

# Volume 2: Goals, Policies & Actions

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**Agricultural,  
Natural and  
Cultural  
Resources**



# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



*Sun Prairie's agricultural, natural and cultural resources play a key role in the quality of life in the community and the long term viability of the city.*

*The City's existing agricultural, natural and cultural resources, described in Volume 1 of this Plan, generally meet the needs of existing citizens. It is critical to strategically plan for the preservation, protection, expansion and improvement of natural and cultural resources to support the growth of the community while continuing to meet the needs of current citizens.*

*The goals, policies and actions in this chapter are based on input from the public, City staff and various City committees and elected officials. The chapter begins with a summary of critical issues and opportunities. Several of the policies and actions are bolded to signify high priority.*

The planning process includes a review of data that describe current conditions related to agricultural, natural and cultural resources (See Volume 1) and many forms of input from stakeholders throughout the community. The following issues and opportunities stand out as most relevant to the goals, policies and actions in this chapter.

## Local Food



Comments in the community survey and focus groups described an interest in locally-grown produce and more unique, locally-owned restaurants. For many, this interest is about the quality and variety of food choices. For some it is also about supporting the local agricultural economy. When asked about “efforts the City should take to become a more sustainable community” in the community survey, “build a public market with outlets for locally grown food products” was the 4th most popular of 14 suggested actions. A public market was listed in

the 2009 comprehensive plan but has not yet been pursued. Meanwhile, the City of Madison has been advancing plans for a public market since 2012 and is currently raising funds to proceed on an east-isthmus site.

## Sun Prairie History



Sun Prairie is proud of its local history and heritage. The community's stories are celebrated primarily through the Sun Prairie Historical Museum and Library located downtown on Main Street. Residents have expressed both appreciation for the museum and a desire for it to do more and be more. Museums and community outreach through museums are great tools to show off unique local character.

## Public Art



A few residents raised the topic of public art during the planning process, to note that there isn't much of it in Sun Prairie and/or to encourage more of it here. An example community to consider is the City of West Bend, WI, where private groups have helped assemble an extensive collection of outdoor sculptures in public parks and spaces.

Public art can take many forms. It can be a painting, sculpture or land form. It can have a clear message or be entirely abstract and aesthetic.

It can last for an hour or for decades. It can be a performance. By definition it is located in a public place, visible and accessible to all. Public art has the power to attract people to a place and to make it more interesting and memorable. It is an important component of effective “place-making”; the process by which people become emotionally connected to places that contribute positively to their own health, happiness and well-being.

## Community Growth



The continued growth of the city is a topic of interest for many and concern for some. As lands at the edges of the City have been converted from farm use to commercial and residential uses, especially near major transportation corridors, the community's agricultural heritage is fading. The loss of farm fields between Sun Prairie and Madison is a loss of rural character. New development is also a strain on natural resources such as surface water and ground water, requiring continued diligence to conserve those resources.

## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

### Improvement Needs

The 2018 Community Survey asked an open-ended question about what improvements people would like to see in the future in Sun Prairie. Some of the top responses related to agricultural, natural and cultural resources included:

- Slow growth (63 responses)
- Add more greenspace, trees (18 responses)
- Add more space for the museum (6 responses)

### Growth

The 2018 Community Survey asked people if the pace of development over the last five years in Sun Prairie is too fast, just right, or too slow for six types of development. The types of development where over 50% of respondents said development was “just right” were industrial (60%), office (61%), retail (56%) and 1- & 2- family residential (54%). The only type of development with greater than 50% of respondents noting development was occurring “too fast” was multi-family residential (76%). Approximately 25% of respondents noted that industrial and office development was “too slow” .

# AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES



Patrick Marsh Viewshed

## GOAL #1

**Encourage agriculture and the preservation of productive agricultural lands, in balance with the growth of the City.**

### Policies

1. Promote infill development on under-utilized sites within the City to help reduce the pressure to expand into surrounding agricultural areas as the City grows.
2. Limit the use of existing agricultural lands to agriculture, agribusiness and farm-based residential uses unless designated for urban development within the next 20 years in this plan's Future Land Use Map.

3. Seek a minimum parcel size of 35 acres within the three-mile extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction, unless smaller parcels are permitted through an adopted intergovernmental agreement.
4. Collaborate with neighboring towns, through boundary agreements, to protect agricultural land. When rural residential development is allowed, encourage small lots and clustering, away from prime agricultural lands, and never in a way that would obviously impede other development many years from now.
5. Encourage neighboring towns to use their own comprehensive plans to limit urban development and promote agricultural uses.

## GOAL #2

**Increase opportunities for access to healthy and sustainable food choices within the City.**

### Policies

6. Allow agricultural uses within the City as appropriate to the size and location of the site.
7. Support the continuation and expansion of community gardens in areas that are compatible with surrounding uses. If existing gardens are displaced by other civic uses, consider relocating the gardens to other available lands, such as portions of Sheehan Park that are currently being farmed.



Indicates a policy or action that supports community sustainability

Policies and actions in **bold text** indicate high priority

8. Support local farm product processing and marketing initiatives. 

9. Encourage Community Supported Agricultural operations in the area. 

10. Continue to support the Farmers' Market by providing space for the Market to operate and use of support facilities if available nearby. 

11. Encourage local institutional uses such as schools, hospitals, assisted living facilities, and other large businesses that serve food, to participate in the Dane County Institutional Food Market Coalition (IFM). 

12. Support Sun Prairie Area School District school garden planning and development for all school locations. 

### Actions

1. Amend the City's Ordinances as needed to allow agricultural uses, such as community gardens, roof top gardens, small-scale organic orchards and vineyards that are compatible with surrounding uses. 

2. Conduct a feasibility study for a downtown public market as an outlet for more locally grown food products. 

3. Promote resident awareness of local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and of the availability of county vouchers and other sponsored programs available to support CSA efforts. This information should be made available on the City's website and promotional materials should be distributed to residents annually. 

4. Establish a City initiative to encourage local businesses such as grocers and restaurants to buy more local food products. 



McCoy Farm c.1949

# NATURAL RESOURCES



*Patrick Marsh*

## GOAL #1

**Protect and preserve the natural resource features in the City and its environs.**

### Policies

#### General

1. Preserve natural resource protection areas and environmental corridor features including waterways, floodplains, wetlands, ground water recharge areas, steep slopes (greater than 12%), wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and mature woodlands through the enforcement of the City's adopted natural resource protection zoning standards and through the use of the City's Subdivision Ordinance and Of-



2. The City shall require all site plans and land divisions to accurately depict all natural resource features located on the property proposed for development or division.
3. Keep sewered urban development from encroaching into environmental corridors through sewer extension controls, and discourage unsewered development.
4. Preserve planned green spaces between the Cities of Madison and Sun Prairie.
5. Locate transportation system improvements to minimize im-

pacts on environmental corridors.

6. Restore degraded natural systems as feasible, including opportunities that arise during transportation or land development projects.
7. Promote public awareness of the negative impacts of invasive species.
8. Continue to eradicate invasive noxious species through implementation of the City's ordinances.

#### Mineral Extraction

9. Mineral extraction uses should be sited and operated in a manner that minimizes conflicts and impacts on surrounding uses to the greatest extent possible.



*Indicates a policy or action that supports community sustainability*

*Policies and actions in **bold text** indicate high priority*

- 10. Consider adoption of ordinances that provide protection of potential mineral resource areas.
- 11. Protect mineral resource areas from development until extracted for use.

Wildlife

- 12. Continue to work cooperatively with landowners and other organizations to protect the Patrick Marsh Wildlife Area and encourage passive recreation, education and trail linkage opportunities. 

- 13. Encourage the incorporation of wildlife corridors or greenways into and between new developments. 

- 14. Consider impacts on wildlife when reviewing development proposals. 

Vegetation

- 15. Preserve existing stands of mature trees to the greatest degree possible by implementing the City’s tree protection zoning standards. 

- 16. Promote landscaping practices that incorporate a variety of noninvasive, native species. Maintain a list of preferred native plants and trees for installation on public and private properties. 

- 17. Encourage the use of native vegetation within private stormwater facilities. 

- 18. Expand use of native vegetation where appropriate on public lands, including: 

- Around and near stormwater management basins;
- On excess or “land banked” public lands; and,
- In rain gardens or other infiltration areas on public properties.

Water

- 19. Encourage landscaping practices on public and private property that require little or no use of groundwater to maintain them and which help to filter and infiltrate rainwater. 

- 20. Encourage the restoration and protection of waterways such as Token and Koshkonong Creeks (e.g. continue relationship with Token Creek Watershed Association). 

- 21. Maintain or improve groundwater quality and quantity. 

- 22. Identify and protect valued springs and water recharge areas. 

- 23. Encourage minimizing impervious surfaces through stormwater utility credits and good site planning practices. 

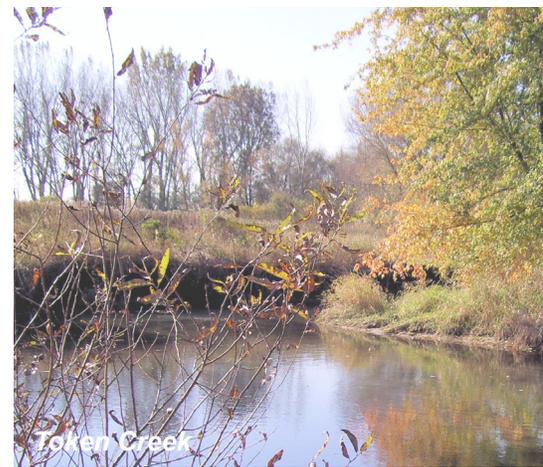
- 24. Continue to participate and consider expansion of the Green Tier erosion control/storm water management program. 



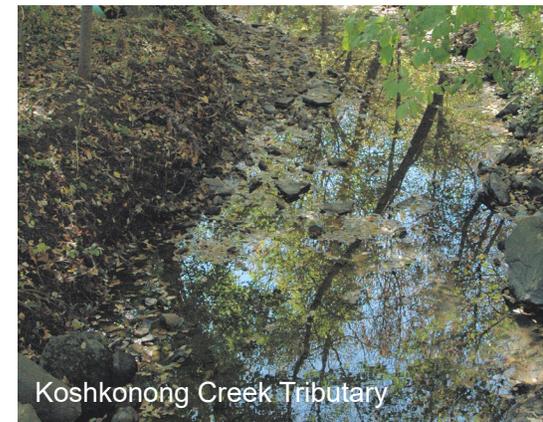
Wetland Feature



Greenway



Token Creek



Koshkonong Creek Tributary

## Actions

1. Advocate for reclamation of the former gravel pit north of Nelson Road (currently in the Town of Burke) as a county park, in collaboration with the City of Madison, Town of Burke and Dane County.
2. Continue to keep residents informed about stormwater quality and measures that they can take to assist with these efforts, using the following methods and media, and others as appropriate:
  - Local cable access;
  - City newsletters, website, mailings, etc.;
  - Storm sewer inlets markings (“Drains to Creek”);
  - Social media posts;
  - Storm drain adoption program by Neighborhood Associations.



*Patrick Marsh*

# CULTURAL RESOURCES



## GOAL #1

Preserve and create new places and events that contribute to the history and identity of Sun Prairie.

### Policies

1. **Create more unique places of interest for which Sun Prairie is known and loved. Whenever there is investment in new or existing neighborhoods, the City will collaborate with developers to create unique features and great public spaces. Encourage the incorporation of art and artistic expression in public and quasi-public places.**
2. Preserve historic downtown Sun Prairie as a residential and commercial center with an emphasis on specialty retail and cultural facilities.
3. Encourage the preservation of architecturally, historically, and culturally significant sites, buildings and structures in the City and its environs.
4. As city growth occurs at the edges, the City should be cognizant of, and work to protect, architecturally, culturally, and historically significant features.
5. Increase public awareness of the City's cultural and historic resources.
6. Maintain an inventory of historic sites and buildings within the City.
7. Pursue public/private ventures for public art.
8. Incorporate the display of art in public buildings.
9. Support cultural organizations and events.
10. Support year round community events and programs that celebrate the history of Sun Prairie and promote community pride (e.g. Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival, other events/initiatives that highlight Sun Prairie's agricultural resources, Parades, Midget Races).
11. Ensure that downtown redevelopment is consistent with the character and architectural features of existing historic resources.

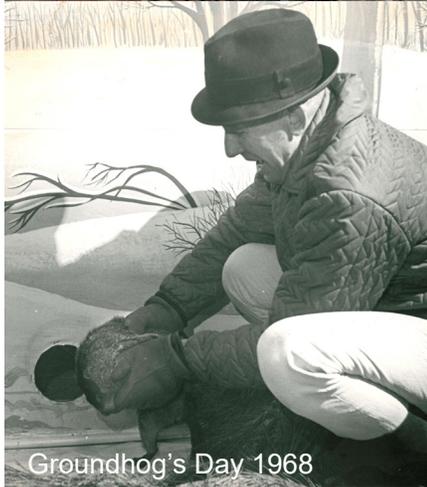
*Policies and actions in bold text indicate high priority*



Crosse House



Cargill Granary



Groundhog's Day 1968



Angell Park Speedway



Sweet Corn Festival

## Actions

1. Adopt a policy or ordinance to enable privately-funded art on public property.
2. Work with the Historical Library and Museum Board to develop a plan for the long-term viability of the Sun Prairie Historic Museum.
3. Create an Art in Infrastructure program that allocates a small percentage of annual capital spending toward artistic elements (examples: poetry stamped into sidewalks, wraps for prominent utility boxes, unique stop sign posts).

