

# Introduction



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Welcome to the City of Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan! This plan is intended to guide future decision making regarding the growth and development of the City of Sun Prairie over the next two decades and beyond. It is also intended to satisfy the City’s requirements under Section 66.1001 Wisconsin Statutes, commonly known as Wisconsin’s “Smart Growth” laws or comprehensive planning statutes. As such, the plan will address, at a minimum, the nine planning elements listed below as required by the statutes and further defined in Appendix A.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

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

## STATUTORY PLANNING GOALS

In 2007, the City received a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Comprehensive Planning grant program. Grant funds have provided the City with necessary resources to create this plan as an update to the City's Master Plan 2020. Recipients of comprehensive planning grants are obligated to consider a set of planning goals that were established to help encourage the adoption of "Smart Growth" oriented plans by local municipalities. The planning goals read as follows:

- Promotion of redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure and public services, and maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
- Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
- Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
- Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and low costs.
- Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.
- Encouragement of cooperation and coordination among nearby units of government.
- Building community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels within the community.
- Providing infrastructure, services and developable land adequate to meet market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- Promoting expansion or stabilization of the economic base and job creation.
- Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
- Planning and developing land uses that create or preserve unique urban and rural communities.
- Providing an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that meets the needs of all citizens.

These planning goals come directly from the statutes, and are intended to serve as an overall guide for the planning process.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

This plan consists 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, as well as a set of appendices. The appendices contain information and studies related to the development of the plan, including details regarding the household survey and other public input received in association with the development of the plan. Volume 2 contains the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations that are intended to be used to guide and direct the orderly growth and development of the City and its environs over the next several decades. In order to effectively plan for the community's future, a good understanding of past and current trends that have helped shape the community is critical, as is a good inventory of community resources, programs, facilities, infrastructure, land uses, etc. Volume 1 provides a resource for such information, as well as the supporting documentation reinforcing the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations found in Volume 2.



## PURPOSE AND INTENT

The comprehensive plan is a resource for managing the short-range (within the next five to ten years) and long-range (ten years and beyond) growth of the City of Sun Prairie. It is designed to be a working document used by City officials and officials from neighboring jurisdictions as a policy guide to direct community development decisions, to assist with community facility budgeting, and as a tool to focus and stimulate private housing, business and industrial investment in the community.

Creating a comprehensive plan is only the first step in directing community development. Subsequent planning efforts must focus on providing direct connections between the plan's recommendations and policies and actual land development activities. The most effective means of accomplishing this objective is to adopt development regulations that directly implement comprehensive plan policies and recommendations, and for the Plan Commission to evaluate all development related proposals in the context of whether or not they are consistent with the plan. Reference to the recommendations and policies of the plan when development decisions are being made will help establish the legal defensibility of those decisions. Therefore, the City's zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, official map and other relevant ordinances should be amended as needed to implement the plan.

In addition to modeling City ordinances and regulations after the policies and recommendations contained within the plan, the plan should be referenced as a tool to guide the day-to-day decision making of City officials. All zoning, land division, annexation, transportation, community service, development and redevelopment decisions affecting the City should be made in the context of their compatibility with the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations of this comprehensive plan. As a long-range comprehensive planning tool concerned with a wide variety of environmental, economic and social factors, the comprehensive plan must examine and provide recommendations for lands currently within the City limits as well as lands located outside the City limits but within strategic City expansion areas.

## SMART GROWTH

The term “Smart Growth” has become somewhat of a loaded term for those involved in the planning and development fields. Because it is often associated closely with movements such as the New Urbanism or Traditional Neighborhood Development, the term tends to raise questions and controversy for those who do not support these concepts. Although there is no single definition of what constitutes “Smart Growth,” it seems to be a widely misunderstood concept, and the term tends to be misused by both proponents and opponents, alike.

Sun Prairie believes that many of the goals and objectives of “Smart Growth” as a general concept are simply sound planning principles, and are key elements associated with building quality neighborhoods and attractive urban places. Nevertheless, this plan will avoid using this term wherever possible to avoid confusion and unnecessary debate over its meaning and intent, and instead shall refer to the state law as the “comprehensive planning statutes,” and this plan as the “City of Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan” or just simply the “Comprehensive Plan.”



## PLANNING HORIZON

This Comprehensive Plan is being prepared to guide the growth and development of Sun Prairie through 2030. In general, population and land use forecasts, housing forecasts, and other recommended policies and programs have been made with this time frame in mind. However, many of the recommendations contained herein are intended to be implemented over a much shorter time frame, and there are specific components of the plan for which alternative time frames will be used in order to better coordinate with the plans and policies of other agencies or units of government. As an example, recently adopted policies by the Capital Area Regional Plan Commission call for 25-year land use and urban service area forecasts, and therefore it makes sense to work within this time frame for certain components of this plan. In general, it can be assumed that the planning horizon for the various recommendations and forecasts contained within this plan is twenty years, or roughly 2030, unless noted otherwise.

## PLANNING AREA

Map 1-1 illustrates the City of Sun Prairie and its extraterritorial review area in relation to surrounding communities. Also illustrated is information pertaining to growth boundaries adopted by mutual agreement with surrounding municipalities. This information has been used to identify the "Planning Area" within which the City should focus most of its efforts. This does not mean that the City will develop all of the land within this planning area over the next twenty-year period, or that this is a boundary showing the City's intentions for future expansion. Rather, 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. For the purposes of this plan, most of the goals, objectives, recommendations, and policies contained in this plan will focus on and/or apply to the "Planning Area" shown on Map 1-1.

### WHAT IS AN EXTRATERRITORIAL REVIEW AREA ?

*By state law, the City of Sun Prairie has review authority over certain development activities on lands three miles outside its corporate boundaries to the point where they overlap with a neighboring jurisdiction. In some cases, the City has negotiated alternative boundaries through intergovernmental agreements.*

**See Map 1-1**

### WHAT IS THE PLANNING AREA ?

*The City of Sun Prairie's extraterritorial review area and growth boundaries, adopted by mutual agreement with surrounding municipalities, have been used to identify a primary planning 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.*



## PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

*An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan can be initiated by:*

- *Application from a member of the public, or*
- *Direction from the Plan Commission or Common Council*

*A public hearing is required and shall:*

- *Be held before the Plan Commission*
- *Receive proper notice and agenda posting*
- *Be considered for approval, rejection, or approval with modifications*

*Upon approval by the Plan Commission, the request/application is presented to the Common Council for consideration. The outcome will result in either:*

- *A plan amendment adopted by ordinance, or*
- *Rejection of the request*

## PLAN ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Under the Wisconsin comprehensive planning statutes, a comprehensive plan must be adopted by ordinance by the Common Council, after receiving a public hearing before Plan Commission. In the past, comprehensive plans prepared under the prior statutes were adopted by resolution of the Plan Commission, whose decision was then forwarded for certification to the Common Council. The ordinance requirement is intended to make the plan a stronger document that must be adhered to more closely than the comprehensive plans of the past. Thus, the comprehensive plan will be elevated in status from an advisory document to a legal document that will be the basis for all local actions or programs that affect land use and development, public facilities, and the delivery of urban services.

Despite this change, a comprehensive plan is still largely a guide for the community, and interpretations of plan policies and maps should keep this in mind. 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, the City needs to recognize that 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. Interpretation of the plan needs to be flexible enough to account for these changing factors, while keeping the long-term vision of creating a high quality living environment intact.

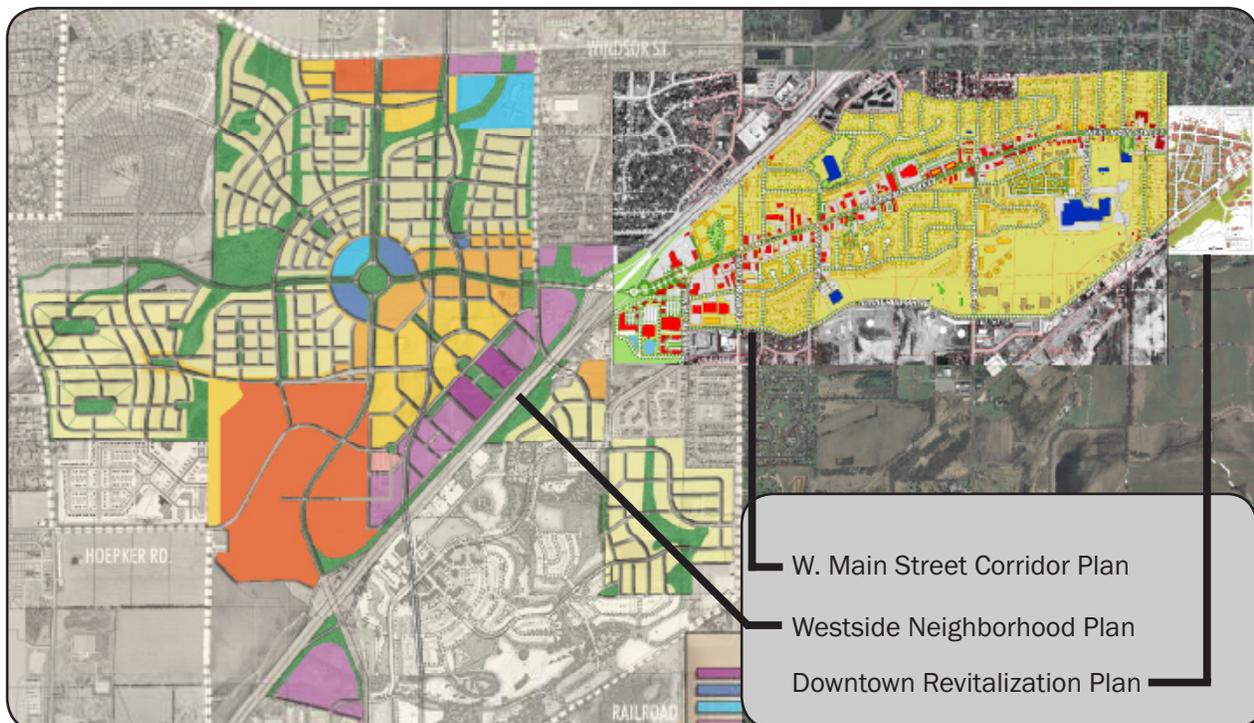
To ensure that the plan remains relevant and in touch with the goals of the community, it should be updated periodically. It is recommended that the plan be updated regularly every five to ten years, depending on the pace of growth and other changes in the community. In addition, changing conditions and new opportunities may warrant periodic amendments and updates to plan policies and recommendations on an as-needed basis. All plan amendments should follow a similar process to the adoption of this plan, with a public hearing before the Plan Commission, a recommendation from the Plan Commission to the Common Council, and the adoption of an ordinance amending the plan by the Common Council. Such amendments can be initiated by referral by the Plan Commission or Common Council, or may be requested by application from a member of the public. For amendments affecting a large geographical area of the City or proposing major changes to plan policies, a more involved public input process should be considered to ensure that proposed amendments are in the best interest of and are well supported by the community.

## PLAN COMPONENTS

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to update and replace the Master Plan 2020. However, many of the neighborhood plans and special plans that were adopted as components of the Master Plan 2020 remain in place and should continue to guide the development and decision making for their respective areas of interest. These plans include the following:

- Business District Revitalization Plan (2001)
- Westside Neighborhood Plan (2004)
- Downtown Phase II Plan (2004)
- Residential Development Phasing Plan (2004)
- West Main Street Corridor Plan (2006)
- Parks and Open Space Plan (2009)

It should be noted that the Sun Prairie Peripheral Area Plan, adopted in 1991, has not been actively implemented in recent years and in many aspects is no longer relevant. The Peripheral Area Plan is not being recommended for incorporation as a component of this Comprehensive Plan, and instead the recommendations and policies of this plan are intended to replace those of the previously adopted Peripheral Area Plan.





Public Open House: July 2008

## ADJACENT COMMUNITY PLANS

The following local plans, among others, adopted by adjacent municipalities should also be taken into consideration:

- *City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and associated neighborhood plans, including:*
  - *Rattman Neighborhood Plan*
  - *Pumpkin Hollow Neighborhood Plan*
  - *Northeast Neighborhood Plan (Reiner/Burke)*
  - *Felland Neighborhood Plan*
- *Town of Bristol Comprehensive Plan (2005)*
- *Town of Burke Land Use Plan (1999)*
- *Town of Sun Prairie Comprehensive Plan (2003)*
- *Town of Windsor Comprehensive Plan (2006)*

## OTHER PLANS AND PLANNING EFFORTS

Sun Prairie does not exist in a vacuum. The City is influenced significantly by surrounding communities and the amenities that are available in each of these communities. The development policies of other communities in the region have impacts on Sun Prairie, just as our development policies will have impacts on our surrounding communities. Recognizing this and acknowledging the regional plans that have influence over Sun Prairie, as well as the comprehensive plans of nearby communities, will help to ensure that the recommendations and policies contained within this plan are in keeping with these other plans. Where discrepancies exist, and conflicting recommendations and/or policies are discovered, this should be recognized and strategies developed to deal with these situations.

Regional plans that have influence over or that may have potential impacts on Sun Prairie are referenced throughout this plan, within the respective plan elements upon which such plans apply. Please see the background materials for each plan element contained in Volume 1 of this plan for an inventory of such related regional plans.

The City has entered into a number of intergovernmental agreements with adjacent communities to deal with areas of mutual interest. Such agreements cover issues that range from simple street maintenance responsibilities, to the provision of emergency services, to establishing development boundaries and parameters for development. These agreements are too numerous to list in their entirety, but those that are of primary interest to this planning process include:

- Town of Burke/Village of DeForest/City of Sun Prairie/City of Madison Cooperative Plan (2007)
- Sun Prairie/Windsor Intergovernmental Agreement (2007)
- Sun Prairie/Bristol Intergovernmental Agreement (2005)

The Sun Prairie Industrial Development Corporation (SPIDC) has a working plan for the long-term expansion of the Sun Prairie Business Park. The plan calls for a new interchange at US 151 and an extended Egge Road to increase access to the Business Park, and a biotech/agricultural technology focus as the Park continues to develop. The SPIDC plan was consulted and considered as this Comprehensive Plan was developed, particularly with respect to city street infrastructure, land use planning, economic development strategies, and future sanitary sewer service planning.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

It is important that the public is provided with an opportunity to be actively involved in the planning process. This helps to ensure that the plan is based on the needs and desires of the community, and helps legitimize the planning effort and garner support for the implementation of the resulting plan. Toward this end the City has adopted a Public Participation Plan, which is included in this plan as Appendix B. In addition to presentations to the Plan Commission, School Board, Transit Committee, Business Roundtable events sponsored by the Economic Development Council, and various other groups in the community, public participation activities associated with this planning process included the following:

### Steering Committee

The plan update process began with the establishment of an ad hoc Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, which met monthly beginning in August of 2007 to discuss the development of the plan. The Steering Committee was made up of residents from all four aldermanic districts, and representing a variety of interests and perspectives. The committee provided general direction for the process and reviewed all plan materials prior to the release of public drafts of the document. For specific topics and plan elements, smaller subcommittees consisting of Steering Committee members were also utilized. All of the Steering Committee and subcommittee meetings were open to the public.

### SWOT Exercise

An exercise aimed at developing and prioritizing an inventory of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was completed with the Steering Committee early on in the process as a means of identifying important issues and topics for further exploration and discussion. The results of this exercise can be found in Appendix C.

### Household Survey

A mail survey to a random sample of Sun Prairie residents was conducted in the spring of 2008. The survey was prepared by the Survey Research Center at University of Wisconsin River Falls, with input from City staff and the Steering Committee. The results of the survey are summarized in Appendix D, and information related to specific topics and plan elements are referenced throughout Volume 2 of the plan. The survey provided useful information regarding community attitudes and opinions across all plan elements, and helped to guide the recommendations and policies contained in the final plan.



Ad hoc Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee



Public Open House: July 2008

## Public Open House

The City hosted a public open house on July 23, 2008, to present the household survey results and follow up on several of the issues raised in the survey. The intent was to update the public on the progress of the plan, encourage people to stay involved, and gain additional insight on specific issues under each plan element. Results of the public input exercises are summarized in Appendix E.

**You are being recruited to join Team Sun Prairie!**

This is the first Open House for the Comprehensive Plan being updated by the City Planning Department and a community member Ad-Hoc steering committee. We invite you to attend and play a valuable role in guiding the future of your community.

 **Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Public Input Open House**

**Talents Needed:**

- ☛ Thoughts on what it is like to live in Sun Prairie
- ☛ Desire to make a difference and provide input for decision making in this diverse and growing city.
- ☛ Ideas of how Sun Prairie could be the best community for you, your family, or your business.

**-Refreshments Served-**

Please join us at anytime during the evening at the  
Westside Community Service Building  
Community Room  
2598 West Main Street

**Game Date:** July 23rd  
**Gates Open:** 5:30-7:30 pm  
**Presentation:** 6:00 pm  
Come hear the results of the Community Survey

## Media

A variety of media avenues were pursued to provide public notice of Steering Committee meetings and plan related activities, including announcements in the local newspaper, on the local cable television station, and postings at the Sun Prairie Municipal Building and the library. Additional notices were posted on the City's website along with plan materials and related information.

## Ad Hoc Committee on Economic Development

Concurrent with the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the City formed an ad hoc Committee for Economic Development to discuss in detail the issue of developing a strategic plan to guide economic development in the City. Rather than duplicate efforts, this process was utilized to form the Economic Development element of this plan. Because of this, the recommended strategies contained in the Economic Development element of Volume 2 are presented in more of a strategic plan format, and are different in appearance and orientation than the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations contained in the other plan elements.

This process involved numerous public meetings of the ad hoc Committee, as well as several focus group meetings that explored Sun Prairie's positioning and potential with respect to various market sectors that the City may or may not be in position to capitalize on. The economic development chapters of both Volume 1 and Volume 2 of this plan were assembled directly from the final report issued by the Committee.

## Land Use Workshop

The City hosted a land use workshop on June 15, 2009 to gain input with respect to the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. About two dozen individuals participated in the workshop. The workshop included a short design preference survey aimed at gauging single-family streetscape preferences, as well as hands-on neighborhood planning for three detailed planning areas in the City, with participants working in a small-group discussion format. Participants were provided with a presentation of background information preceding these activities, and a member of the Planning department staff served as a facilitator at each small-group discussion. The results of the workshop are summarized in Appendix F.



Public Open House: September 2009



Land Use Workshop: June 2009



Public Open House: September 2009

### Draft Plan Presentation Public Open House

A presentation of the draft plan was provided at a public forum held on September 10, 2009. This provided an opportunity for members of the public to learn more about the proposed plan and ask questions prior to the required public hearing.

Once assembled, the draft plan was presented at a series of public meetings before the Plan Commission and the Common Council's Committee of the Whole, beginning on July 28, 2009, and continuing at several subsequent meetings. The intent was to let these bodies become familiar with the plan and its recommendations, and raise questions and suggest changes to refine the plan, prior to the public hearing and adoption process.

### Public Hearing

A public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan was held before the Plan Commission on October 13 and October 27, 2009. Public comments received are on record in the City Clerk's office.

### Plan Adoption

The plan was brought before the Common Council for consideration at a public meeting on November 3, 2009.



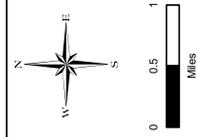
Public Open House: September 2009



# City of Sun Prairie Planning Area January 1, 2008

### Legend

-  City Limit
-  Urban Service Area
-  Planning Area
-  City of Sun Prairie ETJ
-  Township Boundary



Notes:  
Source: City of Sun Prairie  
Date Adopted: November 3, 2009

