.3%
Native Hawaiian	0.0%	0.0 - 0.1%	0.0 - 0.1%
Two of More Races or Other Race	3.0%	2.8 - 4.9%	3.4 - 5.8%
Latino or Hispanic	4.3%	2.7 - 5.4%	3.4 - 6.4%

Source: 2000 Census, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 ACS Estimates

Table 1-3: Sun Prairie Area School District Enrollment by Race: 2014-15 Through 2018-19

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2014-15 to 2018-19 Change
White	66.9%	66.6%	64.7%	63.2%	62.3%	-4.6%
African-American	9.8%	9.8%	9.6%	9.9%	10.1%	0.3%
Asian	7.2%	7.7%	9.1%	9.9%	9.9%	2.7%
Native-American	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	-0.1%
Native Hawaiian	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	7.1%	7.2%	7.5%	8.1%	8.3%	1.2%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Instruction WISEdash Portal

5% Asian and 5% multiple or “other” races. Roughly 5% identified as Latino or Hispanic.

Changes in the makeup of the school population, as reported in the Sun Prairie Area School District enrollment data, are another source that may provide some indication of recent changes in diversity/ethnicity within the City. As noted in Table 1-3, enrollment data indicates that since 2014 the student population is becoming more diverse, with African American, Hispanic, Asian and those identifying as two or more races comprising an increased percentage of the overall enrollment.

*Note: Additional data on demographics, housing and economics are discussed in Volume 1: Chapters 6 and 7.*

## Other Planning Documents

A number of existing City and regional plans were reviewed and pertinent information helped to shape this plan. These plans are summarized on the following pages.

### Business District

#### Revitalization Plan (2001)

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide for the redevelopment of the Downtown in order to ensure that planning redevelopment activities meet the long-term goals of the City. The revitalization study area generally borders Jones Street to the West, Dewey Street to the East, the South boundary is the railroad, and the North boundary is approximately one block north of Main Street. The revitalization study area encompasses 172 parcels. The plan includes recommendations for redevelopment,

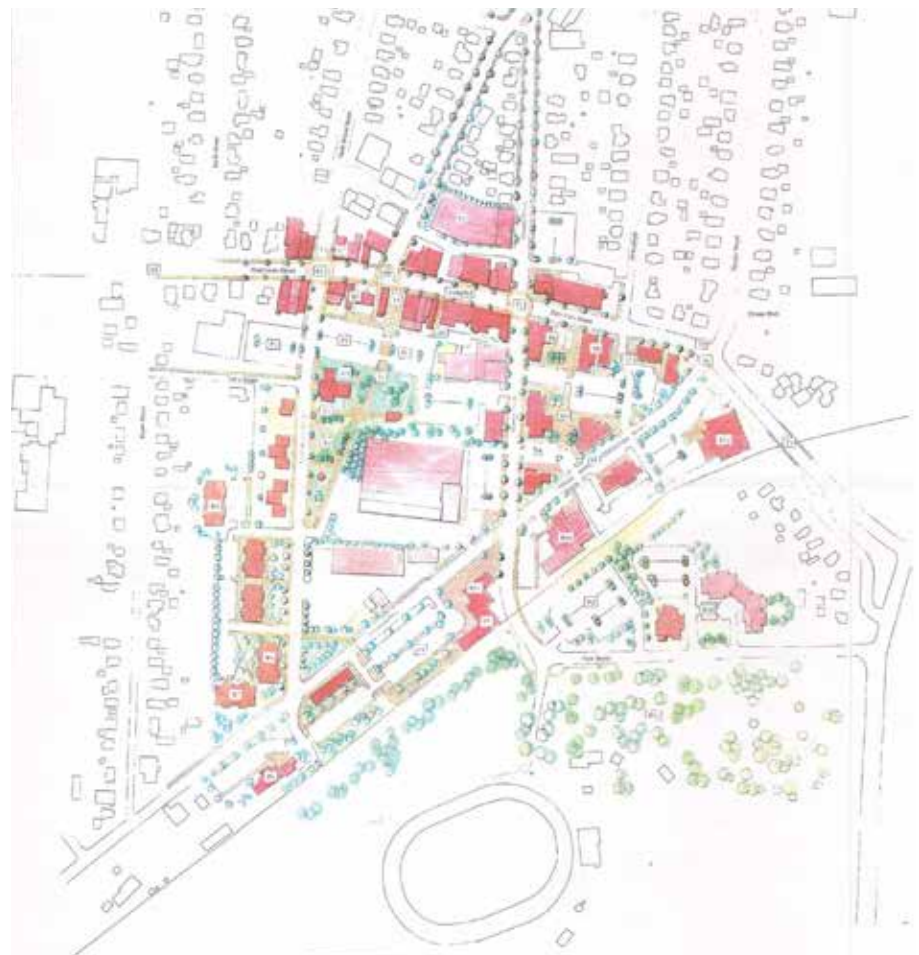
## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015 the City of Sun Prairie created an Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Diversity. The Committee was tasked with (1) providing recommendations to enhance the City’s capability to locate, recruit and hire qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds, and (2) identifying and providing a better understanding of the unique needs of different individuals and communities within Sun Prairie regarding City Services.

transportation, streetscaping/wayfinding, and parking for three sub-district areas: Main Street Historic District, Historic Four Corners District, and the Market Street District.

### Downtown Revitalization Plan, Phase 2 (2004)

This plan builds on the 2001 Business District Revitalization Plan, which included Cannery Square, and outlines the next series of redevelopment efforts and offers



*Business District Revitalization Plan (2001)*

additional recommendations for streetscape enhancements for the area just west of Cannery Square. The Phase 2 planning area is located immediately south of and including the 100 and 200 blocks of the City's Main Street business district. The area is bound by East Main Street, Bristol Street, Linnerud Drive and Market Street.

This plan builds upon the Business District Revitalization Plan and Phase 1 master plan and includes four redevelopment areas: Main Street/Lane Street District, Washington Mills/City Garage Sites, Bristol Street District and Linnerud/Rail District.

- » Recommendations for the Main Street/Lane Street District include street, alley and parking improvements, new commercial and residential development, Heroes' Park, improved rear facades and a pedestrian walkway system.
- » Recommendations for the Washington Mills/City Garage Sites include relocation of City Garage facilities to create a large parcel for redevelopment and a departure of manufacturing facilities and redevelopment in the long term.
- » Improvements to the Bristol Street District include encouraging reinvestment by business and smaller developers along the corridor and targeting small business, entrepreneurs and other investors.
- » Improvements to the Linnerud Drive/Rail District include reinvestment in the Granary building, working with businesses in the area to accommodate potential rail and parking facilities. The plan also includes



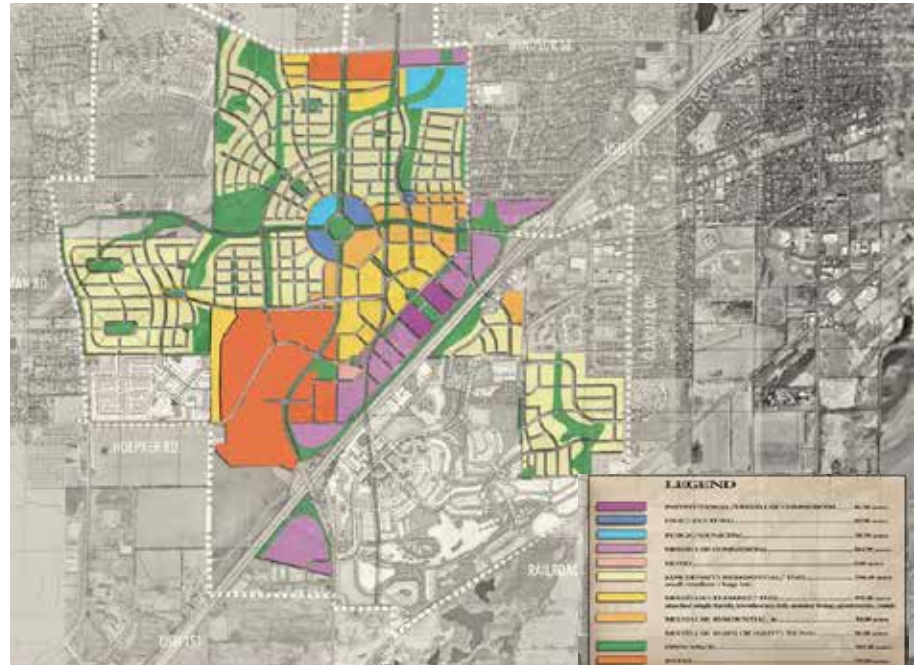
Downtown Revitalization Plan, Phase 2 (2004)

design guidelines and recommendations for branding and wayfinding.

West Side Plan (2004), Amendment (2006), Amendment (2015)

Due to rapid growth experienced by the City and the desire to avoid sprawl, the City hired a consultant team to create a master plan for

the west side. The plan has traditional suburban development with a village-like urban core at the center. Neighborhoods are connected to the Community Core via two formal boulevards (CTH C and Main Street). The Community Core District is bounded by Main Street on the north, CTH C on the west and US 151 on the south. This district includes institutional and/or commercial users. The plan includes a Town Square District, located around the intersection of Hoepker Road and CTH C, which is intended to be a gateway to the west side. This district includes a mix of uses with retail (restaurant, hotel, office, residential uses). Around the intersection of Main Street and CTH C a Green Circle District was



West Side Plan Amendment (2006)



West Side Plan Amendment (2015)



West Side Plan Amendment (2015)

included in the plan. The district was intended to combine sculptural civic, institutional and mixed use buildings around a modern roundabout. The plan also includes a Commercial Node District, which is comprised of the area south of Highway 19 and CTH intersection. The district is intended to include highly active commercial uses. The plan also includes 5 Neighborhood Districts. Each Neighborhood District includes a mix of residential unit types, mixed use commercial, civic/public uses and open space.

### W. Main Street Corridor Plan (2006)

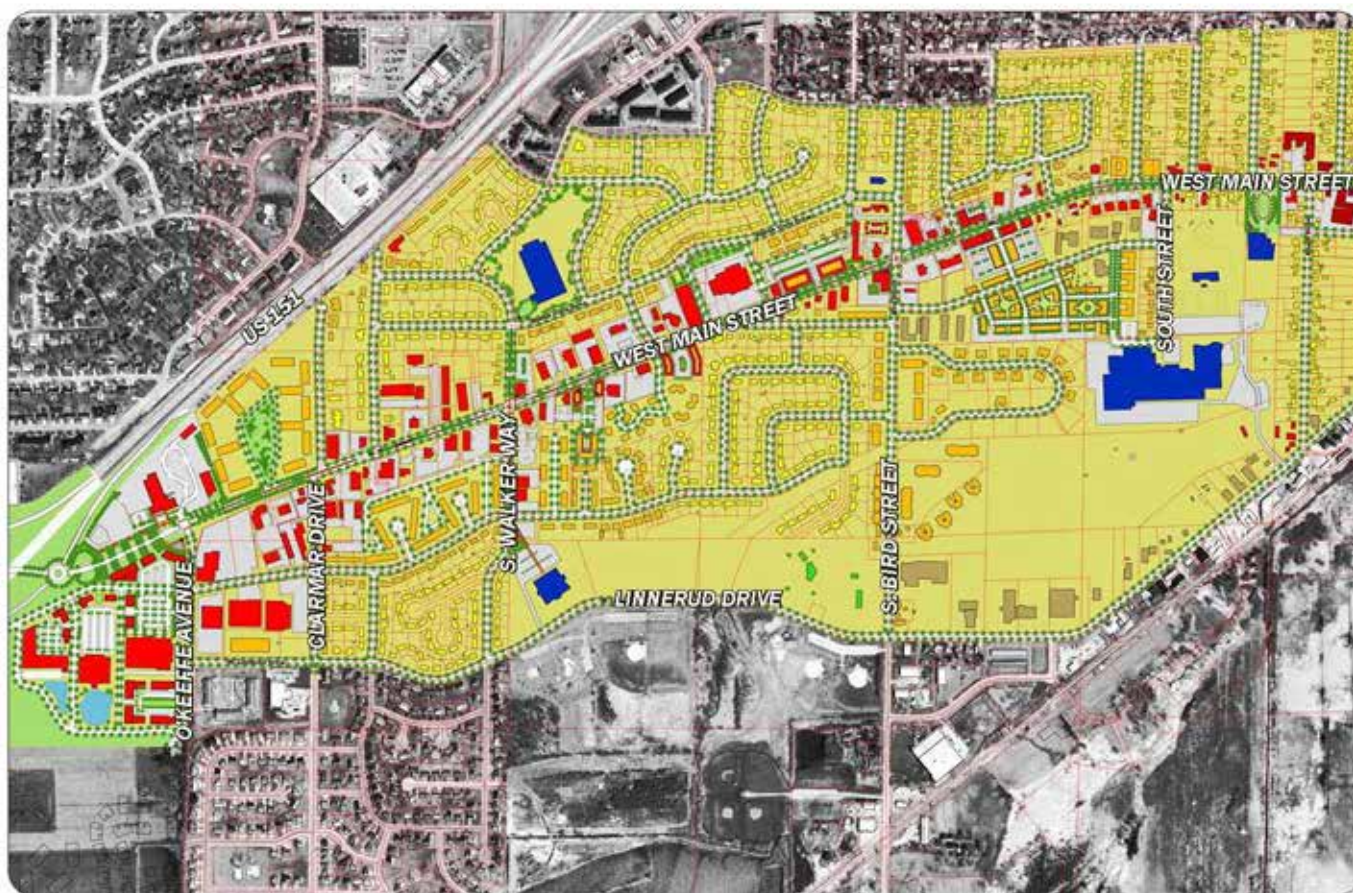
The West Main Street Corridor is a 1.75 mile stretch from the Highway 151 interchange to South

Street. This area contains almost entirely commercial uses. For planning purposes, this area was divided into three study areas: West, Central and East. This area is the connection between the expanding Westside Development and Downtown. The Corridor Plan envisions an increase in density to two- to four-story buildings, mixed uses and improved site development to accommodate automobiles and pedestrians throughout the corridor. The West Study Area is planned to be established as a gateway entrance to Sun Prairie through building placement, façade improvements and landscape development. Concepts for the Central Study Area include incremental infill projects as well

as road and streetscape improvements. The East Study Area includes incremental infill projects and road and streetscape improvements to enhance the Main Street character that already exists. The plan also includes Block Code and Design Guidelines for the Corridor. The City chose to adopt the W. Main Street Overlay (MSO) zoning standards instead of implementing the Block Code and Design Guidelines.

### Safe Routes to School Plan (2008)

The City's Safe Routes to School Plan aims to improve the health and safety of children by reviewing existing policies and conditions, performing a biking and walking



W. Main Street Corridor Plan (2006)

audit and survey, and based on the analysis of those items, providing a list of recommendations and an action plan. The community-wide issues the plan identified include the absence of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, lack of bicycle, pedestrian and driver education as well as safety issues at intersections. The plan also found the perception of walking and bicycling was not popular. The plan's recommendations included increasing the amount of educational programming, including developing Bike Rodeos and Walkable Communities Workshops, increasing enforcement in areas with known traffic safety issues and encouraging the use of non-motorized transportation. The plan also recommended complet-

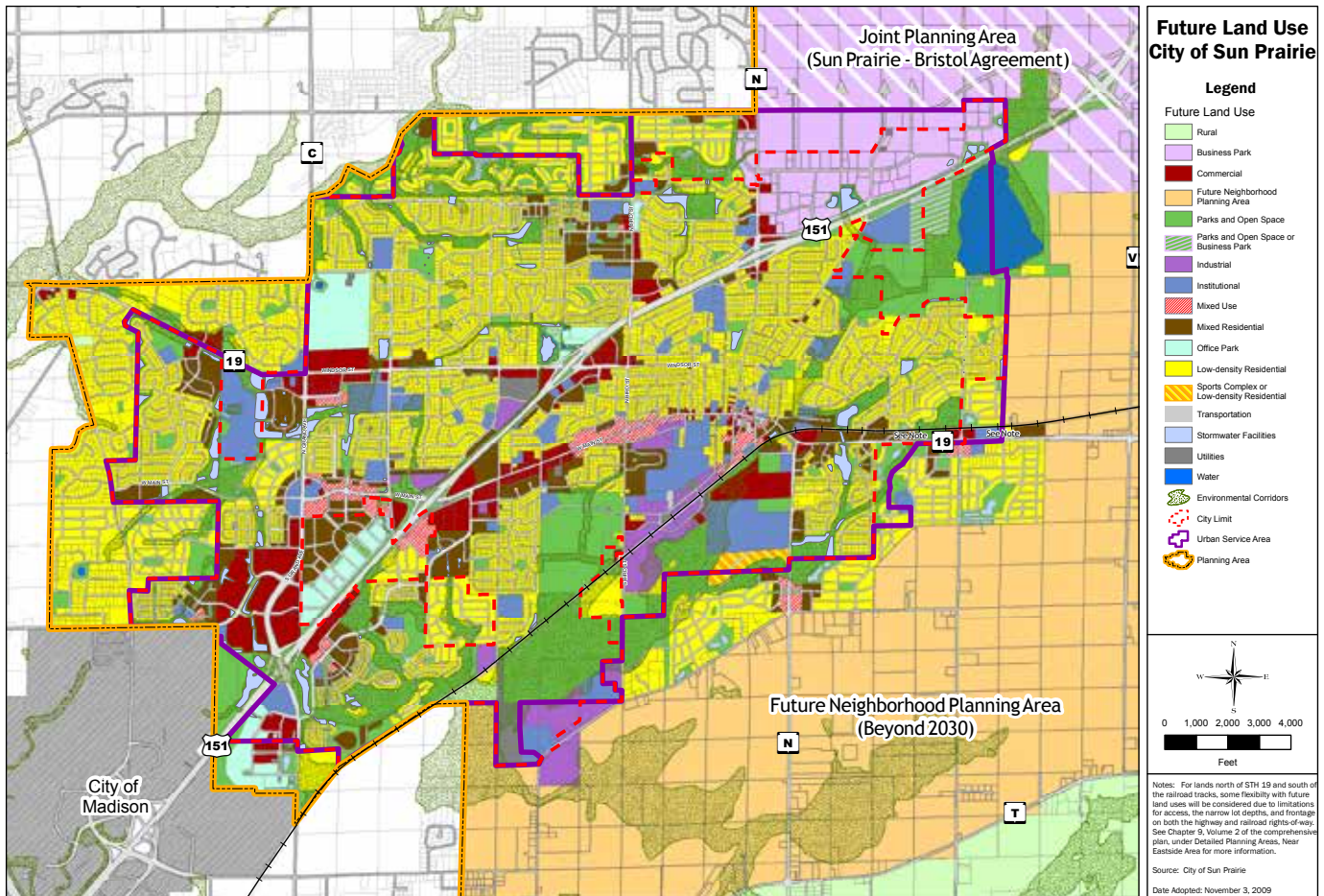
ing the sidewalk network in neighborhoods surrounding school sites to enhance the perception of safety for walking or biking to school. Developing group walks to school, as well as developing encouragement programs to get students excited about walking or biking to school were also recommended.

### Existing Comprehensive Plan (2009)

The City's existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2009. Prominent trends addressed in this plan included:

- » Sun Prairie becoming more diverse
- » An increasing number of baby boomers (impact on housing)

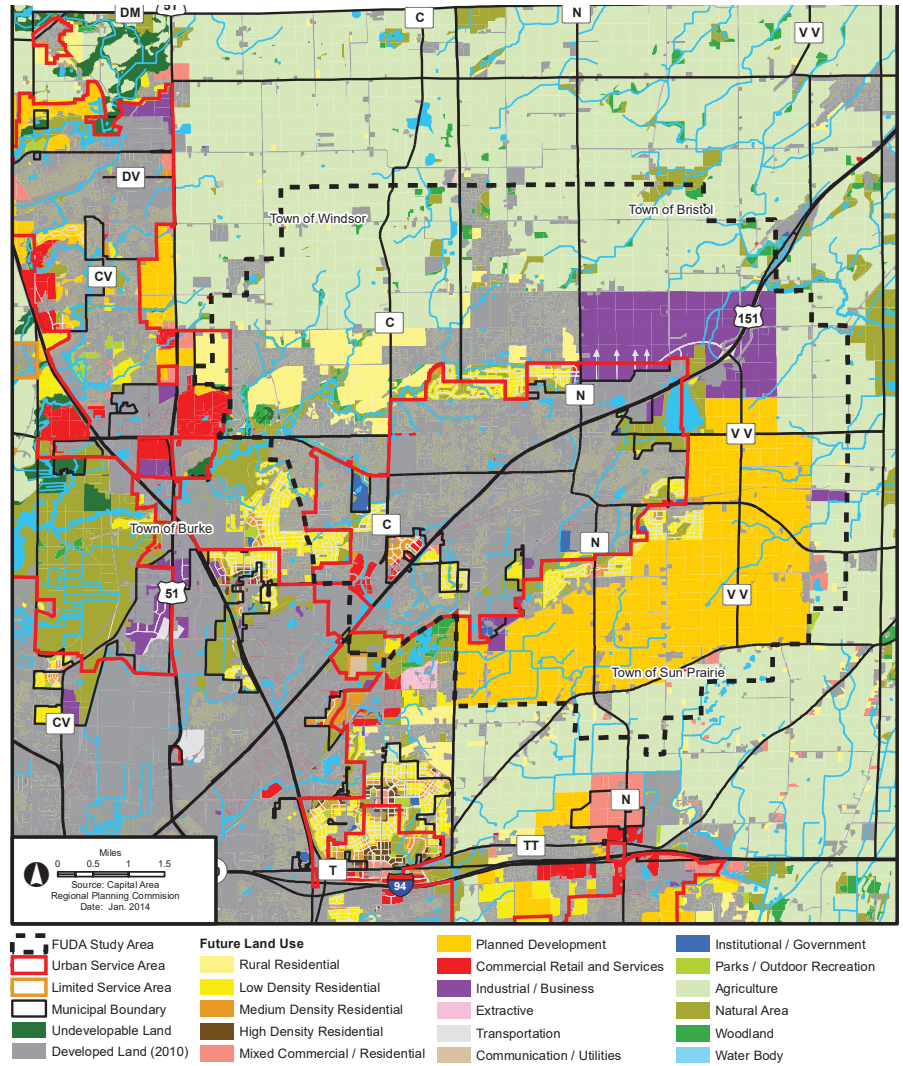
- » An increasing number of multi-family developments
- » Slowing building permit activity after the Great Recession
- » Apparent market for continued downtown redevelopment and revitalization
- » An increase in density, New Urbanist Developments
- » An increase in retail space by 200% to 250% over the next 20 years – driven by Prairie Lakes development on the west side
- » School enrollment increasing rapidly
- » EMS and Fire Department calls increasing at a faster rate than the City's population
- » Focusing on sustainability throughout plan



Existing Comprehensive Plan (2009)

## Sun Prairie Environmental Conditions Report (2014)

The Environmental Conditions Report (ECR) is part of the Future Urban Development Area (FUDA) planning process. FUDA is a long-range planning process charged to the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) and local communities that have urban services areas (USAs). The FUDA is used when communities seek to expand their USA and include a full range of services, including public sewer and water. The ECR includes analysis on four topics: community development, natural resources, agricultural resources and other resources. The report also includes a Healthy Communities Comprehensive Plan Checklist. All of the information in this report is intended to be used to evaluate where development could occur, where resources should be protected, and where both can occur together.



## Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP) (2017)

The City's Parks and Open Space Plan provides guidance for future improvements and expansions of the City's Park and Recreation system, with a focus on needs over the next five years. Sun Prairie's Park and Recreation system is one of its most valuable amenities and the planning process revealed that many people chose to live in Sun Prairie because of its park system (the City currently has over 400 acres of parkland). To implement the plan, the following policies were laid out: use the City's Official Map as an implementation tool for the POSP, assemble large parks, accept only land usable for active recreation for parkland dedications, require multi-family

### Sun Prairie Environmental Conditions Report (2014)

#### Healthy Community Planning Checklist

This tool is adapted from Design for Health [www.designforhealth.net](http://www.designforhealth.net) (supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota) and Minnesota Department of Health Metropolitan Common Council Comprehensive Plan Checklist.

The following tables compile criteria for healthy communities that were applied to the Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan. Several components are applicable to many chapters however were not repeated for brevity. This is not an exhaustive list and could incorporate more variables. Additionally, Sun Prairie has several neighborhood and corridor plans that could provide more specifics in implementation and design in those areas. Ordinances, such as the zoning code, were consulted as needed. Sun Prairie can use this tool to determine any improvements or updates to existing plans, ordinances and programs. Note that Chapter 1 of the Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan is the introduction and the plan has two volumes, 1 for existing conditions and 2 for goals, objectives, policies etc.

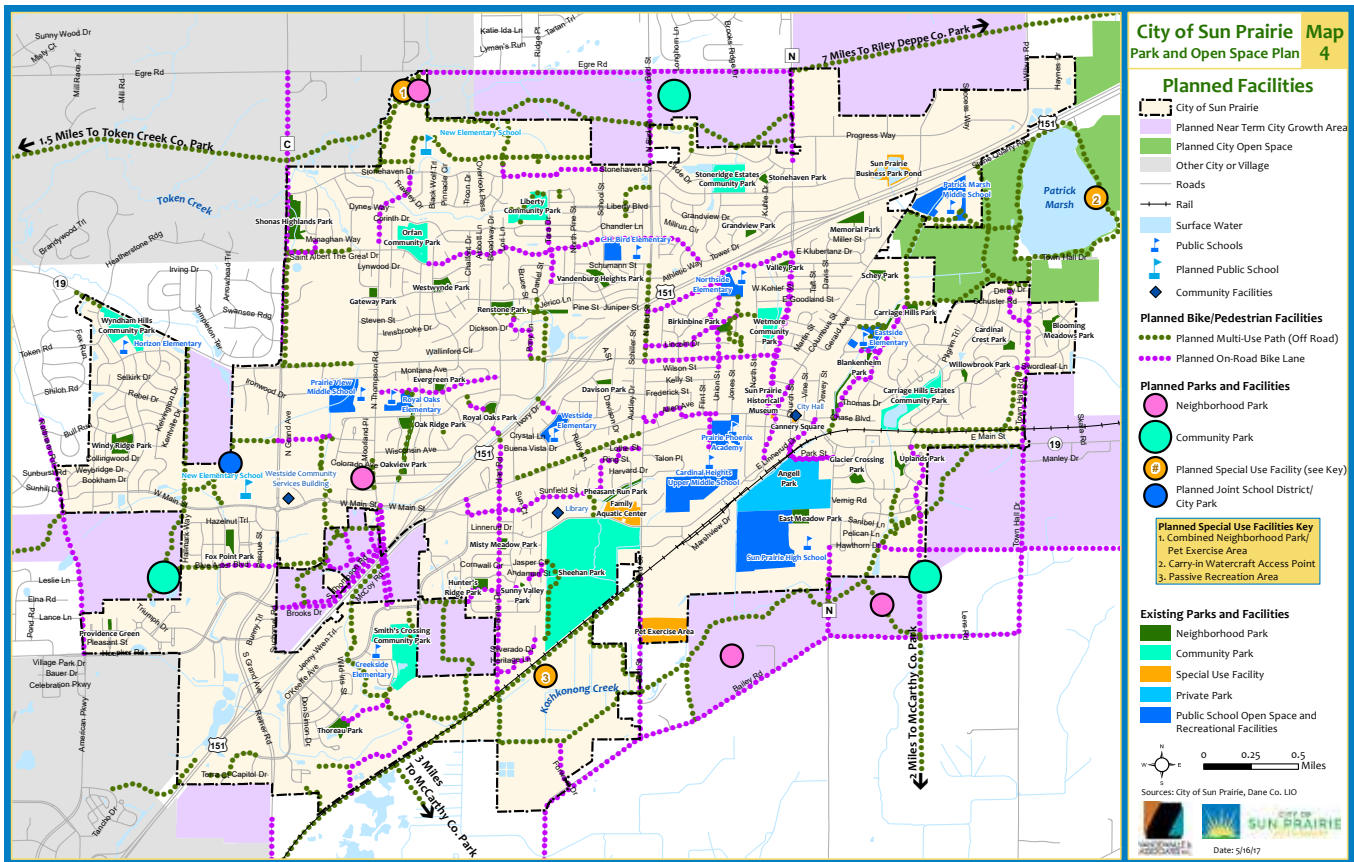
#### Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities

Is there explicit language connecting the plan element to human health?	No	Connection of the plan element to human health is mostly implied. More explicit language connecting the plan element's policies and recommendations to human health is needed.
What other health topics, if any, could be incorporated into this section?		

#### Chapter 3: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Is there explicit language connecting the plan element to human health?	No	Connection of the plan element to human health is mostly implied. More explicit language connecting the plan element's policies and recommendations to human health is needed.
What other health topics, if any, could be incorporated into this section?		
Does the plan identify existing and plan for future opportunities for local food production (i.e. community gardens, protection of agricultural land)?	Yes	No official policy or program.
Has a community food security assessment (USDA ERS) been created to establish barriers to healthy food, income levels, lost farmland, community gardens and farmer's market availability within urbanized areas?	No	
Are there existing or planned vegetated buffers along all water bodies (preferably)		

### Sun Prairie Environmental Conditions Report (2014)



*Parks and Open Space Plan (2017)*

developers to provide recreational facilities for residents, and plan for a potential new Community Center building, in addition to other more general policies. The plan estimates that the minimum park acreage needed to accommodate the City's projected population in 2027 is 165.9 acres. Some of the plan's other recommendations include completing a master plan for Sheehan Park; maintaining, updating and renovating existing park and trail facilities; new neighborhood parks along Thompson Road and in a planned growth area south of the Sun Prairie High School; new community parks on the north side growth area (in the near term) and on the west and east sides in later phases.

### Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Diversity Report (2017)

In 2015 the City created a committee to identify issues related to diversity within the community and recommend solutions. In 2017 the Committee published a report which addresses these issues. The Committee specifically looked at providing recommendations that

will enhance the City's capabilities to locate, recruit and hire qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds and to identify and provide a better understanding of the unique needs of different individuals and communities within Sun Prairie. Through a combination of policy changes and administrative changes the Committee suggested steps the City could take to expand the diversity of its pool



*Sun Prairie Steering Committee on Diversity*

of job candidates. The Committee made similar recommendations in regards to the provision of City services. At the recommendation of the Committee, the City passed a non-discrimination ordinance in May 2017.

## Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Transportation Report (2017)

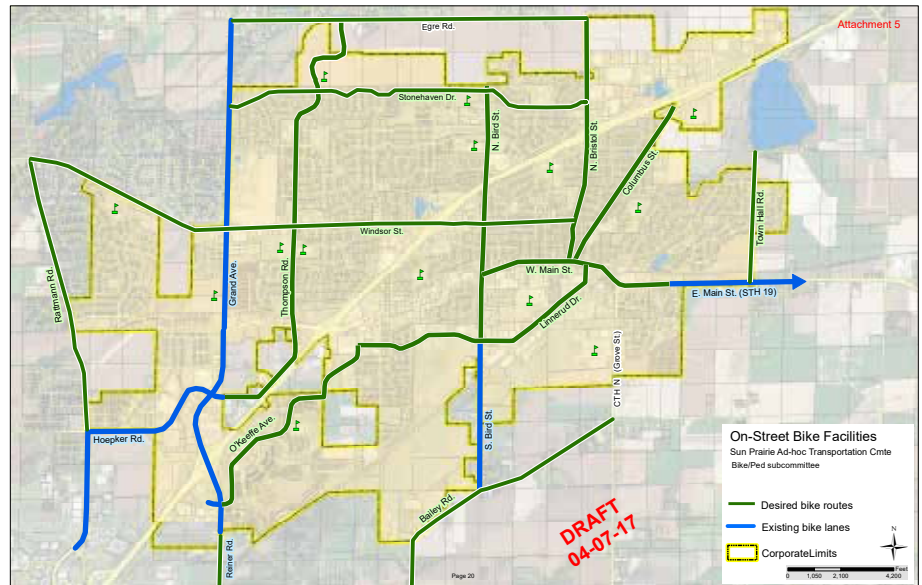
In 2016 the City created a committee to assess the public passenger and alternative transportation needs of Sun Prairie and to recommend potential solutions. The Committee made recommendations under four main topics:

### 1. Sun Prairie Ride-Share Program

- a. Purchase two vehicles to help meet demand during peak times
- b. Increase the service hours to help meet demand during peak times
- c. Review current fare structure and consider adding other discounted rates
- d. Improve advertisement of the program to increase interest and ridership
- e. Explore options for sponsorship of the program
- f. Ride-Share/Madison Metro Transfer Agreement – the City is piloting a program to provide service to/from East Towne Mall

### 2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- a. Modify the City's sidewalk policy as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and codify as an ordinance
- b. Arterial and collector street markings and wayfinding signage
- c. For new arterial streets, parking on both sides and bike lanes in



Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Transportation Report (2017)

- both directions
- d. Create a Committee of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

### 3. Public Communication

- a. Conduct a scientific survey to determine the demand for transportation improvements
- b. Create a communications strategy to inform residents of new initiatives, programs, meetings and events
- c. Expand the duties and authority of the Transit Commission beyond oversight of the rideshare program

### 4. Public Bus Service and Park & Ride

- a. Sun Prairie Bus Service – depending on results of scientific survey mentioned above:
  - i. Continue discussions with Madison Metro for possible expansion to Sun Prairie, or
  - ii. Develop a Sun Prairie bus system, or
  - iii. Seek official representation on the Bus Rapid Transit Planning Process through the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board to ensure

- connection to Sun Prairie, or
- iv. Explore a trolley route, similar to the City of Middleton.
- b. Find a location for a Park & Ride on the west side of the City

## Sun Prairie Area School District Community Growth & Projections Report (2017 Addendum)

This addendum to the 2016 report was prepared to assist the Sun Prairie Area School District (SPASD) gain an updated understanding of the impact of future residential development and demographic change on future student enrollment. The study projects that in Sun Prairie an average of 438 housing units per year will be built between 2017 and 2020 and that an average of 278 housing units per year will be built between 2021 and 2025. After 2020, the study also notes that there will be a growing number of Madison-based developments within the SPASD, which will also increase enrollment numbers. The study predicts an average of 195 housing units per year through 2020 in

the City of Madison within SPASD, and about 300 units per year between 2021 and 2025 and about 370 units per year between 2026 and 2030. Between 2017 and 2030, the study projects an increase of 2,405 K-12 students in SPASD schools. New schools are being planned and built to relieve existing overcrowding at SPASD elementary school and to accommodate future growth projections.

### Water Quality in Dane County (2017)

This report notes looks at water quality challenges within Dane County and suggests recommendations to address them. Top water quality challenges in Dane County include lead (elevated levels have been reported in certain locations in Mount Horeb, Stoughton and occasionally in the City of Sun Prairie), nitrates and pesticides in agricultural areas, and chloride and sodium due to road salt application. Recommendations to address these issues include increased community outreach, especially to immigrant populations; implementation of enhanced wellhead protection methods; upgrades and replacement of aging infrastructure, especially for people, places and infrastructure that are most vulnerable; continued public education and testing of domestic wells; and implementing agricultural best management practices.

### Central Main Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2018)

This plan guides the redevelopment of the Central Main Street Corridor. This Corridor links the Westside Neighborhood to the west and the downtown/Cannery



Central Main Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2018)

Square Neighborhood to the east. The plan is a component of the W. Main Street Corridor Plan (2006), not a replacement. The 2018 plan proposed three principal strategies:

- » Encourage physical, cultural and economic connectivity with surrounding areas.
- » Promote a diverse mix of commercial, residential and public uses.
- » Target key anchor sites as redevelopment priorities.

The plan includes a conceptual design for the area adjacent to the intersection of W. Main and Bird Streets. The plan also identifies potential properties that are or could be available for redevelopment in the near future. Opportunities within the Corridor include: large lots could allow for major projects, corner of Main & Bird serves as a de facto Corridor center, walkability potential with nearby residential, mass transit potential, the built environment could easily accommodate more bicycles and pedestrians, available space for wayfinding and other pedestrian amenities, an

abundance of space, captive audience of residents and commuters passing through the area and new fiber optic infrastructure could attract technology businesses. The plan provides recommendations which capitalize on these opportunities and aim to achieve the strategic objectives of the plan.

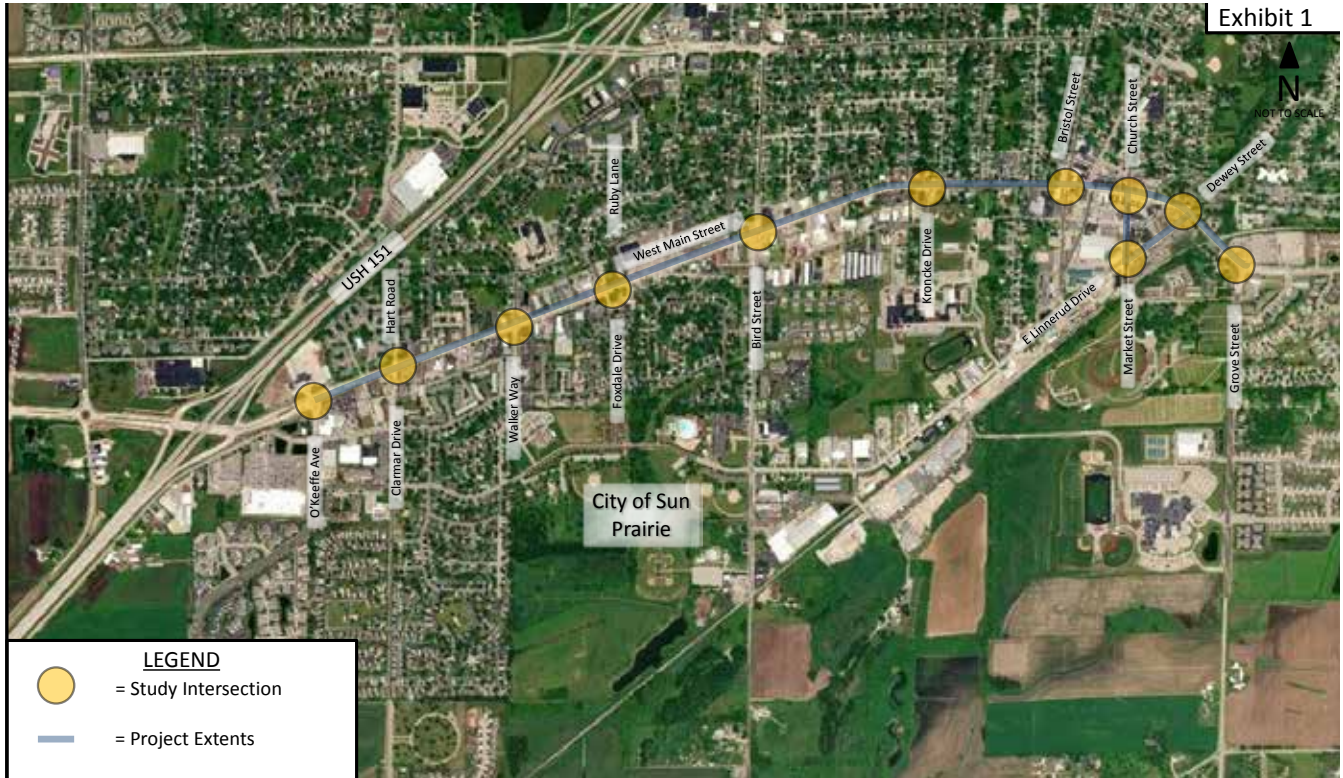
### West Main Street Traffic Impact Analysis (2018)

The study area for this traffic impact analysis is the West Main Street corridor between O’Keeffe Avenue and Grove Street (CTH N). The purpose of the study was to investigate existing operational challenges, safety concerns, and multi-modal accommodations throughout the corridor. Specifically, analyzing traffic flow within the downtown area, providing better school crossing accommodations, optimizing signal efficiency and improving pedestrian mobility. The study includes recommendations for 15 specific locations where challenges were identified.

Overall corridor recommendations included:

- » Increased parking-crosswalk spacing
- » Bicycle detection
- » Retroreflective traffic signal head backplates
- » Traffic signal phasing and timing adjustments
- » Nighttime traffic signal operations
- » Increased pavement marking width

Exhibit 1



West Main Street Traffic Impact Analysis (2018)

# Volume 1: Community Indicators Report

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### 2-2 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Planning Process Overview  
Public Input Summary

# Issues & Opportunities



PUBLIC HEARING

DRAFT

# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



Sun Prairie Neighborhood Forum (May 2018)

*This chapter provides a summary of the planning process as well as a summary of the public participation that occurred during the planning process. Public participation in the planning process is important because it allows stakeholders the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. The range of stakeholder interests sought out during the planning process ensure that a wide range of views and concerns were brought forward during the planning process. These views and concerns helped shape the decision process and are reflected in the goals, policies and action items found throughout this plan.*

## Planning Process Overview

The City of Sun Prairie engaged MSA Professional Services, Inc. to assist in updating its Comprehensive Plan. This plan was drafted through a collaboration among MSA, City staff, and a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The City Council appointed this 19-member Committee to oversee the update to the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

## Public Participation Plan

As required by State Statutes (§66.1001), every community must adopt a Public Participation Plan at the beginning of the planning process. The purpose of the plan is to define the procedures for public involvement during every stage of the planning process (see Appendix A).

Highlights of the public participation plan include:

- » Two series of neighborhood forum meetings. One series near the beginning of the process to identify issues of concern and one near the end of the process to seek feedback on draft policies and actions.
- » A series of 17 focus group meetings with specific groups of stakeholders (e.g. renters, Sun Prairie Moves, Sun Prairie African American Parent Network) to facilitate discussion about issues and opportunities facing the city.
- » A series of 7 meetings with neighboring towns, villages, cities, Dane County and the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission to have discussion about land use and intergovernmental cooperation.
- » A community survey to gather input on all planning issues.

- » Polco, an online platform designed to increase public engagement for local government, was used to ask additional targeted questions on certain topics.
- » A public hearing to gather input on the revised draft comprehensive plan prior to adoption by the City Council

## Public Input Summary

The planning process provided many opportunities for public input on the comprehensive plan update outside of monthly Steering Committee meetings. A timeline summarizing these opportunities is shown below.

## Community Survey

An online community survey was completed from May through June of 2018. The survey was hosted online on Survey Monkey and hard copies were available at City Hall and the Library. Information regarding the availability of the survey was provided via a postcard mailed to every residential address and PO Box within Sun Prairie, press releases, emails to residents and community organizations, social media, Clock Tower Express, newspaper articles, and announcements at the neighborhood forum meetings. In total, over 2,000 members of the Sun Prairie community took the survey. Highlights from the survey are discussed below.

A total of 2,046 people completed at least part of the survey, includ-

ing about 1,700 who completed all of it. This is a robust sample of the community, statistically, though there is some bias in this sample as compared to all City residents. Residents who are notably over-represented (giving them a stronger voice in the results) include women; people age 30-49; white, non-hispanic people; homeowners; and medium- to high-income households. Conversely, residents who are not as well represented in these results include men, people younger than 30, people of color, renters, and lower-income households. These biases are a common, persistent challenge of community engagement efforts. The survey results are still a useful expression of community preferences, but it is important to keep in mind the biases when using these results to inform policy decisions. Many of



# CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

*Sun Prairie is growing and changing. Help guide this change.*



OUR CITY- OUR FUTURE

[www.cityofsunprairie.com/planning](http://www.cityofsunprairie.com/planning)

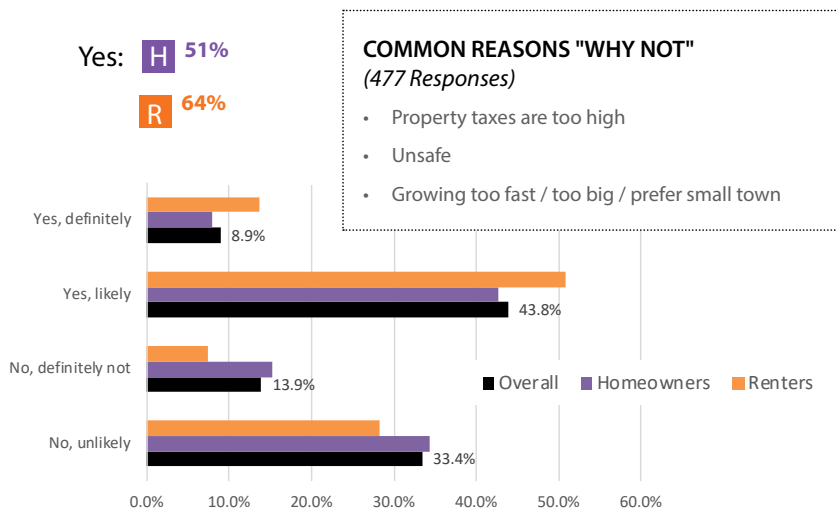
the underrepresented aspects of the City's population correlate with renting (renters are more racially diverse, younger and have lower incomes than the overall population), and so in some cases we included in the survey summary the results for renters and owners separately.

**Residents are generally quite satisfied with their neighborhoods, though only half of homeowners are confident they will stay in Sun Prairie if they move in the next five years.** This planning process is attempting to orient residents to their needs and interests at the neighborhood level. We asked people to tell us what factors make a good neighborhood (Q. 28) and "safety", "parks" and "walkability" topped the list. When asked about the condition of things like lighting, property upkeep, street trees, safety, walkability, etc. (Q. 9), 74% of respondents rated their neighborhoods either "good" or "excellent". The responses of renters were slightly less positive than home owners, but not by much.

We also asked people if they will stay in Sun Prairie should they move in the next five years (Q. 24). While 64% of renters said "yes", only 51% of owners said "yes". Among the reasons given by those who answered "no" were taxes, safety and a desire for a smaller town with less growth.

**Tax rates are a common concern.** Questions that directly or indirectly relate to taxes reveal a prevalent focus on preventing budget and tax rate increases. A majority of respondents were opposed to additional spending for support job growth (Q. 48), city facilities or services other than street maintenance (Q. 49), and develop-

### Q24\* If you were to move in the next 5 years, are you likely to stay in Sun Prairie?

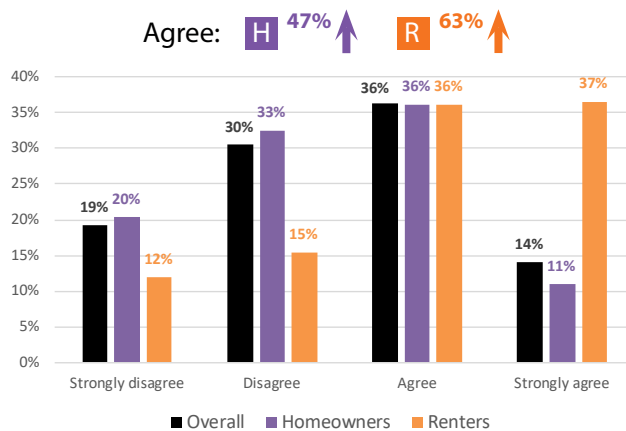


ment incentives (Q. 50). When we asked about park and recreation improvements (Q. 10), "none" was the third most popular answer.

**There is widespread resistance to new rental units, mostly among homeowners.** On all of the housing-related questions, considering images of different housing types (Questions 11-15), affordability (Q. 20), pace of growth (Q. 26) and unit mix (Q. 27), a majority of respondents opposed new multi-unit rental buildings, either implicitly or explicitly. Renters are far more open to the

addition of various attached housing formats in their neighborhoods. Comments throughout the survey reveal common misconceptions that rental housing and affordable housing are the same thing, and that all multi-unit buildings are rental (vs. condominiums). The strength of current opposition appears to be driven by the approval and construction of several larger housing complexes in the past 12-18 months. On the other hand, townhomes and duplexes are seen as relatively more appropriate in neighborhoods and more desirable as a housing choice. More than a third of renters and about 10% of

### Q20 Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statement: *There is a need for more housing in the City of Sun Prairie affordable to working families and individuals.*



homeowners would consider these formats if moving in the next five years (Q. 22). For reference, the ownership rate was about 59% in 2016 based on 1-year Census Bureau estimates.

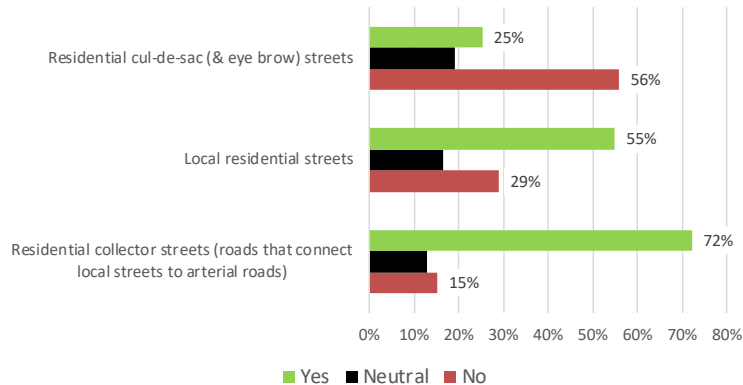
**Renters are more concerned about affordability than owners.** Among all respondents, fewer than 50% agreed that there is a need for more housing affordable to working families and individuals (Q. 20). However, nearly 75% of renters are concerned about affordability.

**Urban design preferences tend toward “small town” character.** The survey presented a variety of images of residential building types to see what people prefer within their neighborhood (Questions 11-15). Among the housing types, only townhome/duplex formats that would blend in well among single-family homes gained broad support.

The survey also presented images of a variety of commercial and mixed use developments (Questions 29-40) to see what people thought were appropriate for Sun Prairie and, if appropriate, where in the City should it be built (downtown, major/minor arterials, abutting 151). The majority of responses seemed to be comfortable with buildings up to four stories in height and massing that is vertically-proportioned. One possible exception to this overall sentiment is receptiveness to taller office buildings (5-8 stories) if built abutting Highway 151 (40% support).

**Support for specific, proactive “sustainability” initiatives is weak.** Regarding municipal actions that could make the City more efficient and environmentally friendly, only green building technologies

**Q45 Should Sun Prairie require the installation of sidewalks when reconstructing the following existing public streets?**



and high-efficiency street lights received support from a majority of respondents (Q. 51). Regarding incentives to encourage the private sector to build more sustainable development, the most popular response was “none” (Q. 50). Less than a third of respondents supported any of the other suggested methods.

**Support for investment in bike and pedestrian infrastructure is strong.** Respondents supported the addition of sidewalks to most existing roads during reconstruction projects, except cul-de-sacs (Q. 45). The number one desired park and recreation improvement in every part of the City was “off-road walking/biking trails” (Q. 10). “Bike/ped facilities” was the second most common selection for increased tax dollar spending

(43%) after “street maintenance” (Q. 49). When asked to prioritize recreation improvement in the City from a list of eight options, “Sign/mark a City-wide bike trail” had the highest overall ranking with “Add more off-street pathways” ranked third (Q. 52).

**There is a desire for bus transit service.** The final question of the survey (Q. 54) asks about other desired improvements not previously addressed in the survey. The most common response to this, by far, was discussing the addition of “bus service” to Sun Prairie.

A complete copy of the survey results is provided in Appendix B.

**Q54\* Are there any improvements you would like to see in Sun Prairie's future that were not covered in this survey?**

**Top Responses (777 total)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Bus service - 112                      | 9. Fix roads - 22                      |
| 2. Slow growth/Stop expansion - 63        | 10. More greenery - 18                 |
| 3. Bike paths - 57                        | 11. Recycling more frequently - 16     |
| 4. Lower taxes - 40                       | 12. Improve safety - 15                |
| 5. Less apartments - 40                   | 13. More services for the elderly - 10 |
| 6. Low-income housing - 32                | 14. More space for the Museum - 6      |
| 7. High School expansion/improvement - 31 |  |
| 8. More local businesses - 24             |  |

## Focus Groups

Between June and November 2018, MSA met with 17 different stakeholder groups and organizations from the community to gain additional perspectives about the future of Sun Prairie. MSA used a set of questions tailored to each group and explored topics and ideas that came up during conversation. The 17 groups/organizations MSA met with include:

- » Sun Prairie Business Park
- » Chamber of Commerce
- » Chamber of Workforce Housing Committee
- » Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)
- » Sun Prairie Moves
- » RISE Young Professionals Networking Group
- » Sun Prairie Area School District
- » CEO Networking Group
- » Realtors and developers
- » Seniors
- » Sun Prairie African American Parent Network
- » QBE employees
- » Renters
- » Hmong residents
- » Executive leadership team
- » Community Development Authority (CDA)
- » Sun Prairie Utilities Commission

Recurring comments from all of these groups are summarized below by topic.

### 1. How do you describe Sun Prairie?

- » Fast growing, friendly small-town
- » Great expanding school system
- » Suburb of Madison
- » Increasingly diverse and be-

coming more inclusive

- » A City in transition with some resistance to change
- » A divided City (old-downtown, new-west side)
- » A City with a “can do” attitude

### 2. Why do you live in Sun Prairie?

- » Good schools
- » Friendly place to live
- » Job, family or church
- » Community assets – library, aquatic center

### 3. Do you feel connected to your neighborhood?

- » Feel isolated, would like to see neighborhoods come together (no more east vs. west)
- » Love the mix of income and housing in Vandenberg, Wyndham Hills.

### 4. Transportation

- » Need fixed route public transportation (i.e. inter- and intra-City)
- » Sidewalks should exist on all streets and City should close existing gaps
- » Need to close existing gaps in off-street bike path network
- » Consider a park and ride location on US 151
- » Take parking off Hwy 19 during peak traffic hours
- » Complete a bicycle/pedestrian plan
- » Issues with the current shared ride taxi – can take an hour to get picked up, requires debit card – no cash, needs to be expanded to Windsor and DeForest

### 5. Neighborhood improvements

- » Need more streetlights
- » Need more trees
- » Need more places to walk to (e.g. grocery store)

### 6. Miscellaneous

- » Need wider selection of activities for all age groups and income levels, families
- » City needs an identity
- » Increase in taxes could drive out long-time Sun Prairie residents
- » Need to improve communication on issues affecting community and ensure consistency – need to communicate ‘why’
- » Decisions seems to always be made by cost, not always value
- » Need nicer restaurants
- » Host more events that attract tourists and events that get existing residents out and exploring the community

### 7. Things elected officials should hear

- » Don’t feel like the City hears us
- » Don’t like the tax breaks City is giving to businesses because more burden is placed on residents
- » Think long-term
- » Get back to thinking about big ideas

### 8. Downtown

- » Revitalize downtown – add more public spaces, apartments, mix of housing prices, accessibility to grocery store, restaurants, retail, mixed uses, co-op, experiential businesses
- » City needs to be proactive with adding parking when new businesses opening
- » Need a major draw (e.g. Duluth Trading in Mt. Horeb)
- » Need infrastructure improvements (sidewalk repair, lighting, etc.)

- » City should chart the course before development happens at Bristol/Main

## 9. Economic development

- » Focus on diversity: incentives for women and minority businesses
- » Need amenities that pull employees to live in Sun Prairie. Businesses go where employees are. (more amenities to draw younger tech demographic – e.g. ethnic food)
- » Focus on quality of jobs vs. total jobs
- » It's challenging to do business in Sun Prairie due to raising property taxes, downtown feels like it's struggling, rents are high, Sun Prairie residents don't spend as much as residents from other communities and City lacks public transit
- » Focus on recruiting businesses that employ IT workers, law firms, insurance agents
- » Create a climate that grows existing businesses and entices new business to locate here
- » Partnership between businesses and city government are excellent, the Chamber could do more.
- » SP business park is full and should be expanded north
- » Need a balance between chain stores and local businesses

## 10. Housing

- » Housing affordability is a big issue – will likely impact long term cultural diversity
- » Focus on workforce housing: proper distribution throughout City near jobs and public transportation
- » Need affordable, walkable

- apartment communities for 55+
- » Currently too many apartments
- » People who work here need to be able to afford to live here
- » Inventory of housing is generally low – particularly small starter homes for young families
- » We need to provide education on how mixed income residential developments do not have a negative impact on neighborhoods
- » There isn't enough incentive for developers to develop affordable housing
- » Need a variety of housing, especially within older neighborhoods
- » Need more high end rentals for interns and recent graduates who are entering the workforce

## 11. Utilities & community facilities

- » Current school boundaries result in a high number of minority students in some schools and no diversity in others
- » Need more green space
- » Improve Public safety – growth brings additional crime/ perception of crime
- » Need more trails – more walkability, bike path connections, lighted walking paths
- » Concern about taxes and the amount of money the City is spending on school buildings vs. teachers/programming

## 12. Land use & development

- » Concerned about City being reactive vs. proactive to growth
- » Focus on infill development
- » More mixed-use nodes with

- neighborhood commercial
- » Need more density, retailers, and manufacturing
- » Improvement of Main Street Corridor a top priority: need a Central Main Street Corridor Plan, explosion area is a high priority



May 2018 Neighborhood Forums

## Neighborhood Forums: Round 1

An initial round of three neighborhood forums were held during May 2018. The forums were held at Bird Elementary School, Sunshine Place and City Hall. These forums provided the public with an overview of the planning project, objectives and schedule. The forums included two activities intended to gather resident feedback on issues and opportunities in the community.

One activity was a visioning exercise which asked participants several questions. Common responses/themes are indicated after each question.

### 1. What do you like best about Sun Prairie?

- » Parks and public spaces
- » Good schools
- » Friendly people who care about the community
- » Small-town atmosphere
- » Good mix of businesses

### 2. What do you like least about Sun Prairie?

- » Lack of affordable housing
- » Taxes are high
- » Lack of public transportation
- » Recent increase in multi-family unit construction
- » Gaps in bike/ped system
- » Increase in traffic

### 3. What makes Sun Prairie unique?

- » It's a small community that is a short distance to "big city" amenities
- » It's continued growth and diversity
- » It's services and amenities (e.g. Library, YMCA, Schools, Parks)

### 4. What are your big ideas and aspirations for our community?

### What would you change or improve?

- » Public transportation to Madison
- » Need free or low cost entertainment for families and teens
- » Need more affordable housing
- » Need to revitalize downtown and bring in unique shops and restaurants
- » Need to embrace diversity among business owners and in city representatives

The other activity was a map-based activity which provided participants an opportunity to provide specific comments regarding:

#### 1. Bike/Pedestrian Improvements.

Locations that you feel need a better connection or safety improvement for walking or biking (e.g. sidewalk, crosswalk, on-road bike lane, etc.)

#### 2. Traffic Safety Concerns.

Locations where you feel a current road is unsafe for motorists.

#### 3. Park Improvements.

The one most important park improvement you would like to see.

#### 4. (Re)Development Sites.

Existing sites or buildings you feel could be (re)developed over the next 10-20 years. Suggest a preferred use.

#### 5. Preservation Sites.

Existing uses, buildings or natural areas you feel should be preserved or left unchanged over the next 10-20 years.

## Neighborhood Forums: Round 2

A second round of three neighborhood forums were held during April/May 2019. The forums were held at Westside Elementary School, Meadow View Elementary School

and City Hall. These forums provided the public with a summary of the planning process to-date and major issues and opportunities that were identified during the process. The forums included a series of poster boards summarizing the goals and high priority policy and action recommendations from each plan element as well as future land use maps broken out by planning areas. Participants were asked to review the boards and maps and respond to a series of questions. A summary of the responses to these questions follows:

**1. Do you have any suggestions or changes for the proposed land use map, policies and actions, specifically regarding Neighborhood Residential areas and design guidance?**

- » Concern about mixing single family and multi-unit complexes
- » Need to encourage more affordable housing
- » Older multi-unit complexes need revamping
- » Need neighborhoods with mix of unit type and price point
- » Need daycare near multi-unit complexes

**2. Do you have any suggestions or changes for the proposed land use map, policies and actions, specifically regarding Commercial and Employment areas and uses?**

- » Need more business and manufacturing jobs
- » Ensure all neighborhoods are well-served by grocery stores
- » Consider traffic management

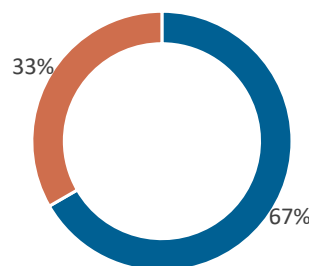
**3. Do you have any suggestions or changes for the proposed land use map, policies and actions, specifically regarding**

**Mixed Use areas?**

- » Promote walkable destinations - need safe walking and bike paths
- » Limit the number of multi-family complexes
- » Access drives from major roads need careful thought

**4. Are you supportive of the City's goals to make housing a priority and ensure that all residents have safe and affordable housing options in Sun Prairie. This includes providing a mix of housing types throughout the City.**

- » City and School District need to work together more
- » This will make public transit and bicycle paths increasingly important
- » Integrate multi-unit housing into neighborhoods
- » Ensure multi-unit housing is compatible with surrounding uses
- » Encourage opportunities for neighbors to get to know one another
- » Concern about too much multi-unit housing being built
  - » Need small, ranch-style housing for aging baby boomers and young families
  - » Of the 33 people who answered this question:



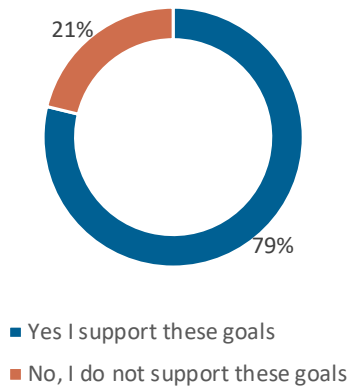
- Yes I support these goals
- No, I do not support these goals



April/May 2019 Neighborhood Forums

**5. Are you supportive of the City's goals to provide multi-modal transportation options to connect all residents to jobs, services and other regional amenities? This includes things like bike lanes and paths, sidewalk construction, and the upcoming launch of an express transit route between Sun Prairie and the City of Madison.**

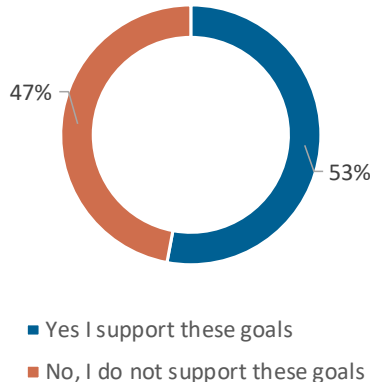
- » Park and ride is not convenient for people that need it
- » Of the 33 people who answered this question:



**6. Are you in support of the proposed sidewalk and multi-use path policy requiring sidewalks/paths as summarized below? 1) On both sides of all new and reconstructed public streets, including cul-de-sac streets and eyebrows; 2) On one or both sides of rehabilitated streets (pavement replacement only), when it is determined to be in the public interest by the City Engineer and City Planner; and, 3) Along private streets, when it is determined to be in the public interest by the City Engineer (or designee).**

- » Not supportive of sidewalks on cul-de-sacs and dead end streets
- » Sidewalks are needed in neighborhoods
- » Paths need to be maintained once they are created

- » Sidewalks are only needed on one side of a street
- » Of the 34 people who answered this question:



**7. Please review the boards on the following topics: Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources; Utilities & Community Facilities; Intergovernmental Cooperation; and Economic Development. Do you have any suggestions or changes for these other goals and high priority policies and action items?**

- » Supportive of preserving agricultural lands and greenspace
- » Economic development should be focused on attracting higher paying employers
- » Need more parking downtown
- » Supportive of public transit

## Polco Questions

Polco was also used to pose a series of single questions to the community throughout the planning process. The following questions were asked and responses received:

**1. What are the BEST ways for YOU to get informed during the process?**

- » 60% - emails from the City through Notify Me
- » 52% - City social media (Facebook/Twitter)
- » 46% - Clock Tower Express
- » 44% - Sun Prairie Star

**2. If we make smart choices today, how will people describe our community 10 years from now? Select TWO phrases that best describe Sun Prairie...**

- » 63% - "small town comfort with urban amenities"
- » 33% - "warm and welcoming" and "healthy people, healthy neighborhoods"

**3. Which of the following activities by the CITY would you support to address the issue of local employers having difficulty finding qualified staff?**

- » 52% - develop a transit system to improve commuter access to employers
- » 51% advocate for the development of more employer-led training, such as apprenticeships
- » 47% - host or coordinate job fairs in the City
- » 42% - convene more conversations between the Sun Prairie School District and local employers

about curriculum that fits the needs of local employers

**4. In an effort to clarify the community's thoughts on cul-de-sacs, which of the following sidewalk policy amendments do you support?**

- » 35% - do not require sidewalks on cul-de-sacs at all
- » 28% - do not change the current policy-continue to require sidewalks on all cul-de-sacs, including around the bulb/circle

**Municipal & Regional Partner Meetings**

MSA and City staff met in late 2018 and early 2019 with each of the neighboring towns, villages and city with which the City shares a border or overlapping extraterritorial authorities, plus the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission, to discuss issues of common interest. A brief summary of the most prominent issues in each discussion follows. The municipal relationships are also addressed in **Volume 1: Chapter 5**.

**City of Madison**

At the time of the meeting with Madison planning staff in 2018 the City of Madison was in the process of updating the Nelson and Rattman Neighborhood Development Plan Areas, both adjacent to Sun Prairie, with no major changes to land use anticipated. The conversation focused on opportunities to connect trails between the two cities (e.g. Reiner Road to the south, Blue Aster when it is eventually extended to the west). Park and open space lands were also discussed, including Madison's

260 acres south of Hoepker Road (opportunity for a joint project, to include soccer fields?) and the former mine site between Nelson Road and Sun Prairie's Smith's Crossing neighborhood.

**Village of Windsor**

The meeting with Village planning and development staff included general discussion about development trends and housing policy, park and rec investments near the shared boundaries, and opportunities to coordinate and share emergency service investments. The Village's 2019 improvements to Egge Road were discussed, including the City's desire for bike lane or path connections to CTH C. Both parties reaffirmed the terms of the existing boundary agreement regarding the transfer of several properties east of Token Creek from the Village to the City if and when they develop.

**Village of Cottage Grove**

Though lacking a shared border the Village and City have overlapping extraterritorial plat review authority in the vicinity of CTH N and CTH T, due to the Village's annexation of lands north of Interstate 94. As discussed with Village planning staff, neither community expects annexation or development near CTH T within the next 20 years, in part due to challenges with sanitary sewer service. The possibility of a mutual boundary agreement to decide the location of a long term boundary between the City and Village was discussed, likely near CTH T but not necessarily using that road as the boundary. The prospect of regional emergency service provisions was also discussed.

**Town of Burke**

The City and Town have many points of shared interest and many

miles of shared boundaries. The discussion with Town staff started with various properties that could be annexed to the City for development before the Town dissolves in 2036 and remaining lands are attached to Sun Prairie (per a 2007 boundary agreement). Coordination between Town and City staff to discuss planned construction projects is good (annually in the spring), but could be expanded to include coordination of five-year Capital Improvement Plans. Staff also discussed private property encroachments into the Town's Hagen Park and the blockades preventing the connection of Token Rd., Rebel Dr., and Bull Run, The City would like to connect those streets but neighborhood residents in the Town still prefer the barriers.

**Town of Bristol**

The Town and City have a boundary agreement adopted in 2005 that describes how they will work together (or defer to the other) on land use planning in various parts of the Town. The discussion with Town officials affirmed a positive working relationship, though there have been few active coordination efforts in recent years. The Town's role in approving annexations in the joint planning area north of the Sun Prairie Business Park was discussed and affirmed. Lands around Patrick Marsh were also discussed, including the possibility that a land owner could propose development. Both the City and the Town have approval authority for land division and zoning decisions in this area. The Town is supportive of efforts to extend off-street paths toward the Town along Bird St. and Broadway Dr.

**Town of Sun Prairie**

Discussions with Town officials occurred both in February and in May 2019. Though there is not a

boundary agreement in place, the City and Town both indicated a willingness to explore an agreement that would address issues such as road maintenance, City growth areas, and limited Town growth areas. The Town would like allowance for a new rural neighborhoods, where new homes could offset the loss of taxable value due to annexation. Roads of greatest concern to the Town include Bird St., Town Hall Rd., and Bailey Rd. The prospects for regional EMS services and a bike path connecting Patrick Marsh to McCarthy County Park along Town Hall Rd. were discussed.

### **Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC)**

As the regional entity responsible for sewer service area planning and approvals, CARPC is involved in growth planning throughout Dane County and had engaged with Sun Prairie and its neighbors on a regional land use planning effort in 2013 (the Sun Prairie Future Urban Development Area Study). On the topic of regional growth trends, CARPC staff described the results of the Greater Madison Vision Survey, especially the prominence of concern about climate change, flooding, and desire for investments in renewable energy.

After discussing general land use and development trends and various existing boundary agreements, the conversation focused on the urban service area amendment process. The City hasn't had an amendment to the urban service area recently but will likely be bringing one forward to facilitate service connection to lands at the east edge of the City near STH 19. CARPC staff noted that environmental corridors as mapped and regulated by CARPC are adjusted during this process, using

data provided by the City. CARPC staff also noted a desire to review preliminary plats for any issues related to environmental corridors prior to City approval.

The discussion also touched on long-term concerns about flooding in the Koshkonong Creek corridor and the impact of flow from Sun Prairie's wastewater treatment plant. CARPC's regional groundwater model may be useful as part of regional watershed planning.

# Volume 2: Goals, Policies and Actions

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### 1-2 INTRODUCTION

Plan Organization  
Goals, Policies & Actions  
Plan Adoption & the Consistency Requirement  
Overall Vision  
Sustainability

# Introduction

# INTRODUCTION



Sun Prairie High School

*Welcome to the City of Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan! This plan is intended to guide decisions and actions affecting the growth and development of the City of Sun Prairie over the next two decades and beyond, consistent with the requirements of Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001*

*This chapter describes the structure of the plan, offers an overall vision for the future of the City, and addresses the issue of Sustainability.*

*This is Volume 2 of the plan, containing all policy content. See Volume 1 for relevant background data and analyses.*

## Plan Organization

This plan consists of two volumes.

**Volume 1** contains the background data and information that informed the creation of the plan. It has continued value to plan users as a resource for data on the many topics addressed in this plan.

**Volume 2** highlights the issues and opportunities of greatest interest to the City at the time that this plan was created and contains the goals, policies and actions that will guide the growth of the City over the next two decades.

Both volumes are organized around the nine required plan elements as outlined in state statutes:

- » Introduction (Chapter 1)
- » Issues and Opportunities (Chapter 2)
- » Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources (Chapter 3)
- » Utilities & Community Facilities

(Chapter 4)

- » Intergovernmental Cooperation (Chapter 5)
- » Economic Development (Chapter 6)
- » Housing (Chapter 7)
- » Transportation (Chapter 8)
- » Land Use (Chapter 9)
- » Implementation (Chapter 10)

Many of these issues are interrelated and do not fall neatly into one chapter. Such issues may show up in multiple places. The topic of sustainability affects many aspects of the City and is woven throughout the plan, beginning with this Chapter 1.

## Goals, Policies & Actions

The policy content of this plan is organized into Goals, Policies and Actions.

### Goals

A goal is a general statement about a desired future outcome. Goals provide the big idea and direction but do not indicate how they will be achieved.

### Policies

Policies are rules of conduct to be used to achieve the goals of the plan. They are intended to be used regularly to guide City decisions. Some of the policies in the plan could also be stated as actions but have not yet been assigned to anyone to pursue action.

### Actions

Actions are specific activities that someone within city government should actively pursue, sometimes in coordination with non-governmental agencies. All actions are repeated in Chapter 10 - Implementation with approximate deadlines and responsible parties assigned.

## Plan Adoption and the Consistency Requirement

Under Wisconsin's comprehensive planning statute, a comprehensive plan must receive a public hearing and be approved by resolution by the Plan Commission, and adopted by ordinance by the City Council.

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning law requires that if a local government unit enacts or amends any of the following ordinances, the ordinance *must be consistent* with the comprehensive plan:

- » Official maps
- » Local subdivision regulations
- » General zoning ordinances
- » Shoreland/wetland zoning ordinance

Though adopted by ordinance, the plan itself is not an ordinance. This plan is not intended to be a literal "road map" for the City that provides a clear path from the present to a point twenty years into the future. Rather, it is intended to guide decision making in the years to come toward a unified vision expressed in this plan. Over

the course of time many factors will arise that will significantly influence the day-to-day decision making that occurs at the local government level, and in the community in general. This plan should continue to be consulted to ensure that such decisions contribute to the established vision in this plan.

## Overall Vision

Sun Prairie's vision statement is intended to set the general tone for the rest of the plan. It encapsulates the major themes woven throughout the plan.

**"The City of Sun Prairie seeks balanced growth, safe and healthy neighborhoods, and opportunity for all residents to pursue their dreams and live full lives."**

## Sustainability

In a community planning context, **Sustainability** refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>1</sup>. A closely related concept is resilience, which refers to “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience<sup>2</sup>.” Planning for sustainability typically considers the effects of local decisions and practices on the wider world as well, such as health and economic impacts on nearby communities, and global climate effects.

Planning a sustainable community requires consideration and balancing of three different perspectives: economic, environmental, and social. Sustainable decisions are those that look good through all three lenses, such as the construction of a stormwater pond that reduces long-term flooding costs (economic), improves river water quality (environmental) and creates a new recreation amenity in a park (social).

## Sustainability in Sun Prairie

Sustainability is a relatively new focus in community planning and development, but the balancing of various impacts in community decision-making is not a new practice – Sun Prairie has been doing this for many, many years. Local examples that show balance of economic, environmental and social impacts, and improve community resilience to future change, include:

- » The use of LED streetlights that use less energy and last longer.
- » The use of methane gas produced as a result of the wastewater treatment process to power equipment that is in operation at the water pollution control facility.
- » The use of a renewable, more environmentally sensitive, and more readily available deicing agent (a beet juice/salt water mixture) for City roadways.
- » An emphasis on redevelopment and reuse of under-utilized land and infrastructure in the City’s downtown and Main Street corridor.
- » An emphasis on multi-modal transportation and complete streets in Sun Prairie.
- » The installation of geothermal energy systems in Sun Prairie Utilities and the Sun Prairie School District projects.
- » The installation of a solar panel system on the roof of City Hall.

As a community, we have often achieved sustainable outcomes through a focus on efficiency, in-



*WPPI Solar Panels in Sun Prairie Business Park*

<sup>1</sup> This is a variant on the frequently cited definition for sustainable development from the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report *Our Common Future*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.100resilientcities.org/>

cluding the efficient use of land and infrastructure and the efficient use of energy. Those efforts have improved our capacity to sustain our way of life in case of future changes such as energy costs spikes or a period of prolonged economic hardship.

**Sustainability in This Plan**  
Our Sustainability Commitment:

*Through this plan, Sun Prairie is reinforcing its commitment to the sustainability and resilience of our community. We will consistently consider the short-term and long-term impacts of our decisions on our economy, on the natural environment, and on the social vibrancy of our City. We seek outcomes that will enable future generations to enjoy the high quality of life that we enjoy here today.*

This plan features many specific actions and policies intended to improve our sustainability and resilience as described in our Sustainability Commitment. These are identified in each section with this sustainability icon:



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Sun Prairie High School has one of the largest applications of a ground-source geothermal HVAC system in the country with 343 vertical bores drilled 300' deep. Other energy efficient features of the building include a high performance building envelope, dedicated outdoor air energy recovery ventilation, occupancy sensors, daylighting controls, and a demonstration PV system. Other green features include low-flow water fixtures, waterless urinals, and native planting to reduce water consumption.



# Volume 2: Goals, Policies & Actions

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### 2-2 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Major Issues & Opportunities

# Issues & Opportunities



P U B L I S H I N G  
D R A F T

# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



*Bristol & Main Redevelopment Site*

*This Chapter is a compilation of the most prominent issues and opportunities facing Sun Prairie during the drafting of the plan update in 2018 and 2019.*

## Major Issues & Opportunities

The description of Issues and Opportunities in a comprehensive planning process establishes the basis for many of the policies and actions that follow. Chapters 3-9 each begin with a description of the most prominent issues related to the topic of the chapter. This Chapter is a collection of those issues and opportunities that came up the most in comments, discussion and debate. The issues summarized in this chapter are the current issues for the City in 2019.

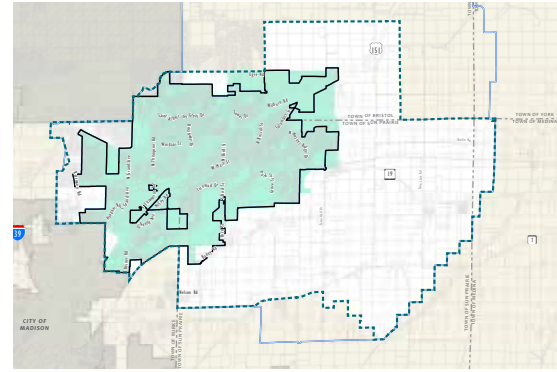
- » Community Growth & Identity
- » Balanced Neighborhoods
- » Urban Design Quality
- » Bike & Pedestrian Facilities
- » Public Transportation
- » Home Affordability
- » Workforce Limitations
- » School District Partnership
- » Coordination With Neighbors
- » Sustainability Challenges

## Community Growth & Identity

Sun Prairie has approximately 34,000 residents today, headed to 40,000 in the next 10 years due to regional growth. Most residents favor growth, but there are concerns about loss of character and the neighborhood impacts of larger, multi-unit housing projects.

*The Plan's response: seek balanced growth coordinated with investments in public services (e.g. schools), and a mix of infill development and incremental outward expansion. Continued investments in cultural traditions and the celebration of local history will orient the Sun Prairie identity as growth continues.*

See the *Housing and Land Use Chapters (Chapters 7 and 9)*.



City of Sun Prairie Planning Area

## Balanced Neighborhoods

Sun Prairie's newest and oldest neighborhoods feature a mix of housing types and some small-scale commercial uses too. Neighborhoods from 1950-2000 often lack that balance, having high concentrations of certain housing types, resulting in school equity problems.

*The Plan's response: encourage balanced neighborhoods in growth areas and allows for neighborhood infill in certain circumstances that will improve neighborhood balance over time. Neighborhood associations and neighborhood plans are encouraged with support from the City's Planning Department.*

See the *Housing and Land Use Chapters (Chapters 7 and 9)*.



Redevelopment on W. Main Street

## Urban Design Quality

Commercial uses and larger, multi-unit residential buildings can conflict with lower-density neighborhood areas unless buildings and sites are designed with care to avoid negative impacts.

*The Plan's response: offer specific design strategies for various building types and locations, especially when close to single-family homes. An update of the zoning ordinance is recommended, with a focus on physical design guidance.*

See the *Housing and Land Use Chapters (Chapters 7 and 9)*.



Design Compatible with Residential Areas

## Bike & Pedestrian Facilities

Community feedback included strong support for investments in infrastructure for safe walking and biking. There are currently few on-street bike lanes and routes, and many gaps in the pedestrian sidewalk/path network.

*The Plan's response: describe the need for various on-street and off-street improvements and call for an Active Transportation Plan. The Sidewalk Policy is reaffirmed with minor changes to support more predictable decisions about when they will be added along existing streets.*

See the *Transportation Chapter (Chapter 8)*.



Bike Facilities at Sun Prairie Library



Madison Metro

## Public Transportation

The City has been actively seeking more effective public transportation resources for several years, and desire for transit was reinforced in feedback during the current planning process. An initial Metro Transit commuter route connecting to downtown Madison is already scheduled to begin service in 2019.

*The Plan's response: encourage efforts to ensure the success of the commuter transit service, and then build on that success over time to meet the needs of more people in more places. The land use plan encourages higher-density development in places that can be most readily served by transit.*

See the Transportation Chapter (Chapter 8).



Single-Family Home

## Home Affordability

Housing prices have been rising quickly in recent years and they continue to rise faster than incomes. There is a particular shortage of units affordable to households earning 30% of the county median income. Employers are concerned that housing costs are limiting local workforce availability.

*The Plan's response: prioritize the creation of a detailed housing action plan, and an Affordable Housing Fund to support a variety of possible programs and incentives that can support affordability for rental and ownership housing. The Plan also encourages the development of housing types that limit cost such as smaller lots, smaller units, and attached units.*

See the Housing Chapter (Chapter 7).



Workforce Development Event

## Workforce Limitations

The City would like to attract employers in growing industries that offer family-supporting jobs, such as information technology, biotechnology, health services and insurance. Employment in the City has been growing, but hiring in all industries is currently a challenge due to the strong regional and national economy.

*The Plan's response: focus on workforce attraction and development and take a holistic approach, including investments in transit, housing, parks and recreation, schools, and workforce training. Strong communications practices by economic development staff and readiness to use targeted financial incentives will help the City grow employment in desirable industries.*

See the Economic Development Chapter (Chapter 6).

### School District Partnership

The Sun Prairie Area School District serves a large area, including parts of Madison and the surrounding towns. Continued growth has resulted in community approval for new schools, including a second high school. Though they are separate governmental entities, the health of the school system is closely tied to the health of the City.

*The Plan's response: emphasize the importance of good communication, including semi-annual meetings between City and School District leaders and staff. The Plan's focus on balanced, walkable neighborhoods is also important to student and school success.*

See the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter (Chapter 5).



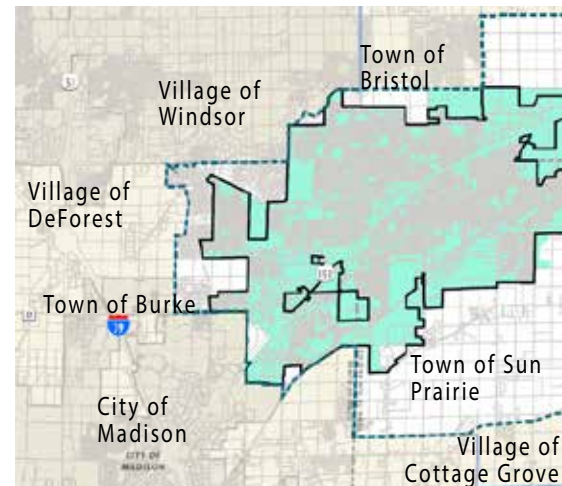
Sun Prairie Schools

### Coordination With Neighbors

As the metropolitan area grows, so does the need for coordination between adjacent jurisdictions. Sun Prairie neighborhoods abut neighborhoods in Madison, Windsor, Bristol, Burke and the Town of Sun Prairie, presenting challenges and opportunities to maintain infrastructure and meet resident needs efficiently.

*The Plan's response: direct the maintenance and update of intergovernmental agreements to help guide these relationships. Strong collaboration is specially identified with the Town of Burke in preparation for when the City absorbs parts of the Town in 2037. Cooperation among northeast metro area communities on public safety services is encouraged.*

See the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter (Chapter 5).



Communities Adjacent to Sun Prairie

### Sustainability Challenges

Sun Prairie exists within global economic and environmental systems, and the City and its residents make decisions every day that have impacts on the environment. Some residents continue to express concerns about how local conditions affect and are affected by changes in the global climate, including more frequent large rainfall events.

*The Plan's response: include a Sustainability Commitment to consistently consider the short-term and long-term impacts of local decisions on the economy, on the natural environment, and on the social vibrancy of the City. Policies and actions that address things like efficient resource use and reduced environmental impacts are highlighted.*

See all chapters.



2018 Flooding in Dane County

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural and historic resources can help define a community's sense of identity and link the present with the past. This section will examine the places, events and organizations that contribute to the City's history and uniqueness.

### Pre-History

The first inhabitants to Wisconsin followed the larger animals into the area as the glaciers retreated more than 10,000 years ago. Evidence of early residents can be found through pottery, arrowheads, burial mounds and other archaeological finds. According to the State Historical Society records, the area around what is now known as Patrick Marsh was used as a campsite during prehistoric times.

In fact, according to the Patrick Marsh Project Plan developed by the Dane County Parks Department, a major Ho-Chunk village that included the confluence of three major Native American trails was located on the southwest corner of the marsh. The village may have still been used by the Ho-Chunk during the early settlement days.

### Community History

Sun Prairie, Our Home: By Peter Klein

Sun Prairie's settlement in 1837 was preceded by Native American settlements in this area for more than 12,000 years. Native American history is important to understanding the development of early Sun Prairie. Caucasian settlers Native American trails became roads. Burial Mounds, village sites, and artifacts still remain in this area. Native American people continued to visit this area into the 1960s; they remembered their history through oral tradition

Madison and Sun Prairie were born out of the influence of developers in the Wisconsin Territorial government. James Doty, who owned many acres of land in the four-lakes area of what is now Dane County, convinced the territorial legislators to build the new Wisconsin Territory capitol in the "paper city of Madison." The territorial legislature commissioned Augustus A. Bird as the architect and construction foreman of the new capitol.

In 1837 Bird assembled carpenters and mechanics in Milwaukee for the construction of the new territorial capitol in Madison. After days of rain that rendered the trip memorable, the sun came out when they entered the lobe of a small prairie. A member of the expedition inspired by the sun on the prairie named the site Sun Prairie on June 9, 1837.

Sun Prairie was the western frontier when the first white settlers arrived here. Local stories and legends are replete with the difficulties involved in the settlement of the Sun Prairie area. The Sun Prairie Squatters Protective Society formed on March 5, 1845. Another society was the Sun Prairie and Token Creek Anti-Horse Thief Society. When the survey of the newly incorporated Village of Sun Prairie was completed on Nov. 20, 1868, it marked the separation of the village from the Town of Sun Prairie.

Sun Prairie was primarily a farming community as late as the 1960s. The village served as an economic, religious, and cultural center for the farming community. Rural Schools and rural settlements such as Pierceville, North Bristol, East Bristol, and Burke Station became community centers. Sun Prairie had the first Rural Free Delivery Route in Wisconsin, which started on November 17, 1896.

The formation of the Sun Prairie Canning Company in 1900 gave farmers another way of preserving their crops and extending their markets away from the Sun Prairie area.

The village's dependence on the farming community experienced a major change with the formation of the Sun Prairie Spark Plug Factory in 1919. This factory, later known as the Sun Prairie Porcelain Company, provided a major alternative to employment in the agricultural community. The company provided women with full-time employment. Women comprised about half of the factory's employees.

German Prisoners of War worked in the factory during the war. Canning Company employment records in the 1950s listed many categories of employees that worked in the factory. The factory later depended upon Hispanic employees and constructed housing units for some of its employees.

The village of Sun Prairie incorporated into a city in 1958. The need to provide housing for military personnel stationed at Truax Field in the 1960's was the catalyst for Capehart, a housing area consisting of 280 units off of North Bird Street, an area now known as Vandenburg Heights and Prairie Homes. Capehart brought Sun Prairie's residents their first major contact with people of different ethnic and racial groups.

New industries developed in the community during the 1950's & 60's, these industries including: the Wisconsin Cheeseman, Diesel Injection Service, Foulke Rubber Products and General Telephone Company. Admiral opened a television component factory in Sun Prairie in 1965, which was later redeveloped in 1967 as Goodyear. General Casualty opened a two-story building containing 120,000 square feet in 1982. ~~Since then, Sun Prairie continues to experience the establishment of industries in its Business Park.~~ Sun Prairie has continued to diversify with steady growth of new business establishments and business expansions in the Sun Prairie Business Park.

Sun Prairie changed from a farming community of 2,263 residents in 1950 to a community of 4008 in 1960. In 1970 city residents increased to 9,935. Approximately 25,370 residents in 2008. Two periods of significant population increase have taken place: from 1960 to 1970 and from 1990 to the present. Much of this growth has occurred to the west and northwest, most likely influenced by the proximity of this area to transportation corridors that connect Sun Prairie with the rest of the Madison region. The majority of the recent increase has occurred on the City's west side, in concert with Madison's outward expansion.

The growth of the city over time has led to a great deal of change in the community, as example of this change can be illustrated by the changes in the community's school facilities. In ~~1950~~, the Sun Prairie School Public School System consisted of one building serving grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. In ~~2008~~ 2019, ~~a seventh~~ **the eighth and ninth** public elementary schools ~~is under~~ **were construction-constructed**. The district operates two middle schools, **one upper middle school** and one high school. ~~Upgrades to these facilities and a new school for eighth and ninth graders are currently underway.~~ **On the April 2019 local election, a referendum pasted to construct a second high school.** There are also several private schools in the city offering alternatives for the student population.

Sun Prairie's history will continue to evolve, changing its employment opportunities, housing, and community services, to meet future needs.

## Places

National and State Register of Historic Places

The City of Sun Prairie has ~~four~~ **five** properties listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places. The Crosse House, built in 1883 and located at 133 West Main Street, is a two-story frame structure trimmed in the Victorian, Carpenter Gothic style. The building architecture is unique in Sun Prairie. Historically the house has been used for a number of purposes including a doctor's office and pharmacy, a grocery store, and a creamery and ice cream shop. Due to the construction of the new Water & Light Commission (**SP Utilities**) building in 1999, the Crosse House was moved approximately one lot to the west of its original location.

Another Sun Prairie home on the National and State Register of Historic Places is the Adam and Mary Smith House, originally located along USH 151 between Madison and Sun Prairie. This brick structure was built in late 1800's of the Italianate architectural style and was recently moved approximately one half-mile as a result of an expansion of Highway 151. It now serves as the anchor and namesake for the Smith's Crossing development on the City's southwest side.

~~Effective~~ **On** April 6, 2000, the Columbus Street Water Tower ~~is~~ **was placed** on the National Register of Historic Places. The water tower is a 60-foot high structure rising from a two foot rusticated foundation, which is almost entirely below the level of the plaza and the street. The tower is topped with a steel tank, which adds 30 feet to its overall height of 92 feet. The water tower is significant to the history of the community because this modern structure and the necessary administrative organization to manage it marked the development of the community from a village into a municipality.

The fourth property, listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places in 2004, is the Fuhremann Canning Company Factory located at 151 Market Street. The factory, constructed in the early 1900's and active into the 1970's, served the surrounding agricultural industry through vegetable processing and canning. The building now serves as the anchor for Cannery Square, part of the City's downtown redevelopment project.

**The Chase Grain Elevator located at 123 Railroad Street is the fifth property on the National Register and it was added in 2010. The unique design incorporated the silos, workhouse, office and conveyors into one structure when it was built in 1922.**

~~The S.W. and Sarah Thompson Farmstead, located at 610 S. Thompson Road, is certified as significant by the National Park Service using the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places. This farmstead was built in the mid 1800's.~~

**In June 2019, the 100 and 200 blocks of East Main Street, were added to the National Register of Historic Places as the Sun Prairie Downtown Historic District. The District is comprised of 26 contributing buildings that retain historic significance.**

Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)

The State Historical Society conducted a survey of Sun Prairie's architecture beginning in 1977. The AHI currently lists 55 sites with historic architecture; however, a number of the buildings are no longer in existence. A full list of these sites can be obtained through the **Wisconsin** State Historical Society (~~or attach list as appendix?~~). More detailed information about these and other sites can also be obtained at the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.

## Cemeteries

Cemeteries are another example of a resource that can add to a community's sense of history. Formally catalogued burial sites are protected from disturbance by State law.

The location of many area cemeteries can be found on Map 3-7. The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum maintains a 'death list' on its website that includes a more detailed description and location of **the** many area cemeteries.

## Cultural Resources

### Map 3-7

#### Native American Mounds

Although there are no documented Native American burial mound sites in the area, a cluster of mounds is said to be located approximately ½ mile southwest of Patrick Marsh in the wooded area of what is known as Carriage Hill - according to the Patrick Marsh Project Plan developed by the Dane County Parks Department in 2003. The mounds are located on private property and are somewhat protected by the existing residential development.

#### Angell Park

Angell Park, located between CTH N and the railroad tracks on the City's east side, was created in the early 1900's when Colonel **William** Angell donated 15 acres of 'Angell's Grove' to the **village** Volunteer Fire Department. The official dedication of the park took place on June 20, 1903.

The Volunteer Fire Department finished construction on the first park pavilion in 1904, to coincide with the 2nd annual harvest festival in August of that year. In 1919, the pavilion was moved and expanded to its present location. The reconstruction at that time doubled its original size and added a lower floor. The pavilion currently houses the National Midget Auto Racing Hall of Fame Historical Display.

The park was and continues to be the site of many community events. The park has hosted harness racing, auto racing, industrial fairs, high school athletics, recreation classes, and was the site of the city pool from 1958-1992.

Now at approximately 62 acres in size, Angell Park continues to host the Midget Auto races throughout the summer months, is home to the Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival, and now includes the recently constructed Firemen's Park In the Prairie.

#### Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum

This **Georgian Revival Style** red brick building, located at 115 E. Main St., was constructed in 1924 and serves as the headquarters of the Museum. The museum building has served many purposes over the years including use as a library, city offices, the village council chamber, World War II Red Cross center, and as the original site of the Colonial Club.

Downtown Sun Prairie contains a number of historic buildings **and in June 2019 the 100 & 200 blocks of East Main St were recognized by being placed on the National Register of Historic Place as an Historic District.** ~~however, there are no formally recognized historic districts within the city.~~ The City has recently implemented an overlay district as part of the adoption of the Business District Revitalization Plan to encourage the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings in the downtown area. ~~Included in that area is the Cargill Granary located on Linnerud Drive near the railroad tracks. This structure, constructed in 1923 by Fred Chase, may be the only one of its kind in the country.~~

## Events

### The O'Keeffe Festival

This annual event celebrates the city's most famous resident, world renowned artist Georgia O'Keeffe. She was born in 1887 on a dairy farm in the Town of Sun Prairie. O'Keeffe is known for her paintings of flowers, shells, rocks, landscapes, and animal bones. The festival showcases the work of local artists and displays a number of framed O'Keeffe prints.

### Groundhog Day

(source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce)

For over 60 years, the Sun Prairie members and supporters have been proclaiming Sun Prairie to be "The Groundhog Capital of the World." This proclamation has caused reverberations from the halls of Congress, to the coal fields of Pennsylvania, and in the news media of the country.

The tradition of Groundhog Day is tied to Candlemas Day, a centuries old celebration day in Europe. Folklore states: "If the day is bright and clear there'll be two winters in the year."

The Groundhog Day tradition in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin dates back to 1948, when Wisconsin celebrated its centennial year. Many ways were found to commemorate the centennial event, both public and personal. One such private observance was a rather ambitious project.

In 1948, to celebrate the Wisconsin centennial, a commercial artist, Ira Bennett, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin and his young son decided to create a series of commemorative post cards relating various locations in Wisconsin to the holidays throughout the year. Sun Prairie was selected to celebrate Groundhog Day because the groundhog sees his shadow when the sun comes up on the prairie, thus, Sun Prairie was picked for the honor.

Associated events and promotions over the years have included the formation of a Sun Prairie Groundhog Club, a groundhog wedding, a groundhog funeral, a moon rocket launch, and on occasion some pomp & circumstance. In addition, there has been an annual commemorative USPS postmark.

Some of the cities chosen were: Independence, Wisconsin for July 4th, Port Washington, Wisconsin for Washington's Birthday, Loyal, Wisconsin for Boy Scout Sunday (a scout is loyal). Groundhog Day required a stretch of the imagination. The groundhog sees his shadow when the sun comes up on the prairie, thus, Sun Prairie was picked for the honor.

At that time the postmaster in Sun Prairie was Margaret McGonigle, a lifelong resident, active in politics and a promoter of the virtues of Sun Prairie. When this idea was presented she quickly asked the artist his permission to use this idea to further promote the community.

Soon after, the Sun Prairie Groundhog Club was organized as a sort of serious spoof. All people born on February 2 were eligible to be groundhogs. Those born on other days in February were designated woodchucks. The word spread and birth certificates were mailed to folks all over the country, for a nominal fee.

Ground hogging really hit its stride in Sun Prairie when the 4 H Club and its leaders, Erich and Teena Lenz took over. Erich, never one to do things halfway, immediately got live groundhogs and always had one ready for the ceremony. Dan Royle, the newspaper publisher and neighbor to the Lenz', made his contribution to the legend with his recipe for Moose Milk, a hot milk drink with the kick of a moose (liquor).

The celebrations were held at the Lenz home on Pony Lane, with their ample home bursting with media people, local politicians and anyone else who wanted to be there at sunrise. Telephone calls came from TV and radio stations all over the country wanting to know if spring was at hand or if we were in for six more weeks of winter.

Each year, the groundhog group had a different scheme to attract the attention of the country. One year, two stuffed groundhogs were married in a wedding ceremony. This gave rise to a declaration by Wisconsin Congressman Glen Davis in the Congressional Record that Sun Prairie groundhogs were "legitimate" and that those in Pennsylvania were otherwise. This of course prompted an equally frivolous response from the Punxsutawney congressman, all printed in the Congressional Record. Congressman Davis has a Sun Prairie street named in his honor. When Sputnik was the subject of conversation, the groundhog was sent to the moon by rocket to keep up with the Russians.

All this high jinx did not go unnoticed by the groundhog club in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania who claimed prior rights to the title. Good natured ribbing has been the order of the day since the start. One year the Pennsylvania rodent didn't see his shadow and Sun Prairie's Jimmy did, the locals proclaimed the reason was that their animal's eyes were full of coal dust and of course couldn't see his shadow.

The first Groundhog Ball was held at a now defunct dance hall, Tropical Gardens, on the corner of Bird & Main Streets. The Groundhog Ball is now sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and is held at The Round Table on a Saturday night around Groundhog Day.

After caring for many generations of Jimmy the Groundhog, Erich Lenz retired. Today, the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce is the official sponsor of the Groundhog Day festivities. Upon the retirement of Mr. Lenz, the Chamber sought out new caretakers. Ted and Cheri Krisher volunteered to care for Sun Prairie's famous prognosticator. Having cared for Jimmy for 20 years, the Krisher family retired and the responsibility was transferred to Sun Prairian Jerry Hahn.

For many years the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce partnered with local organizations to host the Groundhog Day event and member businesses participate via booth displays and promotion. A community breakfast was held with approximately 1,000 people on hand to hear Jimmy the Groundhog predict an early spring or six more weeks of winter. Jimmy the Groundhog boasts an 80% accuracy rate in predicting what type of weather is in store!

Since 2012, the City of Sun Prairie and the Business Improvement District has hosted the annual prognostication downtown in Cannery Square on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## Corn Festival

(source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce)

The first annual Sweet Corn Festival was held on August 29 and 30 in 1953. It is the oldest sweet corn festival in Wisconsin. The 1953 and 1954 festival grounds extended along the two blocks of Angell Street, just north of Main Street. The 1953 festival served 13,000 ears of corn and two hundred pounds of butter to 6,000 people on Saturday, August 29.

The first corn festivals set the format for future festivals. Future events, included the corn eating contest, music, and local talent shows. Each festival ended with fireworks on Sunday evening.

Later festival additions included the festival parade, the Corn Boiler Run, and the extension of the festival to four days.

The festival moved to Angell Park's more spacious grounds in 1955, the third year of the festival. The 1957 corn festival committee assignments included eight committees: dance, corn, butter, queen, concessions, corn sales, rides, and advertising. Bingo in the Angell Park pavilion was added to the roster of events in 1973.

The festival is the major event of the year in Sun Prairie. A corn building staffed by volunteers remains the center of the festival. Local service clubs and organizations use the festival to gain operating funds for their community projects.

In 1997, Stokely USA, expanded their facilities. Stokely had cooked the corn for the festival for years so the festival had the challenge of finding a new location to steam over 70 tons of sweet corn. The solution came in constructing a new "community owned" corn cooking building with the help of local businesses and residents interested in taking "stalk" in the Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival. The community rallied to protect the future of the time-honored tradition that the festival has become. The new corn steaming facility was completed in 1997.

Today, approximately 100,000 people attend the four day Sweet Corn Festival on the 3rd full weekend of August. Nine local organizations still use the festival as one of their major fundraisers during the year and utilize hundreds of volunteers to staff the fest. On Saturday and Sunday nearly 80 ton of sweet corn are served on the grounds. The corn and the carnival continue to be the major attractions on the grounds. In addition, there are a wide variety of family activities, stage shows, musical entertainment, mini-golf, a craft show, specialty attractions, and a parade on Thursday night.

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## Midget Auto Racing

Midget Auto Racing originated in 1934 at the Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles, CA. Soon thereafter, the sport spread throughout the country and began in Wisconsin at the Blue Mound Dog Racing Track in Brookfield, WI.

Midget Racing came to Angell Park in 1946 when the harness racing track was shortened from a one-half mile to a one-third mile semi-banked, clay oval. Over the years, concrete walls and double steel barriers have replaced the hay bales and trees that once lined the perimeter of the course. Modern concession and restroom facilities, coupled with a remodeled public pavilion and restaurant at trackside have added to spectator comfort and enjoyment.

Races are generally held every Sunday evening between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

## Community Tree Lighting

A tradition since 1915, this event marks the beginning of the holiday season. The lighting ceremony currently takes place the Friday after Thanksgiving in front of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.

There are numerous other events that occur in the community, both on a regular basis and as annual one-time events, such as the Cannery Square Block Party, Strawberry Fest, Maxwell Street Days, the Art Fair in Sheehan Park, and many more. The Chamber of Commerce is a good resource for information regarding community events.

## Organizations

A number of organizations exist to promote and maintain a range of cultural resources within and around the city. Some examples include:

~~Sun Prairie Historical Society~~ Friends of the Sun Prairie Historical Library & Museum

The purpose of this organization is to support the on-going efforts of the Public Museum located at 115 East Main St. The Society Friends sponsors fund-raising events which include the regularly held tours of the Downtown Historic District and historic homes within the City.

Sun Prairie Historical Restorations

This non-profit group was organized in 1976 for the purpose of preserving the historic Crosse House on at 133 West Main Street. Its on-going mission is to preserve and restore any improvement in the City that has a special character or historical interest as apart of the cultural characteristics of Sun Prairie.

Sun Prairie Civic Theatre

This area community theatre group was created organized in 1970 and performs four different productions per year. They are headquartered within the remaining repurposed Bradley farm buildings barn located on at 550 South Bird Street next adjacent to Sheehan Park East.

Performances are held at the Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School auditorium and the Sun Prairie High School Performing Arts Center.

#### The Colonial Club

This organization originated in 1969 to ~~promote~~ **establish** a meeting place and activities for seniors. ~~The initial meetings took place in the basement of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.~~ The Colonial Club **Senior Activity Center** is now located at 301 Blankenheim Avenue **and services the surrounding area senior population** offers **with** a wide range of activities ~~for seniors~~. More information about the organization can be found by visiting their website.

#### Sun Prairie **Area** Community Band

The Community Band, ~~sometimes referred to as the Legion Band,~~ was formed in 1961 and ~~was~~ **is a volunteer organization** comprised of 40-50 musicians ~~adults and students~~. ~~Concerts were usually performed at City Park on Main Street (the current site of the main branch of the Bank of Sun Prairie) until the park no longer existed. Shows were subsequently performed in front of what is now the Historic Library and Museum or in Angell Park. (Now?)~~ **They provide free performances throughout the Sun Prairie area which includes everything from traditional and contemporary concert band music, to marches, show tunes, jazz and holiday music.**

#### Sunshine Place

This charitable, non-profit organization directs and administers the operation of a facility located at 18 Rickel Road within the city. The building currently houses the city's food pantry, **and provides beds and mattresses, clothes for school-aged children, toys and school supplies.** ~~a non-profit second hand clothing store and space for more tenants.~~ **Additional space is provided for Dane County human services offices.** It is intended to provide a single point of access to help meet the needs of underserved residents. In addition, **a community meal, Sunshine Supper, is served weekly to provide a healthy nutritious meal and fellowship, and all are welcome to attend.**

#### Northeast YMCA of Dane County

The YMCA, 1470 Don Simon Dr, is a cause-driven organization that is for youth development, for healthy living and for social responsibility. The programs are designed to build health spirit, mind and body for all.

The American Legion Post #333, VFW Post #9362 and a list of other organizations and their contact information can be obtained by contacting the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES



Cultural and historic resources can help define a community's sense of identity and link the present with the past. This section will examine the places, events and organizations that contribute to the City's history and uniqueness.

### Places Community History<sup>1</sup>

Sun Prairie's settlement in 1837 was preceded by Native American settlements in this area for more than 12,000 years. Native American history is important to understanding the development of early Sun Prairie. Native American trails became roads used by Caucasian settlers. Burial Mounds, village sites, and artifacts still remain in this area. Native American people continued to visit this area into the 1960s; they remembered their history through oral tradition

Madison and Sun Prairie were born out of the influence of developers in the Wisconsin Territorial government. James Doty, who owned many acres of land in the four-lakes area of what is now

Dane County, convinced the territorial legislators to build the new Wisconsin Territory capitol in the "paper city of Madison." The territorial legislature commissioned Augustus A. Bird as the architect and construction foreman of the new capitol.

In 1837 Bird assembled carpenters and mechanics in Milwaukee for the construction of the new territorial capitol in Madison. After days of rain that rendered the trip memorable, the sun came out when they entered the lobe of a small prairie. A member of the expedition inspired by the sun on the prairie named the site Sun Prairie on June 9, 1837.

Sun Prairie was the western frontier when the first white settlers



<sup>1</sup>History provided by Peter Klein.



arrived here. Local stories and legends are replete with the difficulties involved in the settlement of the Sun Prairie area. The Sun Prairie Squatters Protective Society formed on March 5, 1845. Another society was the Sun Prairie and Token Creek Anti-Horse Thief Society. When the survey of the newly incorporated Village of Sun Prairie was completed on Nov. 20, 1868, it marked the separation of the village from the Town of Sun Prairie.

in the factory. The factory later depended upon Hispanic employees and constructed housing units for some of its employees.

The village of Sun Prairie incorporated into a city in 1958. The need to provide housing for military personnel stationed at Truax Field in the 1960's was the catalyst for Capehart, a housing area consisting of 280 units off of N. Bird Street, an area now known as Vandenburg Heights and Prairie Homes. Capehart brought Sun Prairie's residents their first major contact with people of different ethnic and racial groups.



Sun Prairie was primarily a farming community as late as the 1960s. The village served as an economic, religious, and cultural center for the farming community. Rural Schools and rural settlements such as Pierceville, North Bristol, East Bristol, and Burke Station became community centers. Sun Prairie had the first Rural Free Delivery Route in Wisconsin, which started on November 17, 1896.

New industries developed in the community during the 1950's and 60's, these industries including: the Wisconsin Cheeseman, Diesel Injection Service, Foulke Rubber Products and General Telephone Company. Admiral opened a television component factory in Sun Prairie in 1965, which was later redeveloped in 1967 as Goodyear. General Casualty opened a two-story building containing 120,000 square feet in 1982. Since then, Sun Prairie continues to experience the establishment of industries in its Business Park. Sun Prairie has continued to diversify with steady growth of new business establishments and business expansions in the Sun Prairie Business Park.



The formation of the Sun Prairie Canning Company in 1900 gave farmers another way of preserving their crops and extending their markets away from the Sun Prairie area.

The village's dependence on the farming community experienced a major change with the formation of the Sun Prairie Spark Plug Factory in 1919. This factory, later known as the Sun Prairie Porcelain Company, provided a major alternative to employment in the agricultural community. The company provided women with full-time employment. Women comprised about half of the factory's employees.

Sun Prairie changed from a farming community of 2,263 residents in 1950 to a community of 4,008 in 1960. In 1970 city residents increased to 9,935. Approximately 32,894 residents in 2018. Two periods of significant population increase have taken place: from 1960 to 1970 and from 1990 to the present. Much of this growth has occurred to the west and northwest, most likely influenced by the

German Prisoners of War worked in the factory during the war. Canning Company employment records in the 1950s listed many categories of employees that worked

proximity of this area to transportation corridors that connect Sun Prairie with the rest of the Madison region. The majority of the recent increase has occurred on the City's west side, in concert with Madison's outward expansion.

Sun Prairie's history will continue to evolve, changing its employment opportunities, housing, and community services, to meet future needs.

### Register of Historic Places

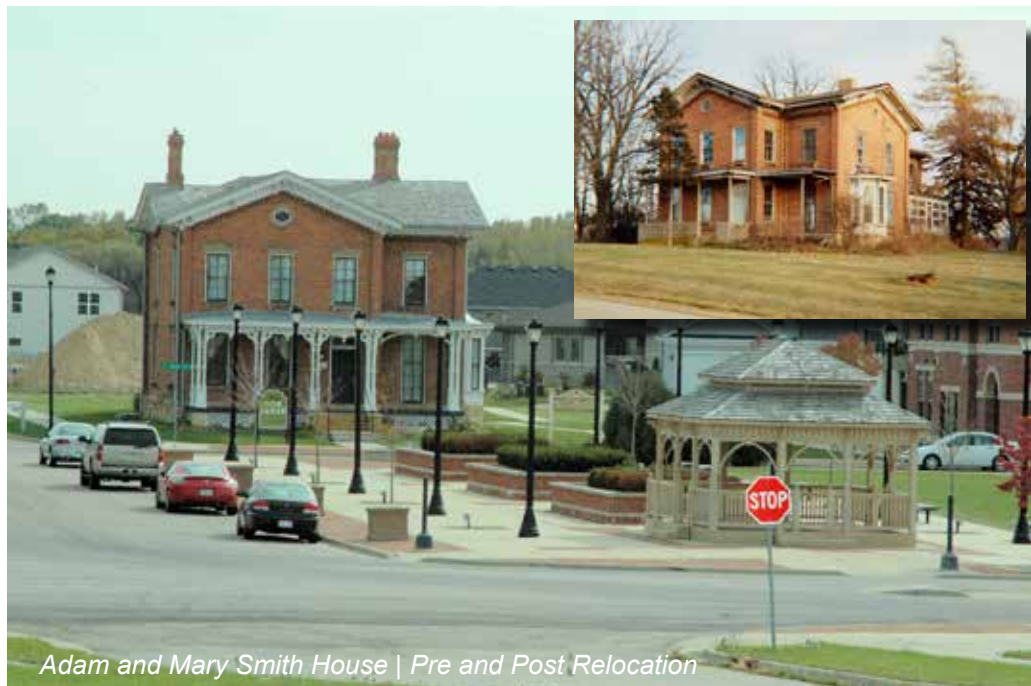
The City of Sun Prairie has six properties listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

The Crosse House, built in 1883 and located at 133 W. Main Street, is a two-story frame structure trimmed in the Victorian, Carpenter Gothic style. The building architecture is unique in Sun Prairie. Historically the house has been used for a number of purposes including a doctor's office and pharmacy, a grocery store, and a creamery and ice cream shop. Due to the construction of the Sun Prairie Utilities building, the Crosse House was moved approximately one lot to the west of its original location.

Another Sun Prairie home on the Register of Historic Places is the Adam and Mary Smith House, originally located along US 151 between Madison and Sun Prairie. This brick structure was built in 1872 of the Italianate architectural style and was moved to 2531 Smith Crossing as a result of an expansion of US 151.

Effective April 6, 2000, the Columbus Street Water Tower is on the Register of Historic Places. The water tower is a sixty-foot high structure rising from a two-foot rusticated foundation, which is almost

*Crosse House*



*Adam and Mary Smith House | Pre and Post Relocation*

### DID YOU KNOW?

The State Historical Society conducted a survey of Sun Prairie's architecture beginning in 1977. The inventory currently lists 55 sites with historic architecture; however, a number of the buildings are no longer in existence. A full list of these sites can be obtained through the State Historical Society. More detailed information about these and other sites can also be obtained at the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.

entirely below the level of the plaza and the street. The tower is topped with a steel tank, which adds thirty feet to its overall height of 92 feet. The water tower is significant to the history of the community because this modern structure, and the necessary administrative organization to manage it, marked the development of the community from a village into a municipality.

The fourth property, listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places in 2004, is the Fuhre-mann Canning Company Factory located at 151 Market Street. The factory, constructed in the early 1900's and active into the 1970's, served the surrounding agricultural industry through vegetable processing and canning. The building now serves as the anchor for Cannery Square, part of the City's redevelopment project.

The Chase Grain Elevator, constructed in 1922, was registered to the State and National Register of Historic Places in 2010 and is located at 123 Railroad Street. It represents a significant phase in the evolution of grain elevator construction with its use of tile (vs. wood) for fireproof experimentation. Tile country elevators, never



numerous, were no longer built after 1925. The Chase Grain Elevator is the only known tile elevator remaining in Wisconsin.

The Old City Hall Building, constructed in 1895 at 100 E. Main St., was registered to the State Register of Historic Places in 2019.

As of February 2019 the City also has a Downtown Historic District on the State Register of Historic

chitectural styles as they evolved for 80 years.

### Sun Prairie Historic District

In 2019 the Sun Prairie Downtown Historic District was created (see Figure 3-16). Properties within the district receive limited protection from encroachment by federal and state development projects, and may be eligible to apply for matching grants for research, restoration, acquisition or stabilization. Certain tax incentives are also available to properties listed on the State or National Register.



### Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum

This red brick building, located at 115 E. Main Street, was constructed in 1924 and currently serves as the headquarters of the Museum. The museum building has served many purposes over the years including use as a library, city offices, the City Council chamber, World War II Red Cross center, and as the original site of the Colonial Club.

### Cemeteries

Cemeteries are another example of a resource that can add to

Places. The District includes the 100 and 200 blocks of East Main St. (including the Old City Hall Building.) The district contains a collection of buildings with Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Twentieth Century Commercial styles, and Commercial Vernacular designs. The buildings help tell the story of commercial development as well as the development of popular ar-



Figure 3-16: Sun Prairie Historic District



a community's sense of history. Formally catalogued burial sites, including cemeteries and Native American mounds, are protected from disturbance by state law. The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum maintains a 'death list' on its web site that includes a more detailed description and location of many area cemeteries.

### Native American Mounds

Although there are no documented Native American burial mound sites in the area, a cluster of mounds is said to be located in the general vicinity of Patrick Marsh - according to the Patrick Marsh Project Plan developed by the Dane County Parks Department in 2003. The mounds are located on private property and are somewhat protected by the existing residential development.



Harness Racing



Angell Park: Corn Fest 1970's

### Angell Park

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### Midget Auto Racing

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and restaurant at track side, have added to spectator comfort and enjoyment. Races are generally held every Sunday between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

### Events

There are numerous events that occur in the community, both on a regular basis and as one-time events with a sampling of events summarized below. For additional community events see the Chamber of Commerce's and/or the City of Sun Prairie's website.

### Georgia O'Keeffe Celebration & Sun Prairie Taste of the Arts Fair

This annual event celebrates the City's most famous resident, world-renowned artist Georgia O'Keeffe. She was born in 1887 on a dairy farm in the Town of Sun Prairie. O'Keeffe is known for her paintings of flowers, shells, rocks, landscapes, and animal bones. The festival showcases the work of local artists and displays a number of framed O'Keeffe prints.

This celebration is in combination with the Sun Prairie Taste of the Arts Fair. The Arts Fair is hosted at Sheehan Park and includes more

than 100 fine crafts/artists booths, wine and cheese tasting and food vendors.

### Downtown Artful Wine Walk

This event is hosted downtown amongst several businesses where event-goers can sample unique wines and delicious appetizers, while enjoying interesting art and live music.

### Community Tree Lighting

A tradition since 1915, this event marks the beginning of the holiday season. The lighting ceremony currently takes place the Friday after Thanksgiving in front of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.

### Groundhog Day

For over 50 years, the Sun Prairie members and supporters have been proclaiming Sun Prairie to be "The Groundhog Capital of the World." This proclamation has caused reverberations from the halls of Congress, to the coal fields of Pennsylvania, and in the news media of the country.

The Groundhog Day tradition in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin dates back

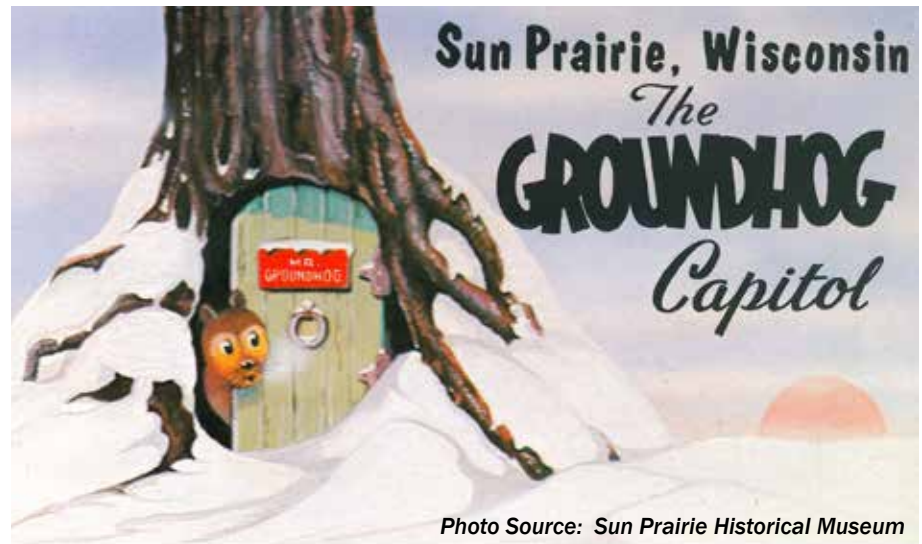


Photo Source: Sun Prairie Historical Museum



to 1948, when Wisconsin celebrated its centennial year. Many ways were found to commemorate the centennial event, both public and personal. One such private observance was a rather ambitious project. A commercial artist, Ira Bennett, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin and his young son decided to create a series of commemorative post cards relating various locations in Wisconsin to the holidays throughout the year. Groundhog Day required a stretch of the imagination. The groundhog sees his shadow when the sun comes up on the prairie, thus, Sun Prairie was picked for the honor.

At that time the postmaster in Sun Prairie was Margaret McGonigle, a lifelong resident, active in politics and a promoter of the virtues of Sun Prairie. When this idea was presented she quickly asked the artist his permission to use this idea to further promote the community. Soon after, the Sun Prairie Groundhog Club was organized as a sort of serious spoof. All people born on February 2 were eligible

to be groundhogs. Those born on other days in February were designated woodchucks. The word spread and birth certificates were mailed to folks all over the country, for a nominal fee.

Ground hogging really hit its stride in Sun Prairie when the 4-H Club and its leaders, Erich and Teena Lenz took over. Erich, never one to do things halfway, immediately got live groundhogs and always had one ready for the ceremony. Dan Royle, the newspaper publisher and neighbor to the Lenz', made his contribution to the legend with his recipe for Moose Milk, a hot milk drink with the kick of a moose (liquor). The celebrations were held at the Lenz home on Pony Lane, with their ample home bursting with media people, local politicians and anyone else who wanted to be there at sunrise. Telephone calls came from TV and radio stations all over the country wanting to know if spring was at hand or if we were in for six more weeks of winter.

Each year, the groundhog group had a different scheme to attract the attention of the country. One year, two stuffed groundhogs were married in a wedding ceremony. This gave rise to a declaration by Wisconsin Congressman Glen Davis in the Congressional Record that Sun Prairie groundhogs were "legitimate" and that those in Pennsylvania were otherwise. This of course prompted an equally frivolous response from the Punxsutawney congressman, all printed in the Congressional Record.

All this high-jinx did not go unnoticed by the groundhog club in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania who claimed prior rights to the title. Good natured ribbing has been the order of the day since the start.

Source

The first Groundhog Ball was held at a now defunct dance hall, Tropical Gardens, on the corner of Bird and Main Streets. The Groundhog Ball is now sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and is held at The Round Table on a Saturday night around Groundhog Day.

After caring for many generations of Jimmy the Groundhog, Erich Lenz retired. Today, the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce is the official sponsor of the Groundhog Day festivities and Sun Prairiean Jerry Hahn cares for Sun Prairie's famous prognosticator.

The Chamber partners with local organizations to host the Groundhog Day event and member businesses participate via booth displays and promotion. A community breakfast is held with approximately 1,000 people on hand to hear Jimmy the Groundhog predict an early spring or six more weeks of winter. Jimmy the Groundhog boasts an 80% accuracy rate in predicting what type of weather is in store!

*Source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce*

## Sweet Corn Festival

The first annual Sweet Corn Festival was held on August 29 and 30 in 1953. It is the oldest sweet corn festival in Wisconsin. The 1953 and 1954 festival grounds extended along the two blocks of Angell Street, just north of Main Street. The 1953 festival served 13,000 ears of corn and two hundred

pounds of butter to 6,000 people on Saturday, August 29.

The first corn festivals set the format for future festivals. Future events, included the corn eating contest, music, and local talent shows. Each festival ended with fireworks on Sunday evening. Later festival additions included the festival parade, the Corn Boiler Run, and the extension of the festival to four days.

The festival moved to Angell Park's more spacious grounds in 1955, the third year of the festival. The 1957 corn festival committee assignments included eight committees: dance, corn, butter, queen, concessions, corn sales, rides, and advertising. Bingo in the Angell Park pavilion was added to the roster of events in 1973.

The festival is the major event of the year in Sun Prairie. A corn building staffed by volunteers remains the center of the festival. Local service clubs and organizations use the festival to gain operating funds for their community projects.

In 1997, Stokely USA, expanded their facilities. Stokely had cooked the corn for the festival for years

so the festival had the challenge of finding a new location to steam over 70 tons of sweet corn. The solution came in constructing a new "community owned" corn cooking building with the help of local businesses and residents interested in taking "stalk" in the Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival. The community rallied to protect the future of the time-honored tradition that the festival has become. The new corn steaming facility was completed in 1997.

Today, approximately 100,000 people attend the four day Sweet Corn Festival on the 3rd full weekend of August. Nine local organizations still use the festival as one of their major fundraisers during the year and utilize hundreds of volunteers to staff the fest. On Saturday and Sunday nearly 80 ton of sweet corn are served on the grounds. The corn and the carnival continue to be the major attractions on the grounds. In addition, there are a wide variety of family activities, stage shows, musical entertainment, mini-golf, a craft show, specialty attractions, and a parade on Thursday night.

*Source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce*



## Organizations

A number of organizations exist to promote and maintain a range of cultural resources within and around the City. The American Legion Post #333, VFW Post #9362 and a list of other organizations can be obtained by contacting the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce. Some examples include:

### Sun Prairie Historical Society

The purpose of this organization is to support the on-going efforts of the Museum. The Society sponsors a regularly held tour of historic homes within the City.

### Sun Prairie Historical Restorations

This non-profit group was organized in 1976 for the purpose of preserving the historic Crosse House on Main Street. Its on-going mission is to preserve and restore any improvement in the City that has a special character or historical interest as a part of the cultural characteristics of Sun Prairie.

### Sun Prairie Civic Theatre

This area theatre group, created in 1970, performs four different productions a year. They are headquartered within the remaining Bradley farm buildings located on S. Bird Street next to Sheehan Park where rehearsals, meetings, set construction, and storage take place. Performances are held at the Sun Prairie High School auditorium which functions as the main facility serving the community as a performing arts venue.

### The Colonial Club

This organization originated in 1969 to provide a meeting place and activities for seniors. The initial meetings took place in the base-

ment of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum. The Colonial Club is now located at 301 Blankenheim Avenue.

### Sun Prairie Community Band

The Community Band, sometimes referred to as the Legion Band, was formed in 1961 and is comprised of adults and students. Free performances are conducted throughout the year including outdoor concerts at city parks, a spring and fall concert, and at community events.

### Sunshine Place

This charitable, non-profit organization directs and administers the operation of a facility located at 18 Rickel Road. The building currently houses a food pantry, a non-profit second-hand clothing store and space for community-oriented tenants. It is intended to provide a single point of access for residents in need.



*Flags of Freedom Parade*



*Sun Prairie Rotary Club Breakfast*



*Sun Prairie Civic Theater*



*Concerts in the Park*