

# Economic Development

# 6



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Regional Context	6-2
Statistics/Demographics	6-4
Local Economic Development Programs	6-14
State Economic Development Programs	6-18
Educational Training Resources	6-20
Public Input	6-24
Building on Success	6-42

This chapter explores the current economic development environment, including comparisons with other communities in the region, and an inventory of current programs and efforts toward supporting economic development in the City of Sun Prairie. Included is an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the City that lays the ground work for the identification of target sectors that the City is well positioned to pursue, or desires to pursue, over the next two decades.

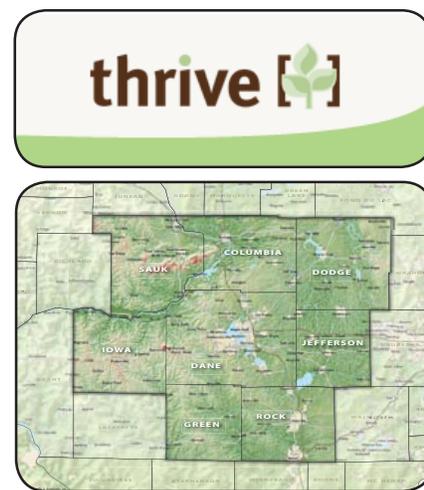
Volume 2 of this plan element contains strategies that are intended to guide the City's future actions and decisions related to the promotion and support of economic development activities in Sun Prairie.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Sun Prairie is the second largest city within Dane County and occupies a prominent location with respect to the region's transportation system. Access to the interstate highway system (I-39/90/94) is readily available within two miles of the City providing connections to Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Milwaukee and the rest of the Midwest. Access to other state destinations is readily available via US 151 and STH 19, which both pass directly through Sun Prairie. Sun Prairie is also located only a short drive from the Dane County Regional Airport, which is located on Madison's northeast side.



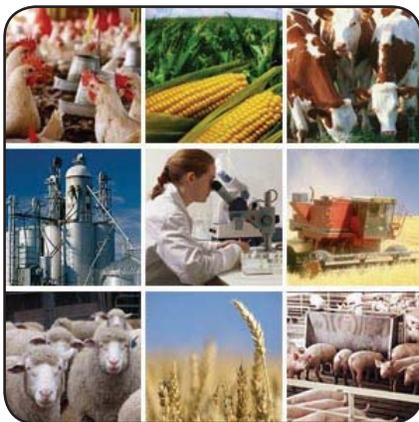
Source: Google Maps



Within the broader region, the counties of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk in South Central Wisconsin (also referred to as the Greater Madison Region) have joined together to form a regional economic development partnership known as THRIVE. This region offers an amazing breadth and depth of regional advantages that make it great for work and play, including:

- Economic driver diversity and corporate presence
- Higher education and innovation capacity
- State capital and state government
- Natural resources, landscape diversity and expertise
- Agriculture, dairy, and food science infrastructure and expertise
- Individual identifiable communities and urban/rural balance
- Connection to some of the Midwest's largest urban centers

The THRIVE region's location offers substantial advantages for its businesses and residents, with easy access to highway systems, international airports, ferries and a location within an average of 500 miles of fourteen states and Canada. The region is less than an hour's drive from Chicago, and Milwaukee is thirty minutes away by car from the region's eastern boundary. Minneapolis/St. Paul, Kansas City and St. Louis are all easily accessible within a reasonable distance, providing easy access to multiple Midwestern markets. In addition, a rapidly growing number of non-stop flights, coupled with the region's central location, results in very convenient air travel.



The THRIVE region has an exceptional mix of innovative businesses, from a strong distribution and manufacturing base in Rock County, some of the best agricultural land in the world in Green, Iowa and Dodge counties, and major tourist attractions in Sauk and Columbia counties, to the robust entrepreneurial climate fostered in Dane County and the greater Madison area. The region's base sector strengths in financial services, insurance, government, light manufacturing and health care provide strong support for emerging sectors such as the biotechnology, bio-agriculture and bio-medical industries.

Wisconsin's capital city, Madison, lies at the heart of the region. Madison is the seat of state government and the home to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW), both serving as anchors to a stable economic base. The UW is a primary economic driver for the region and continues to be one of the top recipients of federal funding for its world class high-tech and bio-tech research and facilities. A strong partnership with the local technical college system and the existence of several excellent K-12 school districts in the region help with the development of a vital and dynamic workforce.

The region's natural assets also contribute heavily to its success. Area residents live at the apex of some of the most important natural resources in the world. They are surrounded by some of the richest agricultural land in the world, near the largest freshwater resource in the world in the Great Lakes, and between the Northern Timberlands and the Mississippi River Basin. These four forces overwhelmingly shape the local economy and culture. The THRIVE Region is ideally situated for long-term, sustainable growth for both businesses and families.

Source: Adapted from THRIVE website

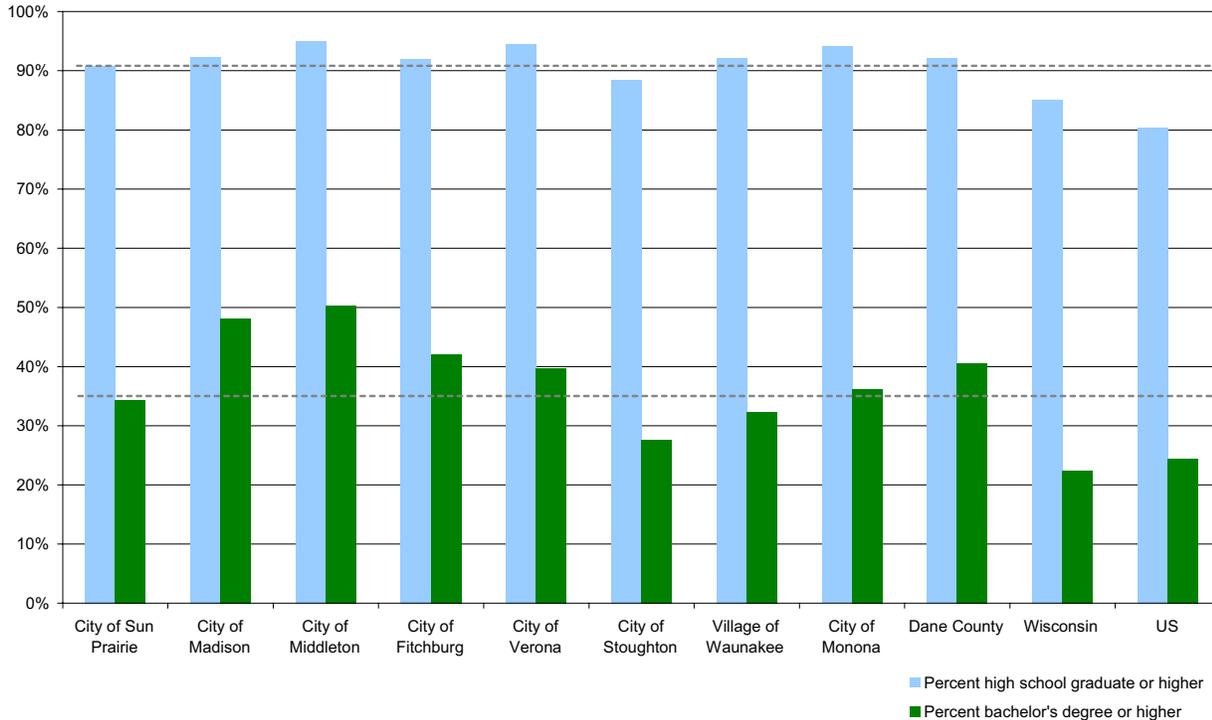
## STATISTICS/DEMOGRAPHICS

A full demographic and economic analysis of the community in comparison with other Dane County communities, the State of Wisconsin, and the United States, is included as Appendix K. Selected information and tables from this analysis to help describe and understand the Sun Prairie labor force and economic base are reported below. Statistics are derived from the 2000 US Census unless otherwise noted.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Sun Prairie ranks well above the state and United States average in terms of the percentage of residents who are high school graduates (90.9%), but ranks slightly below the Dane County average (92.2%). Likewise, Sun Prairie's percentage of residents who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (34.4%) is well above the state and national averages, but below the county average of 40.6%.

**FIGURE 6-1**  
**COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**

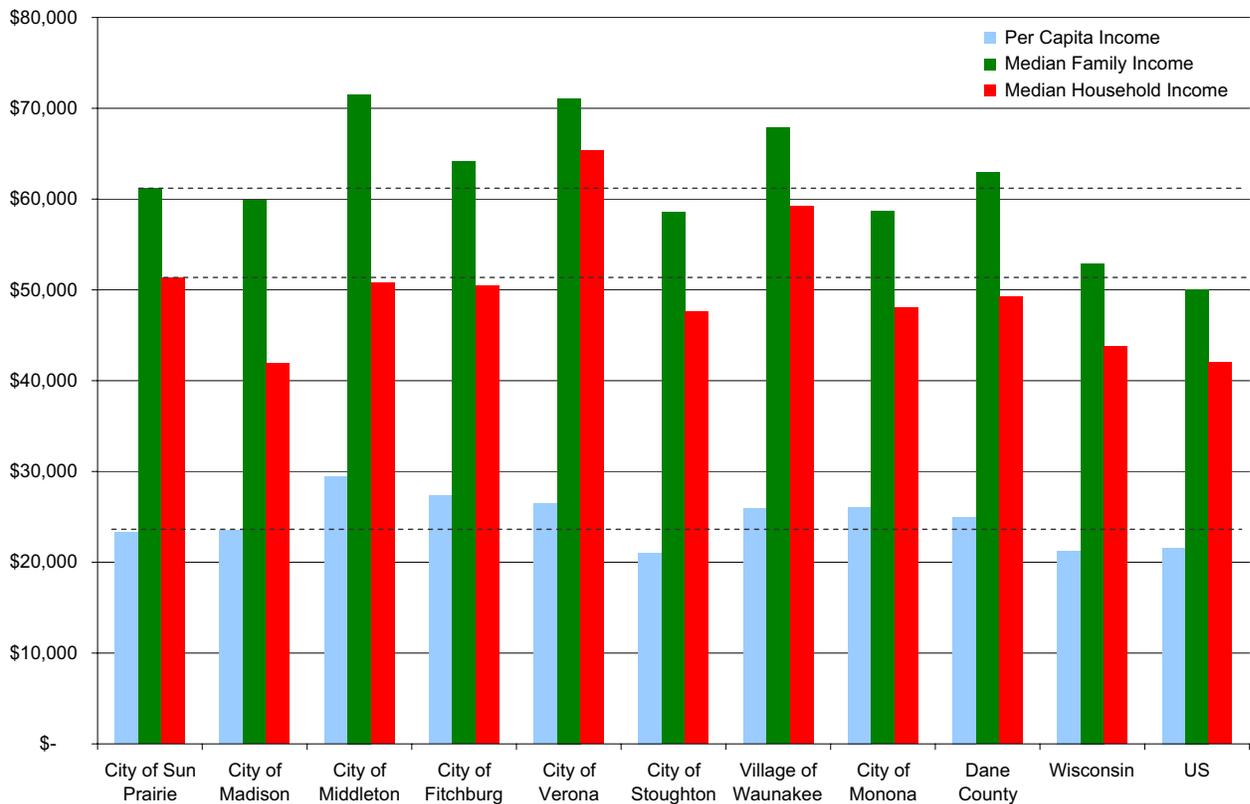


Source: US Census 2000

### INCOME

While the median family income of Sun Prairie residents (\$61,197) is higher than state and United States levels, Sun Prairie ranks slightly behind Dane County (\$62,964). However, median household income in Sun Prairie (\$51,345) is slightly higher than Dane County (\$49,223).

**FIGURE 6-2**  
**RESIDENT INCOME: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**

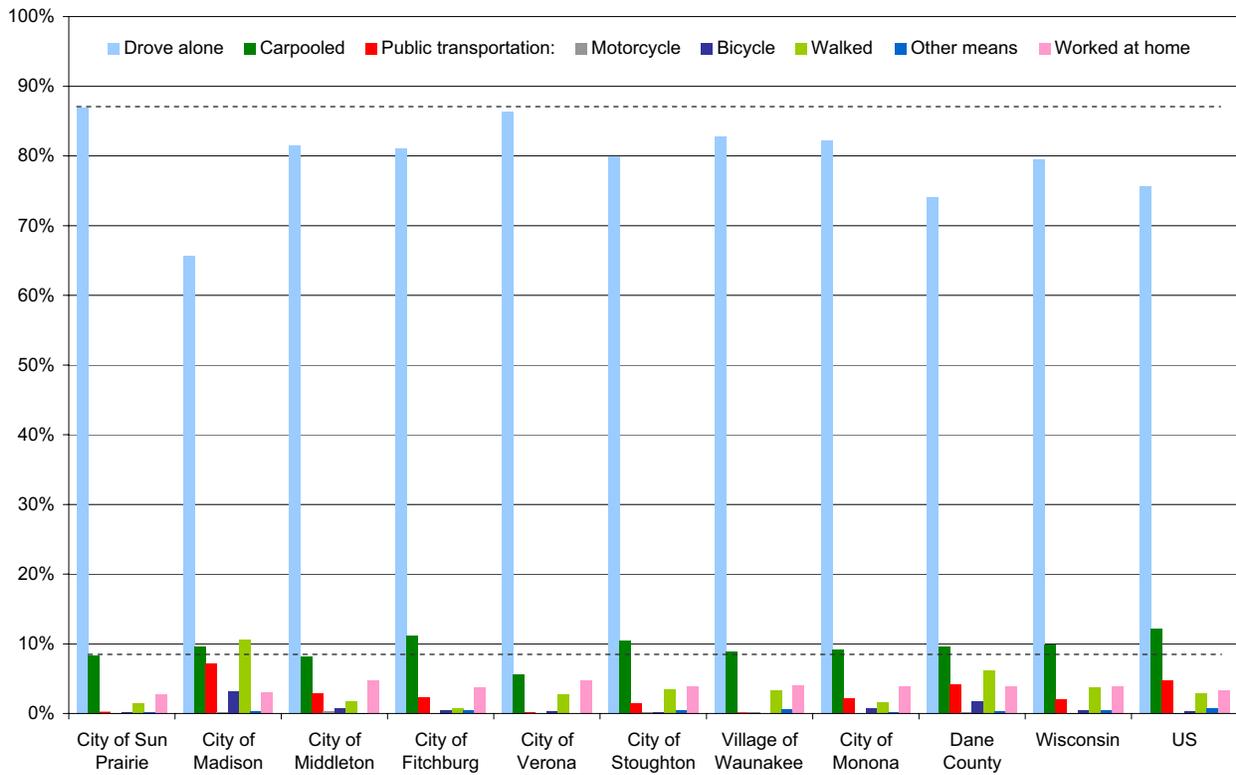


Source: US Census 2000

## TRAVEL TO WORK/COMMUTE TIMES

Sun Prairie commuters are slightly more likely to commute to work alone than residents of most other Dane County communities, and are less likely to walk, bike, carpool or use public transportation for their commute. The lack of a regular public transit link with Madison and the lack of a park-and-ride facility likely contribute to this trend.

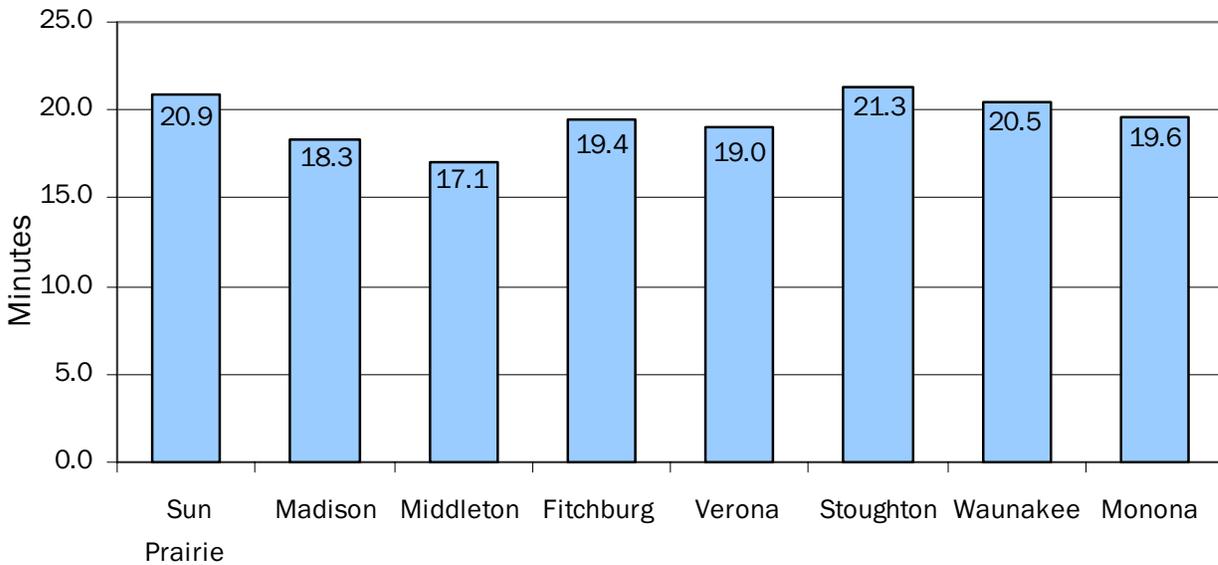
**FIGURE 6-3**  
**METHODS OF TRAVEL TO WORK: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**



Source: US Census 2000

As might be expected, Sun Prairie, being slightly farther from downtown Madison and other major employment areas, has a slightly higher than average commute time than many other communities in Dane County.

**FIGURE 6-4**  
**AVERAGE COMMUTE TIMES: MADISON AND AREA COMMUNITIES**



Source: US Census 2000

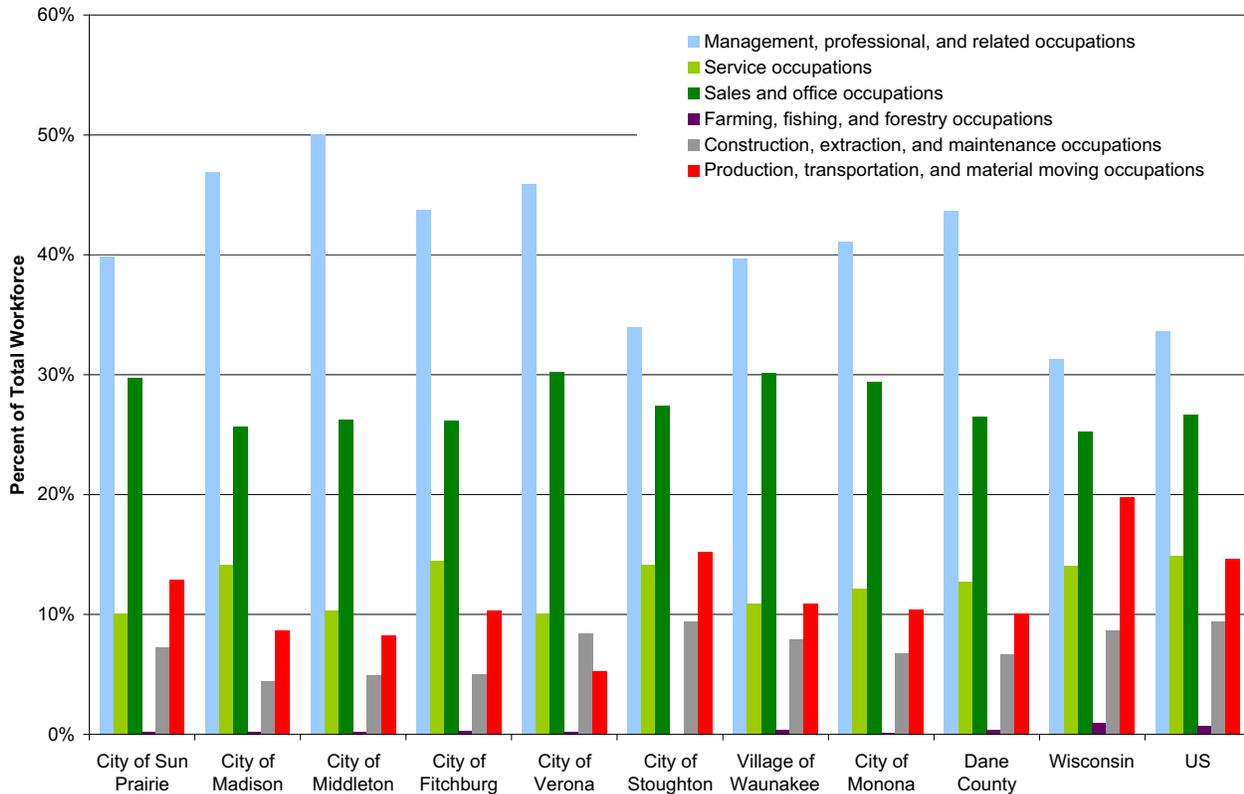


US 151 at N. Bristol Street

## EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY

Figures 6-5 and 6-6 provide a breakdown of employment by occupation and employment by industry, respectively, and Figure 6-7 illustrates industry change between 1990 and 2000.

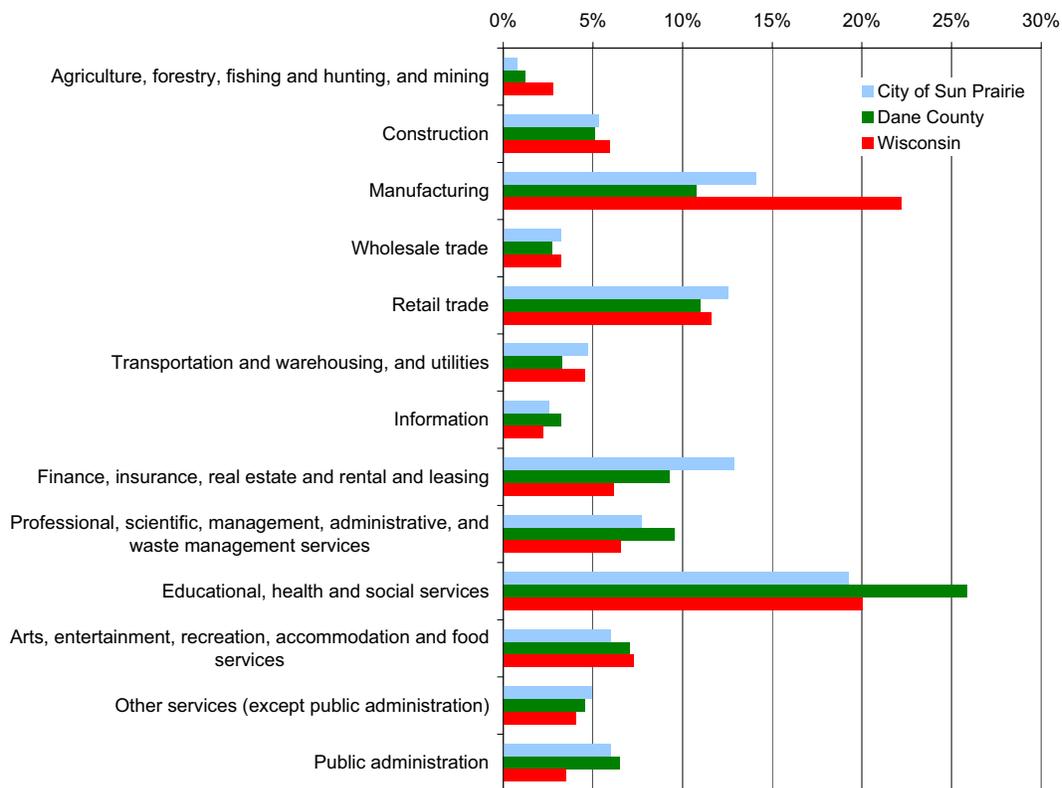
**FIGURE 6-5  
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**



Source: US Census 2000



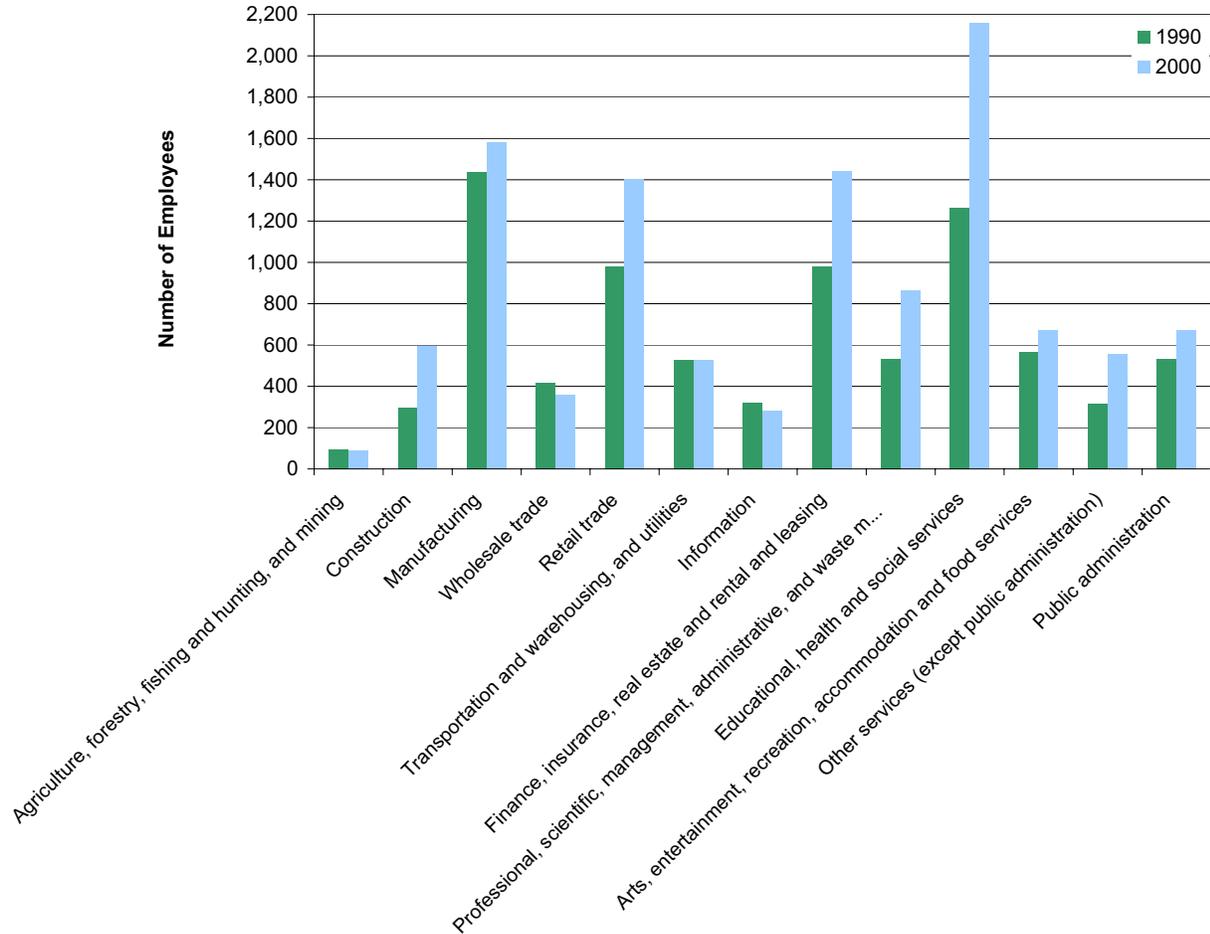
**FIGURE 6-6  
 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**



Source: US Census 2000



**FIGURE 6-7**  
**INDUSTRY CHANGE: CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE (1990 TO 2000)**



Source: US Census 1990 and 2000



Old Canning Inspection and Packing



New Development on Cannery Site



## TOP EMPLOYERS (2007)

The Sun Prairie Area School District and QBE/General Casualty top the list of Sun Prairie employers, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's 2007 statistics. It is important to also note the impact of other nearby employers on the Sun Prairie economy, such as American Family Insurance and other businesses in the American Family Center office park, located just to the west of the City of Sun Prairie.

**TABLE 6-1  
SUN PRAIRIE TOP EMPLOYERS - 2007**

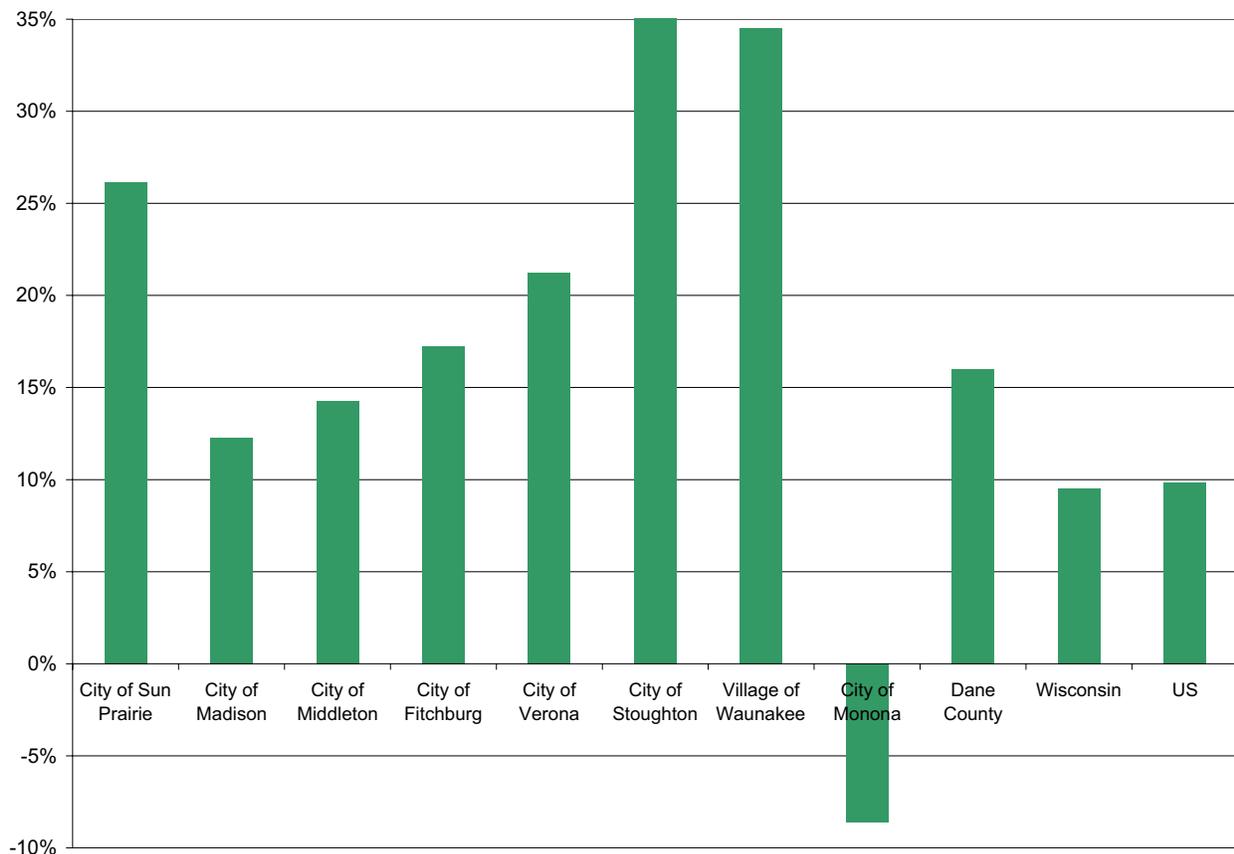
Rank	Employer	Industry Type	Number of Employees
1	Sun Prairie Area School Dist.	Elementary and Secondary Schools	500-999
2	General Casualty (QBE)	Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers	500-999
3	Wisconsin Food Gift Co.	Mail Order Houses	250-499
4	Veyance Technologies Inc.	Rubber and Plastics Hoses and Belting Manufacturing	250-499
5	Prairie Athletic	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	100-249
6	City of Sun Prairie	Executive and Legislative Offices, Combined	100-249
7	Verizon North Inc.	Wired Telecommunications Carriers	100-249
8	Royle Printing Co.	Commercial Lithographic Printing	100-249
9	Copps	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	100-249
10	Wisconsin Distributors	Beer and Ale Merchant Wholesalers	100-249
11	Famous Footwear	General Warehousing and Storage	100-249
12	Conrad's Inc.	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	100-249
13	Sun Prairie Clinic	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	100-249
14	Wal-Mart	Discount Department Stores	100-249
15	YMCA	Civic and Social Organizations	50-99
16	Walgreens	Pharmacies and Drug Stores	50-99
17	WPPI	Electric Power Distribution	50-99
18	M & I Support Services Corp.	Financial Transaction Processing, Reserve, and Clearinghouse Act.	50-99
19	Capitol Mechanical Inc.	Non-residential Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning Contractors	50-99
20	Pick'n Save	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	50-99
21	Bank of Sun Prairie	Commercial Banking	50-99
22	Soderholm	General Line Grocery Merchant Wholesalers	50-99
23	One Call Dental Staffing Inc.	Temporary Help Services	50-99
24	SM & P Utility Resources Inc.	Surveying and Mapping Services (except Geophysical)	50-99

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

## LABOR FORCE

Figure 6-8 illustrates the growth of the labor force in selected Dane County municipalities from 1990 to 2000. It is important to note that while some smaller communities experienced a higher percent growth in their labor force, Sun Prairie was second to only the City of Madison in terms of the number persons added to the labor force during that decade. From 2000 to 2007, the Sun Prairie labor force has grown an additional 35.7%. This represents residents of Sun Prairie that are participating members of the workforce – not to be confused with individuals working in Sun Prairie.

**FIGURE 6-8**  
**PERCENT GROWTH OF LABOR FORCE: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**  
**(1990 TO 2000)**

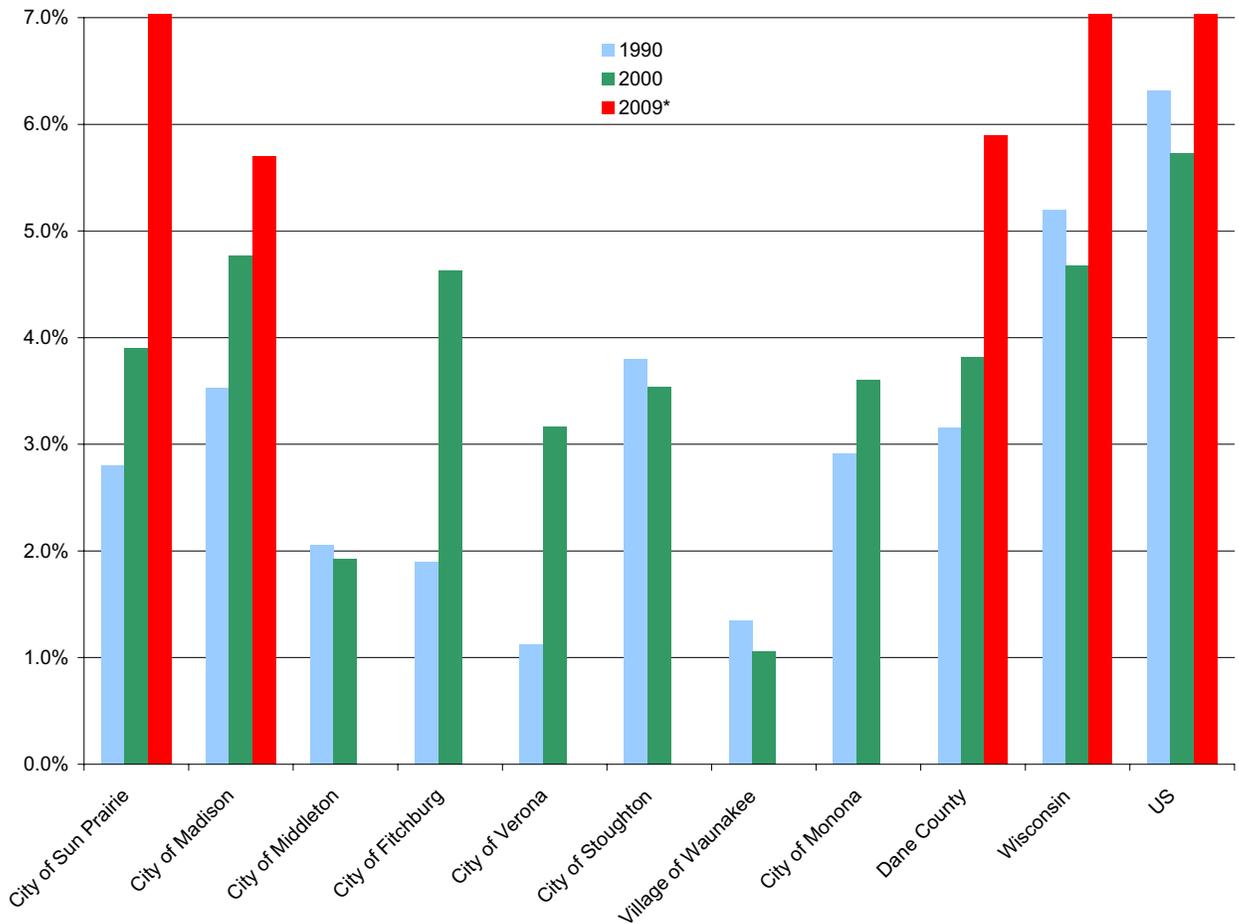


Source: US Census 1990 and 2000

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The Madison region continues to fair better than the rest of Wisconsin and the United States in terms of unemployment rates. However, 2009 figures show that unemployment in Sun Prairie, while still below Wisconsin and United States rates, is higher than the Dane County unemployment rate.

**FIGURE 6-9**  
**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES: SELECTED DANE COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES**  
**(1990, 2000, MAY 2009)**



Source: US Census 1990 and 2000, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (2009)  
 Note: Figures for 2009 are not available for other Dane County communities other than Madison.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Sun Prairie has limited options in terms of economic development incentives, but has a strong history of using the tools that are available to encourage economic development and attract investment to the community. A summary of available programs and current efforts is provided below.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

The City has a very positive track record regarding the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to support economic development in the community in a responsible way. This economic development tool was used to develop the Sun Prairie Business Park, and to initiate revitalization efforts in the City's downtown. The City currently has five active TIF districts, and has successfully closed five prior districts. Active TIF districts are illustrated on Map 6-1, and are summarized below.

- TIF-6 is an industrial TIF that encompasses the Marshview Drive Industrial Park. Several lots remain to be developed within this district, including property located along S. Bird Street. TIF-6 was designated in 1997.
- TIF-7 is an industrial TIF in the City's Business Park. It is one of a series of districts used to help finance infrastructure for the development and keep land costs down as a means of attracting new businesses. TIF-7 was designated in 1998 and is projected to close by 2018.
- TIF-8 is a redevelopment district that is aimed at revitalizing the Downtown and transforming an aging industrial corridor adjacent to the traditional Main Street business district to an urban village setting. TIF-8 was designated in 2001, and saw construction begin on its first phase of redevelopment in 2003 with the Cannery Square project. Cannery Square has led to additional redevelopment activity on other sites in the area. As of 2009, approximately \$17.75 million of TIF assistance, including site demolition and remediation, infrastructure installation, beautification, and direct economic incentive payments to developers, have leveraged approximately \$57.1 million in new value in the downtown area. The downtown revitalization project is an ongoing effort that will likely continue for many years.

*See Map 6-1*



Cannery Square  
During and Post Re-Development



St. Mary's Emergency Center



Hanley Site on W. Main Street

- TIF-9 is a mixed-use district that was created to assist with the assembly of land and installation of infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating the construction of a health care campus near the US 151/Reiner Road interchange. Approximately seventeen acres within the district was sold to SSM Health Care in 2008, and a stand-alone emergency room opened on the site in 2009. The City retains three parcels within the district that it is marketing for commercial or office development, and SSM retains substantial room to expand the health care campus in the coming years.
- TIF-10 was designated in 2008 as a blight-elimination district along a portion of the W. Main Street corridor to encourage reinvestment in this area.

## REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Through its participation in the Wisconsin Development Fund program, the City has established a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to make direct business loans on a companion basis with other financing sources for qualifying projects within the corporate limits. The program is available to projects that have demonstrated that other financing options are not available on comparable terms, and that are aimed at job creation and/or job retention. Activities eligible for funding through the RLF include land, equipment or building acquisition, new construction or remodeling/expansion of existing buildings, working capital, site preparation and demolition, and payments for assessments for utilities. More than half of the jobs created or retained on an RLF project must be made available to persons of low to moderate-income per federal guidelines.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Funded through TIF-8, the Economic Development Fund provides assistance to projects that contribute to the redevelopment of the downtown, including assistance with the maintenance and improvement of exterior building facades. The Economic Development Fund is comprised of four programs as follows:

### Redevelopment Loan Program

The Redevelopment Loan program is available to assist with acquisition, demolition, site preparation or similar activities deemed necessary to stimulate development projects. In periods of high interest rates, this program may be advantageous to assist with redevelopment, but since the loan rate is based on the municipal rate plus one percent, it is not always a strong incentive or catalyst for redevelopment.

### Rehabilitation Loan Program

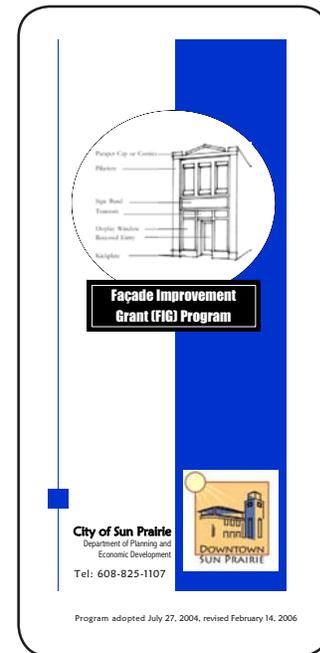
The Rehabilitation Loan program is similar to the Redevelopment Loan program in that the rate is based on the City's borrowing rate plus one percent, but it is aimed at interior and exterior building rehabilitation.

### Business Redevelopment Loan Program

The Business Redevelopment Loan program is intended for leasehold improvements, equipment, or other capital start-up costs. Like the Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Loan programs, the interest rate is the municipal rate plus one percent, and the program is intended to help fill a financing gap to help make a project feasible.

### Façade Improvement Program

The Façade Improvement program consists of two grant programs to assist with building maintenance, improvement, and rehabilitation in the downtown area. The Façade Improvement Grant (FIG) program is aimed at providing grants to commercial property owners within TIF-8 to assist with the building rehabilitation and façade restoration for building facades facing public rights-of-way. Grant limits are fairly modest for routine maintenance and rehabilitation, but increased funds may be made available for substantial restorations of historic building facades. The Design Assistance program is also available to fund up to fifty percent of the costs of hiring a qualified architect to assist with plan development. As of 2009, the FIG and Design Assistance programs have helped to fund eight projects, and \$68,754 in grant funds have been allocated to help leverage \$170,356.50 in total improvements to buildings along Main Street in the downtown.



212 E. Main Street - Before and After Façade Improvement Grant work

## INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS

The Department of Commerce's Industrial Revenue Bond program (IRB) allows all Wisconsin cities, villages and towns to support industrial development through the sale of tax-exempt bonds. The proceeds from the bond sale are loaned to businesses to finance capital investment projects at, primarily, manufacturing facilities. Even though IRB's are municipal bonds, they are not general obligations of the municipality. The company or business that will use the facilities provides the interest and principal payments on the loan. The local government is in partnership with the business, lending its name, but not its credit, to the bond issue.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Sun Prairie city staff provides assistance as needed to help facilitate new investment and reinvestment in the community. The position of Economic Development Coordinator was created in 2006 to lead efforts to recruit new investment and improve communication with, and retention of, existing businesses.

## SUN PRAIRIE WATER AND LIGHT

Sun Prairie Water and Light maintains several programs for businesses including:

- Cogeneration Evaluation Assistance
- Backup Generator Programs
- Utility Owned Supplementary Generation
- Customer Owned Generation
- Efficiency Improvement Program
- New Construction Design Assistance
- The Preparation of Lighting Plans for Newly Developing Sites
- Energy Management Investment Assistance
- Green Energy Alternatives Feasibility
- Fiber Optic and Wireless Internet Services
- Safety Testing
- Substation Maintenance
- Transformer Oil Testing
- Assistance with Power Quality Assessments
- Load-Based, Usage Pricing Options

More details on these programs are available from the Sun Prairie Water and Light utility.

## STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The State Department of Commerce (Commerce) provides economic development assistance and programs to facilitate job growth and new business growth in Wisconsin communities. Although its Division of Business Development is responsible for administering more than 25 separate economic development programs, they can be categorized into five distinct areas: Entrepreneurial Development, Capital Finance, Technology Development, Employee Training, and "Targeted Businesses." All of these programs apply common underwriting criteria.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

In recognition of the importance of a sound business plan, Commerce offers an Early Planning Grant program (EPG) that provides grants to entrepreneurs and small businesses to help off-set a portion of the cost of hiring an independent third party to develop a comprehensive business plan.

### CAPITAL FINANCING

Commerce's capital finance programs offer below market rate financing to businesses that are willing to make a firm commitment to invest in Wisconsin. Notwithstanding the attractiveness of the interest rate, it should be noted that Commerce is not a primary lender. In fact, given its limited financial resources, Commerce works closely with eligible businesses and their private sector lenders to minimize the amount of public funds necessary to make a project go forward.

### TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Commerce recognizes the need for Wisconsin businesses to stay on the forefront of technological innovation. To assist in this process, Commerce offers a Technology Development program that is designed to assist businesses and entrepreneurs that are researching new technologies, products, or manufacturing processes that, if successful, could have a significant impact upon Wisconsin's economy. This loan program is designed as a cost sharing program with flexible repayment terms that are keyed to the success of the particular research project.

## EMPLOYEE TRAINING

In keeping with Commerce's long held belief that Wisconsin's best assets are its people, the agency offers training programs that are designed to enhance the skills and abilities of its workforce. Offered in the form of a matching grant, the Customized Labor Training program (CLT) has historically been driven by a company's commitment to re-invest in new technologies that necessitate the need for training. However, in addition to the CLT program, Commerce now offers the BEST program which is specifically designed to meet the wide variety of training needs of Wisconsin's small businesses.

## "TARGETED BUSINESSES"

Please note that while the descriptions are fairly generic, Commerce does give special consideration to "targeted businesses" such as: minority owned businesses, women owned businesses, recycling businesses, the dairy industry, etc.

## TRADE SHOWS

In order to encourage small and new exporters to get first-hand experience of international markets, Commerce offers a Trade Show Grant of up to \$5,000 to cover many of the costs of exhibiting at international trade events. The Center for International Business Education Research at the UW-Madison also offers a Trade Show Travel Grant to cover other expenses associated with trade shows in the hi-tech and biotech sectors.

## COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS OF OTHER STATE DEPARTMENTS

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce also coordinates resources from other state agencies and can match those resources to businesses in need of assistance.

## EDUCATIONAL TRAINING RESOURCES

### SUN PRAIRIE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Sun Prairie School District (SPASD) employs a School to Work Coordinator who arranges and implements a variety of program and activities ranging from Technical Writing and Advanced Composition courses, mock interviews for career oriented students, and a job fair for students to meet with local employers.

The SPASD has also recently undertaken an initiative to create more opportunities for direct interaction between teachers and local employers who hire young adults. This interaction is targeted to facilitate communication by employers to teachers so they may customize their curricula to address current needs.

### Career and Technical Education Plan

The SPASD maintains a Career and Technical Education program (CTE) that is designed to “empower students in grades six through twelve with the knowledge and skills necessary for career development and life success in a technological and global society.” The SPASD has developed a four year strategic plan that identifies specific goals and objectives for the program.

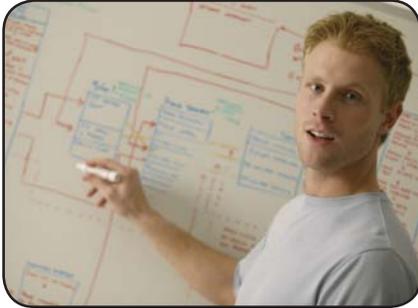
Goals and Objectives are focused on six content disciplines:

- Agriculture Education
- Business Education
- Family and Consumer Education
- Health Occupations
- Marketing Education
- Technology and Engineering Education

The program further breaks down their goals and objectives to sixteen career clusters, and then into 82 different employment opportunities. Each opportunity is then aligned with a “career pathway” that outlines recommended coursework to best be prepared for that occupation.



Source: Sun Prairie Area School District Career and Technical Education Strategic Plan 2008-2011



## SUN PRAIRIE BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Starting with two educators and five business leaders, the Sun Prairie Business and Education Partnership has grown to include more than 100 businesses. The partnership has three key goals and focuses its programs and activities on those areas. First, it strives to have business people provide a vibrant, caring presence in public and private schools. Second, it aims to reinforce the significance of student achievement, and third; it strives to connect the world of education with the world of work.



Several activities support the goal of providing a caring presence in the schools.

- On the first day of school, for example, business members greet students at the door.
- Twice a year business members visit kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms to read. The readers told students about their jobs and about the importance of reading and why they enjoy it.
- To improve student attitudes about the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam, business members are present at the time of testing to distribute pencils and snacks and to deliver pep talks about the test to eighth and tenth graders.
- To reinforce the importance of student achievement, the partnership holds quarterly recognition luncheons.
- Students in grades four through six who complete every assignment are invited to a pizza celebration hosted by business members.
- A breakfast of champions is held for students in the fifth and sixth grades who complete every assignment on time for the entire year.
- The partnership also reinforces achievement annually with three post-secondary scholarships in technical careers.
- For seventh, eighth and ninth graders, the partnership sponsors an annual writing contest on a topic related to career goals. Community senior citizens get involved by reading and selecting the finalists.

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Junior Achievement (JA) is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating students in grades K-12 about entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. JA has been promoting business education since 1919, first through an after-school secondary program, and later through in-school partnerships with educators.

JA programs help prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs which make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students put these lessons into action and learn the value of contributing to their communities.

JA's unique approach allows volunteers from the community to deliver our curriculum while sharing their experiences with students. Embodying the heart of JA, our classroom volunteers transform the key concepts of our lessons into a message that inspires and empowers students to believe in themselves, showing them they can make a difference in the world.

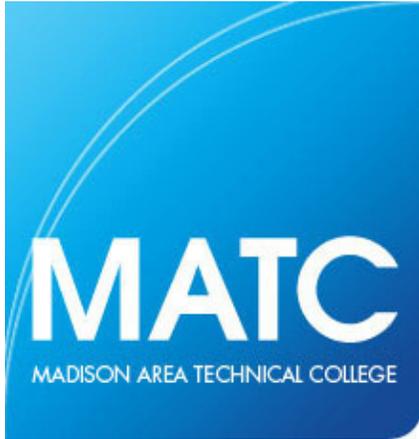
The elementary school programs include six sequential themes with activities that build on studies from each preceding grade, for kindergarten through fifth-grade students, and one capstone experience. Students learn the basic concepts of business and economics and how education is relevant to the workplace.

The middle grades programs build on concepts the students learned in JA's elementary school program and help teens make difficult decisions about how to best prepare for their educational and professional future. The programs supplement standard social studies curricula and develop communication skills that are essential to success in the business world.

Junior Achievement's high school programs help students make informed, intelligent decisions about their future, and fosters skills that will be highly useful in the business world. With a range of different programs, JA teaches about concepts relating to entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and work readiness.

During the 2008-2009 school year, there were 674 students in 89 classes throughout ten schools in Sun Prairie School District participating in a Junior Achievement program.





## **MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE (MATC) Business, Industry and Community Services**

The Business, Industry and Community Services Department works directly with business and community organizations to provide customized services to meet the needs of its customers. MATC delivers high quality, competitive, innovative and flexible employee development solutions including:

- Customized Training
- Skills Assessment
- Technical Assistance

Specific areas course offerings include:

- Communication and Workplace Effectiveness
- Computer Training
- Presentations, PowerPoint, and Project Management
- Leadership and Supervision
- Increasing Your Sales Through Government Contracting
- Manufacturing and Technical
- Customized Training

### **Business Procurement Assistance Center**

The most comprehensive website of any Department of Defense procurement technical assistance center program on the Internet. The site assists in all aspects of state and federal procurement.

### **Job Posting Service**

Companies may use the job placement forum to post a position for MATC students to access.

## PUBLIC INPUT

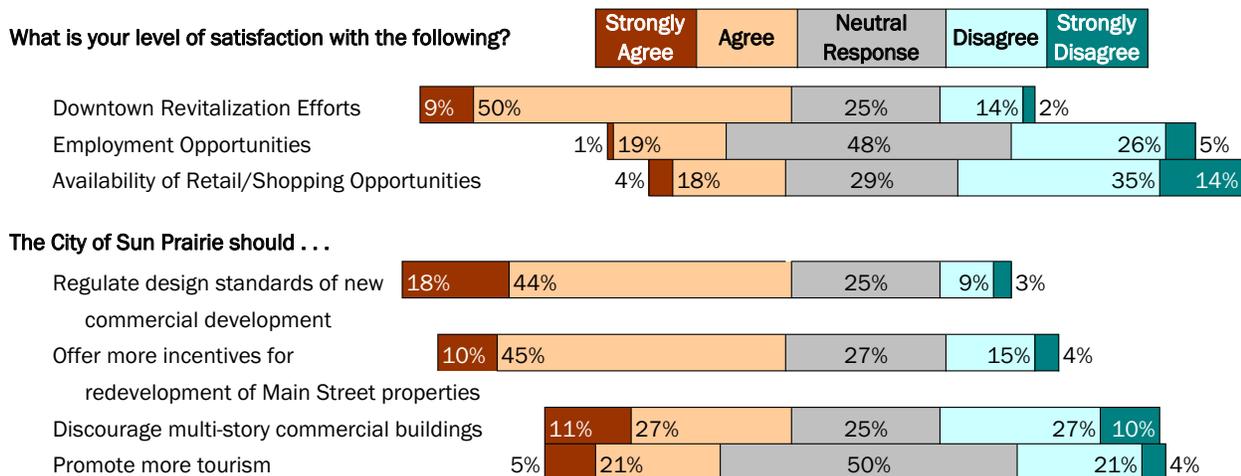
### SWOT EXERCISE

Early on in the plan update process, the Steering Committee participated in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise to identify defining major issues and opportunities facing the City. The Steering Committee identified a number of issues related to economic development. Community growth and development emerged as the predominant issue as both a weakness and an opportunity. The new Westside development, the Sun Prairie Business Park, Main Street and Downtown revitalization efforts were viewed as strengths to provide quality job, retail, and housing diversity opportunities. However, the rapid pace of unbalanced growth and a perception that neighborhood plans were not being implemented as adopted were identified as the top weaknesses and threats in the community. The Committee listed mixed-use development, the attraction of retail, community events, housing diversity, attraction of an aging population, and renewable energy efforts as additional opportunities to bolster economic development for Sun Prairie. Full results can be found in Appendix C.

### HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Economic development was one of several topics that were addressed in the household survey. Survey respondents indicated that they were generally satisfied about the City’s downtown redevelopment efforts, but dissatisfied about employment and retail shopping opportunities in the City. The notion of regulating the design of new commercial developments was strongly supported, as was the idea of offering incentives for redevelopment of Main Street properties.

**FIGURE 6-10**  
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESPONSES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

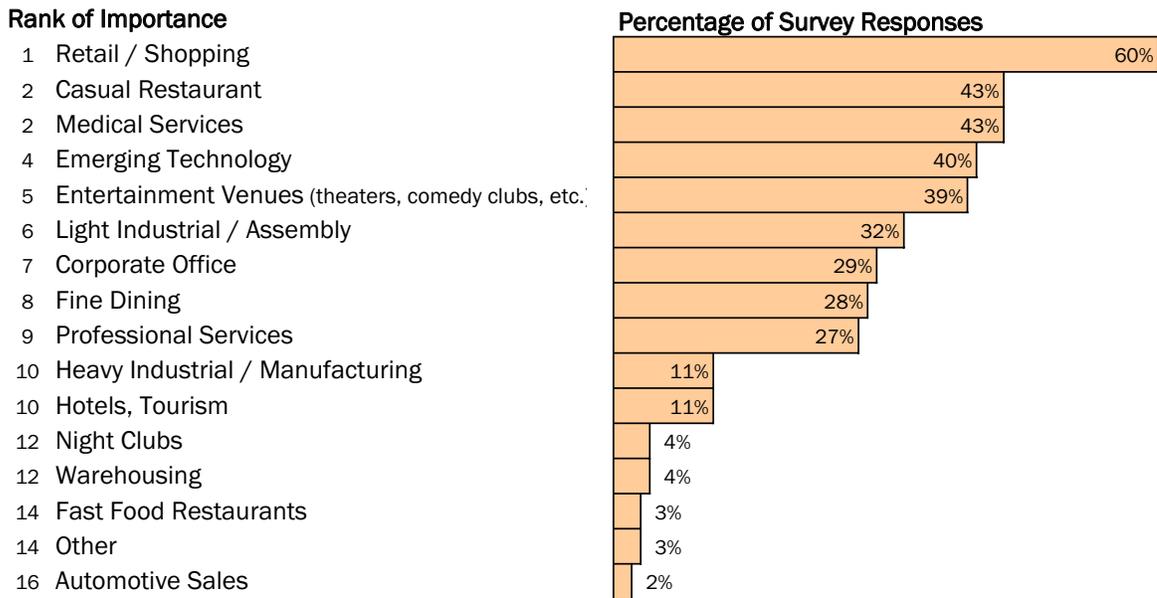


Source: 2008 Household Survey

When asked about the most important types of future businesses that are best for Sun Prairie, retail/shopping, casual restaurants, and medical services were listed as the most important, followed by emerging technology and entertainment venues. In a related question dealing with quality of life factors, however, shopping/retail opportunities were not listed as a high priority item by respondents. Full survey results can be found within Appendix D.

**FIGURE 6-11**  
**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO FUTURE DESIRED BUSINESSES**

Which of the following are the four (4) most important types of future businesses that are best for Sun Prairie?



Source: 2008 Household Survey

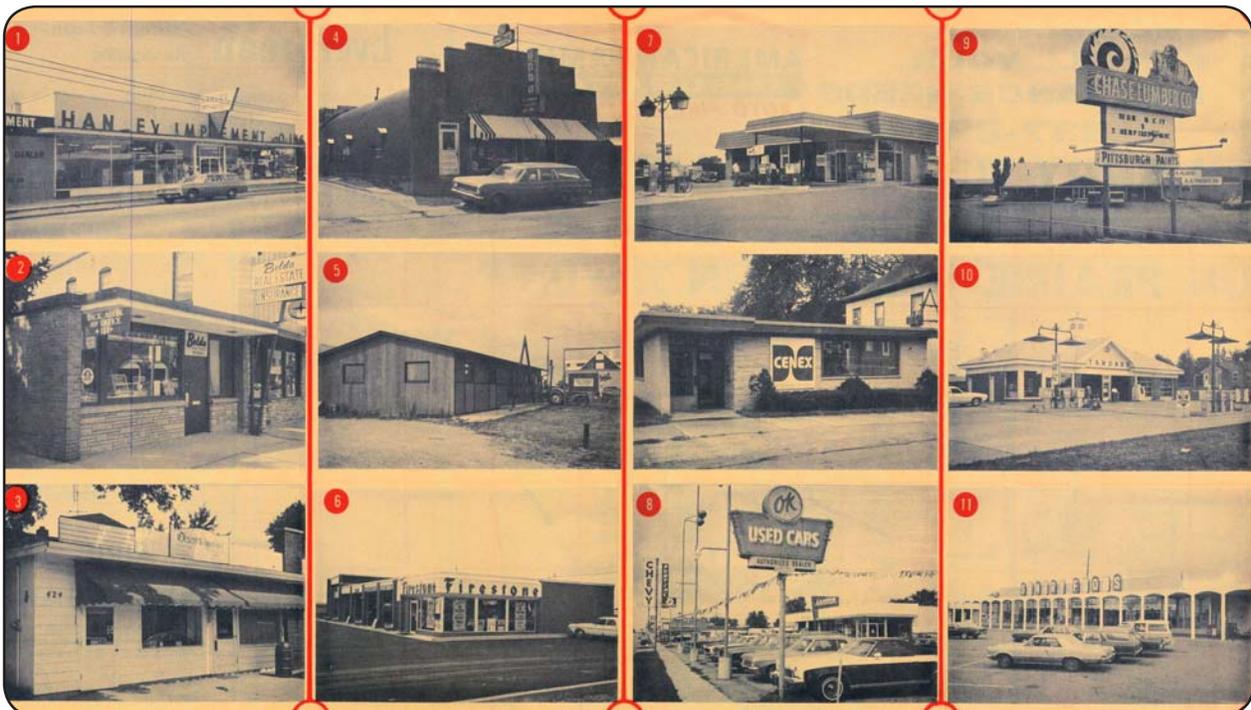
### OPEN HOUSE

One series of questions at the July, 2008 public open house was aimed at determining the favored economic development strategies that the City should be considering. The retention of existing quality, “living wage” jobs was a clear priority, followed by the creation of new quality jobs and ensuring a business friendly environment. Public input responses are summarized in Appendix E.

## FOCUS GROUP/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PROCESS

Concurrent with the development of this Comprehensive Plan update, 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 chapter 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 balance of this chapter is an excerpt from the final report issued by the Committee.



Sun Prairie Businesses c.1973

## OVERVIEW OF SUN PRAIRIE'S POSITION IN THE ECONOMY

The following overview provides some context for discussion of the local economy, as well as its position in the region and state. This “self-assessment” is largely subjective, and additional information on each of these categories follows Table 6-2. Several of the factors identified as a part of the assessment process done by staff ended up being on both sides of the analysis.

**TABLE 6-2  
SUMMARY OF SELF ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

Probable Assets and Strengths	Potential Liabilities or Weaknesses
Proximity and Access to Madison and the University of Wisconsin	Proximity and Access to Madison and the University of Wisconsin
Immediate Access to Regional Transportation Infrastructure	Competing With Development Alternatives in Madison (e.g. the “Madison address”)
Supportive Elected Leadership and Staff	Combating East Side vs. West Side Perceptions
Historically Business Friendly Regulatory Environment	Lack of Identity, Media Coverage from Region
Willingness to Utilize Incentives; Track Record of Sound TIF Investment	Limited Resources for Local and State Incentives
Manageable, Predictable Development Review Process	Perceived Need for Improved Consistency in Development Review Process
Availability of Affordable Sites and Buildings	Increasing Land Costs
Effective Partnering Organizations	Lack of a Coordinated, Targeted Economic Development Vision or Plan
Quality of Life Factors - Competitive Schools, Public Services, Parks, Library, Churches, etc.	Quality of Life Factors - Lack of Local Entertainment, Shopping, Hotel and Cultural Amenities
Significant Development Recently Despite State and National Economic Trends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest Employer is Expanding (QBE)</li> <li>• Fastest Growing Company in Region (Wisconsin Distributors)</li> <li>• St. Mary's</li> <li>• WPPI</li> <li>• Royle Printing, Four Lakes, The Datastore</li> <li>• Target, Copp's</li> </ul>	Lack of Designated Controlled, Ready-to-Go Areas for Targeted Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less Restrictive Industrial Park</li> <li>• Future Office Park</li> <li>• Future Business Park Expansion</li> </ul>
Affordable Electrical Rates and High Reliability	Increasing Development Related Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Taxes</li> <li>• Traffic Impact Fees</li> <li>• Stormwater Utility</li> </ul>
Access to Qualified Workforce	Access to Qualified Workforce
Adequate Utility Capacity	Some Need for Expanding Services to Some Areas
Available Housing	Available Housing

Source: City of Sun Prairie 2009 Strategic Business Development Plan

### Location and the University of Wisconsin

Proximity and access to Madison and the University of Wisconsin work both as an asset and as a liability for Sun Prairie. Having Madison 7-10 minutes away (15-20 to reach Downtown) acts as a positive catalyst for Sun Prairie's economy. This means fast, easy access to national retailers, restaurants, a variety of services, employment opportunities and entertainment venues. This same easy access to these Madison amenities for Sun Prairie residents also makes a competitive case for living, working, or developing right in the City of Madison. In addition, certain sectors (e.g. Biotechnology) want to be as close to the University as possible. Others need to be able to access its resources as needed, but do not need to be located immediately next to the University itself (e.g. Finance and Insurance). Sun Prairie's questions will be how to bring the University closer to the City, or how to find quality businesses that don't necessarily need to be right next to campus.

### East versus West

For many years, the west side of Madison and Dane County has grown considerably faster because of the University of Wisconsin Madison campus. The growth of office parks and spin off businesses from the University has been an engine for growth of higher level wage jobs compared to the east side. Consequently, incomes have historically been somewhat higher on the west side but data indicates that this gap is closing as the east side is catching up. Until recently, much of the City of Madison's projects and plans have focused downtown or toward the west. It has only been the last several years that the developments on the east side (the American Center, the redevelopment of the East Towne Mall, the BioAg corridor, the redevelopment planning for the E. Washington Avenue Corridor and the development of Sun Prairie's Westside Neighborhood) have started to bring the east side back on the map.

Media coverage about development in the area has followed this trend, resulting in a general misconception or lack of knowledge about projects and communities on the east side that is slowly improving with each project that is initiated or completed.

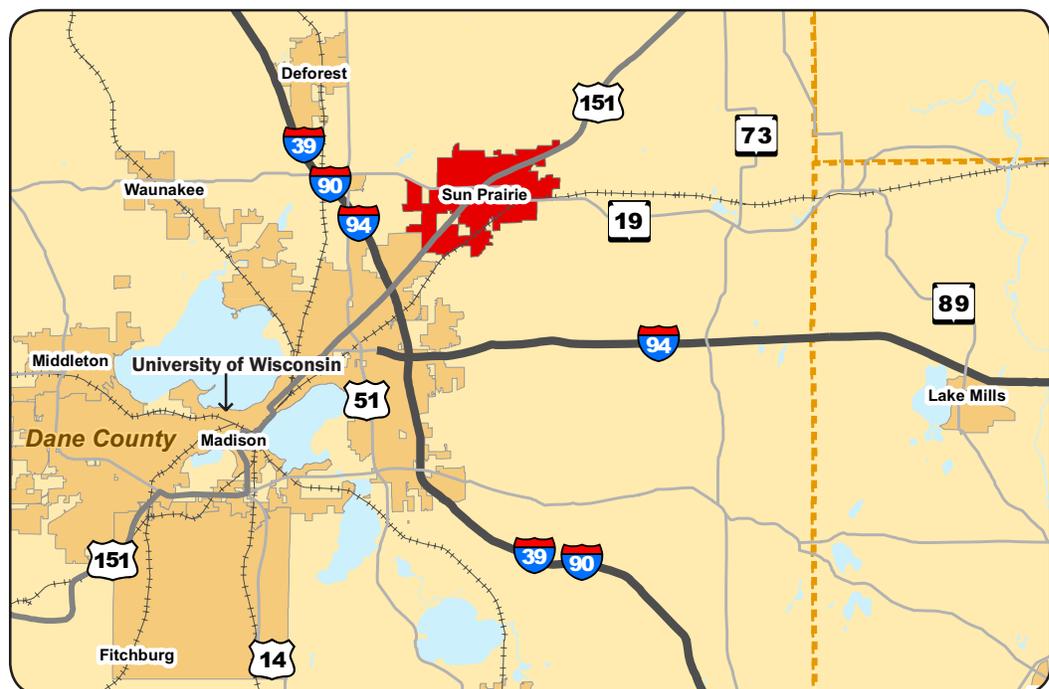
## Transportation

Immediate access to national and regional transportation infrastructure is an asset for the entire Madison region, but Sun Prairie is better positioned than other communities in the area due to its immediate access to US 151 (six lanes), which connect to I-39/90/94 to the southwest within five minutes (see Figure 6-12). The average annual daily traffic for US 151 was 44,000 in 2006. STH 19, a prominent east-west route runs through the northern and eastern portions of the community. Finally, there are two major regional/county routes that pass north-south through the City, CTH C (Grand Avenue/Reiner Road) and CTH N (Bristol Street/Main Street/Grove Street). This access makes Sun Prairie attractive to warehousing and distribution, manufacturing, and other businesses that rely on shipping of products and materials. The highway access, visibility, and traffic counts also make areas near these routes attractive to office uses and retail uses.

The Wisconsin Southern Railroad currently operates a commercial route that is designated to be a primary route for either commuter rail or high speed rail in the future.

Finally, the Dane County Regional Airport is located ten minutes from Sun Prairie. It is considerably faster to get to the airport from Sun Prairie than most of the City of Madison.

**FIGURE 6-12**  
**SUN PRAIRIE REGIONAL MAP**



## Local Government

Sun Prairie has worked to develop a reputation of cooperation and collaboration with the development community, and is often seen as being more business friendly when compared to other nearby jurisdictions. While the City has occasionally placed additional demands on private developments, they have been negotiated in a spirit of cooperation as opposed to delaying or rejecting projects. The development review and approval process has largely been consistent in its timeframe, and staff and developers have typically been able to address points of concern before coming to Plan Commission or Common Council meetings. In several cases, the Common Council has accelerated this process to aid private developers in their efforts to meet their own timeframes.

There have been concerns from some members of the development community regarding consistent implementation of planned development projects. This largely has to do with the revisiting of language in approved general development plans (GDPs) by the Common Council that was often meant to be flexible, and upon submittal of precise implementation plans (PIPs) the Common Council and developer do not agree on requirements of the GDP.

The City of Sun Prairie has not been inclined to enact ordinances that have been viewed as potentially harmful to business, including a smoking ban for restaurants (now a state mandate), requiring a higher minimum wage, mandatory benefits for part time employees, and mandatory sick leave.

There are several businesses that chose to locate in Sun Prairie because of local governmental policies and practices that were easier to navigate than other communities. There are also some project developers that were not willing to work with the City towards the suggested improvements and therefore did not locate here (primarily retail or industrial buildings), but these are not the norm.

The City currently lacks a targeted economic development strategy. Individual policies have been created in terms of programs (TIF guidelines, standard development agreements, comprehensive planning objectives, etc.) and have functioned fairly successfully. The lack of a unifying plan leaves open the potential for conflicting policies, and initiatives from staff or others that may not be 100 percent in concurrence with Council objectives. This document is intended to provide that overarching, coordinating document that clearly sets a vision for the City as well as a means of achieving it.

Finally, there is an unmet need for several types of land uses that likely will require some sort of direction to be set by the Common Council at some point in the near future. The lack of designated controlled, “ready-to-go” areas for these uses may make their de-





velopment more difficult to attain. These targeted uses could include but are not limited to an industrial park with lesser covenant restrictions, a dedicated area for a future office park, and future expansion of the business park. The lack of having these areas designated makes marketing to these uses difficult and decreases the City's ability to site potential business in the community.

### Use of Incentives

Sun Prairie has been extremely successful with its use of local incentives—primarily tax incremental financing (TIF). The City has recently created its ninth district for the St. Mary's project and a tenth district for the W. Main Street area to help facilitate redevelopment of the corridor. The ongoing redevelopment of the Downtown has been largely made feasible through the use of TIF funds. The creation of the Sun Prairie Business Park and the installation of roads and infrastructure were financed with TIF assistance. The success of these districts has been largely based on working with sound developers as well as the use of development agreements and increment guarantees. TIF remains the City's most powerful tool in terms of assisting with private development projects. In the past year, the City created and adopted TIF guidelines to aid in evaluating potential assistance for qualified projects. These guidelines establish projected increment to assistance ratios, pay as you go preferences, payback timelines, and types of projects that will generally be considered for assistance. TIF assistance is primarily limited to the areas where districts have been created, and only works as intended when additional property tax increment is created.

The Revolving Loan Fund program (RLF) has not been as effective as was originally hoped, in that two businesses ended up closing their doors and not repaying their loans. Because the RLF was originally capitalized with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, there are job creation and income requirements to qualify for funds. In 2007, Sun Prairie made its first loan in almost ten years to a local business looking to expand. The demand for the program is generally dependent upon market interest rates. The amount of funds available for loan is around \$70,000 out of the original \$500,000.

Resources for state financial assistance have been limited by budgetary constraints and programmatic requirements. Generally, CDBG funds have historically been used for infrastructure type projects, and have recently gone more towards community facilities. Recent projects in Sun Prairie would not have been competitive applications, or may not have even met the application requirements. The available program is becoming more viable for Sun Prairie projects are the various tax credit programs through enterprise zones and technology zones.

## Available Sites and Buildings

Sun Prairie maintains a significant inventory of buildable land and available building space, and maintains a variety of viable areas in both greenfield and brownfield developments. As a general rule, the prices for both land and buildings are less expensive than most areas within the primary core of communities in and around Madison. Recent market trends show this gap closing in some areas, including some retail areas in Sun Prairie that may even be higher in price than competing locations in the region.

The Sun Prairie Business Park has over forty acres on eight lots remaining ranging in size from 3.7 to 12.2 acres. Additional land is present to the north and northeast of the Business Park to allow for significant expansion, when needed. All have roads and utilities brought to the property line. As of 2009, lots range in price from \$1.75 to \$3.00 per square foot.

The City of Sun Prairie has eight acres on three lots available as a part of the St. Mary's project in TIF-9 ranging from 2.12 to 3.44 acres. Each lot has the potential to be expanded to the south if adjacent properties on Capitol Drive are redeveloped. Lots range in price from \$10.00 to \$13.00 per square foot based on 2009 values.

Smith's Crossing, Prairie Lakes, Woodman's, West Prairie Village, Golden Meadows, Prairie Centre, General Casualty/QBE, and Livesey Company all have acreage available for new commercial retail, office or service development. More than one million square feet of space has been given zoning/GDP approval in Sun Prairie's Westside Neighborhood alone. Lot sizes vary, and prices and leases range from \$7.00 to \$25.00 per square foot (2009).

The redevelopment of Downtown Sun Prairie is considered to be a model for communities across Wisconsin. Approximately \$17.75 million in public investment has resulted in \$57.1 million in private investment. There are currently two primary development sites (Market Street and S. Bristol Street) where new buildings could be constructed. There are also several buildings that are likely to redevelop over time (public works site, Washington Mills, etc.). It is currently estimated that there is approximately 20,000 square feet of available retail space in the traditional downtown area.



Business Park



Westside Neighborhood



Smiths Crossing



Market and S. Bristol Streets



Heckels Site - W. Main St.



Pick'n Save Site - W. Main St. &amp; US 151



Verizon Site - STH 19 &amp; US 151



Sun Prairie Business Park

The Main Street corridor has several buildings and sites that are prime candidates for redevelopment depending on the intentions of the property owners, including the Hanley site, the Main Street Shopping Center, the Sun Prairie Rentals site, the Paul's Bar site, as well as several other small groupings of parcels that if properly assembled would create excellent building sites.

It also appears that the Main Street and STH 19 interchanges at US 151 are likely to redevelop in the relatively near future. The future of the Wal Mart and Pick 'n Save buildings will likely be determined in 2009. The Verizon building, the Wisconsin Cheeseman, and strip center near this interchange are likely to see new tenants, and eventually are likely to redevelop into newer uses.

Finally, Sun Prairie has proactively established boundary agreements with Madison, Burke and DeForest to facilitate how areas currently in the Town of Burke will develop over time. This prevents the likelihood of delays in annexation by designating areas that can petition for direct attachment to the City when they are ready to come in. Similar agreements establishing boundaries with the Towns of Bristol and Windsor are also in place including the Bristol agreement serving to protect expansion lands around the Business Park.

## Economic Development Partners

Sun Prairie is fortunate to have several highly effective organizations that assist in a variety of economic development related activities. The notable number of partners helps bring a variety of resources and funds to the table. Unfortunately, it also makes coordination between these groups more difficult, and occasionally individual organizations are duplicating efforts. Table 6-3 provides a summary profile of the organizations that partner with the City to improve various aspects of our local economy.



**TABLE 6-3**  
**DIRECTORY OF PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS**

Organization	Resources or Programs Relating To Economic Development	Approximate 2009 Overall Budget (Economic Development Program Budget)
Sun Prairie Economic Development Council (EDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Business Roundtable</li> <li>• Marketing, Retention, Recruitment Efforts</li> <li>• Special Events</li> </ul>	\$5,000 (\$5,000)
Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education/Training - Programs</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Policy Advocacy</li> <li>• Business Retention Programs</li> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Special Events</li> </ul>	Pending
Sun Prairie Industrial Development Corporation (SPIDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Development/Sales</li> <li>• Public Infrastructure</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> </ul>	Varies (\$5,000)
Sun Prairie Business Improvement District (BID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Events</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> <li>• Advertising</li> </ul>	Pending
Sun Prairie Community Development Authority (CDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of TIF Projects</li> <li>• Redevelopment Planning</li> </ul>	\$0 (\$0)
Sun Prairie Education Foundation (SPEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Support of Educational Programs</li> </ul>	\$1,000 (Varies)
Sun Prairie Business and Education Partnership (BEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming and Support of Educational Programs</li> </ul>	Pending
Sun Prairie Water and Light (SPWL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric Utility Provider</li> <li>• Water Utility Provider</li> <li>• Rate Comparisons</li> <li>• Efficiency Assessments</li> </ul>	Pending

Organization	Resources or Programs Relating To Economic Development	Approximate 2009 Overall Budget (Economic Development Program Budget)
Sun Prairie Area School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Career Counseling</li> </ul>	Pending
WPPI Energy (formerly Wisconsin Public Power, Inc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric Utility Provider</li> <li>• Operating Cost Estimates</li> <li>• Energy Cost Comparisons</li> <li>• Power Quality Services</li> <li>• New Construction Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Energy Conservation Financing</li> <li>• Renewable Energy Options</li> </ul>	Not Provided (\$1,000 provided to member utilities annually)  Specific programs related to economic development are available.
WE Energies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Gas Utility Provider</li> </ul>	Not Provided
Dane County Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Assistance (County)</li> <li>• Technical Assistance (County)</li> </ul>	Pending
University of Wisconsin Extension – Dane County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> </ul>	Pending
THRIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> </ul>	Pending
Wisconsin Department of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Assistance (State)</li> <li>• Technical Assistance (State)</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> </ul>	Pending
FORWARD Wisconsin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> </ul>	Pending
Wisconsin Small Business Development Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Assistance (County)</li> <li>• Technical Assistance (County)</li> </ul>	Pending
University of Wisconsin Extension (Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Demographic Analysis</li> </ul>	Pending
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Assistance</li> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Employment Data</li> </ul>	Pending
South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker Re-employment</li> <li>• Industry Partnerships</li> <li>• Youth Services</li> <li>• Career Pathways</li> </ul>	Pending
Sun Prairie Tourism Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Assistance (Local)</li> <li>• Marketing Programs</li> </ul>	Pending

Source: Sun Prairie Economic Development Department

## Quality of Life Factors

Sun Prairie has competitive schools, solid public services, excellent parks, a top notch public library, a strong church community, active civic groups, etc. Yet there are many communities who can accurately say they have all these things and that they help make their town are a great place to live. Unless these factors are exemplary in the community, they are more or less minimal requirements to attracting development, and are NOT competitive advantages. If these things do not set us apart from other communities, they do not help us make our pitch to new investment. More importantly, if we don't have these things they will be used to eliminate the City from consideration. It should also be noted that the City does rate higher in services and facilities than many other communities—even within the area.

There are also quality of life factors where the City of Sun Prairie is not positioned to compete as well as other communities. Despite being the second largest community in Dane County, there is a perceived lack of local entertainment, dining, shopping, hotels and cultural amenities. Much of this has to do with the easy access to Madison and its offerings. In addition, several proposed new developments are going to drastically improve the dining and shopping options. Entertainment venues, hotels, and culturally-based activities (theatre, music, art, etc.) remain few when compared to the population of the area. While these things are “softer” quality of life factors, they can directly impact whether or not people and companies choose to move here (or stay here).





<http://www.sprwl.net/environment/renewableorder.asp?CategoryNumber=1>



### Affordable Electrical Rates

One of the key factors that differentiate Sun Prairie from most of the Greater Madison area is the fact that Sun Prairie Water and Light is a municipally owned utility (as opposed to an investor owned utility). In addition, several municipal utilities work together to enhance their purchasing position as WPPI Energy. This results in a cost savings ranging from ten to twenty percent for most industrial and commercial users. At least two of the recent industrial tenants that moved to Sun Prairie specifically indicated that their projected cost savings over time more than justified moving their facility here. While no one can know for sure what utility rates can do, Sun Prairie Water and Light and WPPI Energy are extremely confident in their ability to ensure a significantly lower electrical rate while maintaining a highly competitive, reliable service.

### Adequate Utility Capacity

All primary utilities controlled by the City of Sun Prairie are currently operating well below capacity.

- According to the 2007 Annual Report for Sun Prairie Water and Light, water capacity in terms of supply, storage and distribution all had considerable capacity remaining.
- Also according to the 2007 Annual Report, electrical demand was less than sixty percent of what the current system would be able to provide.
- In terms of the Water Pollution Control Facility capacity, the Wastewater Superintendent stated that recent upgrades to the treatment facility are estimated to provide adequate capacity for the next ten years. In addition, the City is proactively trying to eliminate clear water from entering the system, which will further enhance the plant's capacity. There are no immediate restrictions on the capacity of the collection system, and the City closely monitors the flow levels in primary mains and interceptors across the City to ensure adequate capacity.

## Increasing Costs Associated With Development

The City of Sun Prairie faces several challenges in the coming years in the area of taxes and City budgeting, due in part to the pace of growth experienced in the community in recent years. All communities struggle with increasing costs associated with staffing, materials and supplies, healthcare benefits, etc., but Sun Prairie taxpayers have also had to fund the construction of several new facilities in recent years, including, since 2000, two new elementary schools, a new high school, the expansion of its two middle schools and renovations to its upper middle school, a new municipal services building to serve residents in its growing Westside Neighborhood, a major expansion of its Water Pollution Control Facility, and several street and sanitary sewer infrastructure projects needed to support new growth. Although there are many factors that should be considered when making relative cost of living comparisons, costs associated with these improvements tend to place the City at a competitive disadvantage to other communities in the region when property tax factors alone are used for comparison.

The City has one of the highest mill rates in Dane County at the present time, and there is a perception that local assessments are high when compared to some surrounding communities - something that may be a result of the City's assessment practices more closely following prescribed procedures than some other communities. Remaining competitive with surrounding communities' mill rates while absorbing the costs of these new facilities should be a priority for both the City and the Sun Prairie Area School District in the coming years. In addition, promoting other areas where the cost of doing business in Sun Prairie is more advantageous, such as the lower utility rates consistently offered in the City versus surrounding communities, should also be emphasized.

Sun Prairie has been aggressive in its use of alternative revenue sources to pay for various infrastructure needed to support development, namely traffic impact fees, sanitary connection fees, and stormwater utility fees. While these measures provide some measure of relief to the property tax payer, they do create additional costs for developers seeking to build projects within the City. These fees are substantial enough that it is possible they have caused some projects to either not move forward or to be delayed because of difficulties associated with financing the additional start up costs. It is also thought that the hardest impact is felt by more local developers and smaller businesses as they do not have the cash flow that a larger national store might have.

As stated previously, the City has also been very willing to help offset some of these costs with TIF incentives and recapture agreements for developments with multiple users when the project warrants such tools to be utilized.



Sun Prairie High School under construction in 2009



West Main Street Reconstruction



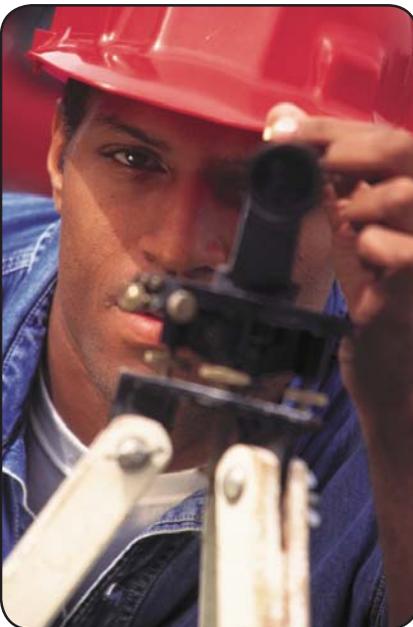
### Access to Qualified, Trainable Workforce

There really is no such thing as the “Sun Prairie workforce”. Sun Prairie employers cast a wide net for their employees, and many workers who reside in Sun Prairie travel to Madison or elsewhere for employment. Place of residence and place of employment are often not the same. For this reason, the entire Madison metro area is used as a basis for tracking workforce related data.

The Madison metro area has generally been an excellent source of educated and skilled workers, and the area has fared very well compared to many other areas. Unemployment is almost always lower than state and national averages. The University of Wisconsin, Madison Area Technical College, and other institutions provide top quality graduates for a variety of positions. Specialized training opportunities range from scientific research to diesel truck driving school.

While currently competitive, sectors such as information technology, nursing, engineering and other higher paying skilled positions are starting to see increasing difficulty finding employees they need. It’s not that the employees aren’t there, rather it’s more likely that jobs in these sectors are growing faster than the employment pool. Additional programs and polices will likely be needed to recruit additional workforce to meet these and other demands by sector.

More traditional sectors such as warehousing and distribution, and manufacturing are cutting back on positions and slowing hiring. In some cases, positions are being replaced by more efficient, higher technology equipment. This also changes the expectation for employee job skills for many employers.



In addition, Forbes.com recently identified the Madison metro area as the number one place in the country to find a job for 2009. This analysis was based on a comparison of unemployment rate and number of new jobs created in the previous six months, as well as other evidence of workforce related activity in metro areas.

There is evidence of demand in the workforce to potentially meet this need. In September 2008, the Wisconsin Alumni Association, Competitive Wisconsin, THRIVE, and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce surveyed more than 22,000 UW-Madison (UW) alumni between the ages of 22 to 55 in the five primary metropolitan markets where UW graduates go if they leave Wisconsin: Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. More than 2,600 UW alumni responded to the e-mail survey in August and September. More than 58 percent of respondents living in these five areas indicated they would consider moving back to Wisconsin to further their careers.

## Housing Availability

Sun Prairie's proximity to Madison, access to transportation routes, high performance on required quality of life factors, and relative affordability to other communities in the area have resulted in the community being a preferred location for new housing construction over the past several years. The community has a more than adequate supply of both built housing units and approved, buildable lots across several price ranges. Some key facts include:

City Staff has calculated that as of December 2007 there have been nearly 8,000 housing units approved within various developments in the City during the recent housing boom, and just less than half of these have been constructed.

According to DaneCountyMarket.com, the average sales price for a home (excluding condos) has risen from \$170,226 in 2000 to \$236,254 in 2007. The median value for this same range went from \$156,000 to \$223,000. Values increased steadily until 2005, where they have remained largely flat. These figures indicate that Sun Prairie continues to be a more affordable housing option than the west side of Madison or Middleton, but is higher than the east side of Madison.

Building permits for new housing units in Sun Prairie have slowed in recent years, as has permit activity in the rest of the county. According to US Census data, occupancy rates in 2000 were 96% occupied versus 4.0% vacant. With the continued build-out after 2000, and the slowdown in the housing market, it is assumed that the percentage of occupied housing units has dropped considerably.





Also according to US Census data, the percentage of owner occupied housing increased between 1990 and 2000, from 56.3 to 60.8 percent. With the dip in the housing market and the number of newly constructed multi-family units built since 2000, it is possible that the percentage of owner-occupied housing has decreased somewhat since then, but it is important to note that the number of single-family and duplex/twin-home units constructed since 2000 is about equal to the number of multi-family units.



When comparing the change in home value to the change in household income between 2000 and 2006, home values have risen approximately three times more than income.



While some feel that higher end housing opportunities in Sun Prairie are limited, survey results from the spring of 2008 indicate that the general public does not see the need to focus on this housing type. Nevertheless, the City should be open to this concept as a means of providing housing opportunities for potential buyers in the upper price ranges, and should recognize the connection between the availability of higher end housing and its desire to attract corporate jobs to the community.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Perhaps the best indicator of local economic conditions is the amount of new construction activity that occurred in 2008. Unlike many other communities, Sun Prairie has continued to attract high quality businesses to the City. The following is a list of economic development activity in the City during the past year:

- QBE (General Casualty) announced the planned expansion of their data processing operations here in Sun Prairie, which could result in 75 to 100 jobs in the short-term.
- St. Mary's Hospital started construction of Wisconsin's only stand alone emergency room. The facility opened in 2009.
- WPPI Energy broke ground on a major expansion of their corporate headquarters in the Sun Prairie Business Park.
- Four Lakes Label (Western States Envelope) broke ground on a new 36,400 square foot production facility in the Sun Prairie Business Park, bringing 62 current employees with the intention of expanding to 75.
- Royle Printing completed a 40,000 square foot addition to allow for additional storage and a new printing press.
- Wisconsin Distributors was named fastest growing company in the Greater Madison Region by In Business Magazine.
- Target completed construction on its 136,000 square foot retail store. This store opened in March 2009.
- Copp's (Roundy's) started site work on a second grocery store (61,000 square feet) to serve the east side of the City. This store opened in September 2009.





Cannery Square phases of redevelopment

The City was also active in its efforts to facilitate economic development in 2008. Some of the highlights included:

- A Better Urban Infill Land Development Grant was received in March to help prepare redevelopment plans for the re-use of the Dane County Garage site. This plan resulted in the new Copp's grocery store on the City's east side.
- Staff created an "Economic Development News Blog" site to help increase awareness of the positive happenings in the private sector.
- Common Council adopted a standard set of guidelines to be utilized when evaluating the creation of TIF districts, in addition to what would be considered for funding assistance.
- Staff prepared a survey of existing structural conditions for a significant portion of W. Main Street, which allowed for the creation of TIF-10.
- Negotiations regarding a potential mixed-use project on S. Bristol Street continued, and zoning approval was granted for redevelopment of the site.
- Staff continued to provide support to the Economic Development Council.
- Discussions regarding the potential development of a less restrictive business park on Bailey Road were initiated.
- Staff facilitated a six-month strategic planning process for the ad hoc Committee on Economic Development.
- Staff and elected officials attended and manned a City informational booth at the Wisconsin Early Stage Symposium.
- Staff prepared a series of alternatives for consideration by the Common Council regarding potential mitigation strategies for businesses affected by the upcoming reconstruction of W. Main Street.
- Staff facilitated a draft work plan for the Economic Development Council efforts in 2009.
- Staff initiated research on the potential to receive funds to conduct a feasibility study for building a business incubator in Sun Prairie.

**BU1LD**  
Better Urban Infill Development  
DANE COUNTY

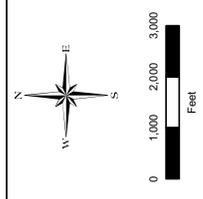






# Active Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) Districts

- Legend**
- TIF 6
  - TIF 7
  - TIF 8
  - TIF 9
  - TIF 10
  - Public Street
  - Future Public Street
  - City Limit



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

