

# Issues and Opportunities

# 2

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## INTRODUCTION

The Issues and Opportunities element considers background data, inherent characteristics, and public comment that have contributed to the identification of key community trends that guide the development of policies and objectives contained within the following chapters.

Volume 1 of this plan element describes the existing demographic characteristics, population projections, and housing forecasts for the City of Sun Prairie that were used to provide a basis for the identification of trends and issues from which to formulate policies and recommendations.

Volume 2 of this Comprehensive Plan identifies the primary trends and issues that the community will be facing over the next couple of decades, as they relate to each of the required planning elements, as well as policies and recommendations that are intended to build upon current efforts toward sustainability.

## MAJOR TRENDS AND ISSUES

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Over the life of any long-range plan such as this Comprehensive Plan there will likely be changing factors and cycling markets that impact the effectiveness of the plan and a community's ability to implement certain policies contained within the plan. This is well understood, but communities typically assume that such cycles will correct themselves over time, and project major trends over the life of the plan in order to guide policy and land use objectives. However, planning for the future growth and development of the City at this particular time is a very challenging task. With the major changes that have occurred in the Nation's economy, including major declines in the business and housing markets, predicting future demand for development and establishing policies for local decision making in the coming years will be difficult, at best. While this plan makes some assumptions about future demand for housing and land for non-residential development, the City will need to continue to monitor the bigger picture and adjust its policies as needed to adapt to these changing conditions. This should be kept in mind as this plan is implemented in the coming years.

Beyond the overriding issue of the national economy, there are several primary issues and trends that have been identified through the public input process and background research conducted as part of this planning effort. These items, listed below, are identified on the following pages, and are dealt with in one form or another throughout the balance of Volume 2.

- **DEMOGRAPHICS**
- **BABY BOOMER IMPACTS**
- **HOUSING MIX**
- **HOUSING MARKET**
- **RETAIL**
- **REDEVELOPMENT/INFILL DEVELOPMENT**
- **EMERGENCY SERVICES**
- **SCHOOL DISTRICT/CITY COMMUNICATION**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN/CHARACTER**

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic make-up of Sun Prairie is changing. The City's population is becoming more diverse, and while all segments of the population have been growing, a larger portion of the population consists of individuals and families in need.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Sun Prairie is becoming more diverse in terms of both ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
- While the Caucasian population increased in Sun Prairie by almost 4,000 persons in the 1990's, it decreased from 98% of the overall population in 1990 to 92.7% in 2000.
- School district enrollment data indicates that these trends have continued since the 2000 US Census. Enrollment data shows substantial increases in minority students since 2000, while the percent of Caucasian students has decreased from 89.9% to 78.8% between 2000 and 2007 (overall the Caucasian student population increased by 476 students over this time period). Students with limited English proficiency also increased from 1.5% to 5% of the overall enrollment during this time period.
- The poverty rate in Sun Prairie is lower than the statewide and countywide poverty rates, but it increased slightly during the 1990's while the state and county rates decreased slightly. School district data suggests that this trend may be continuing, as students of poverty increased from 12.8% of the overall enrollment in 2000 to 18.1% in 2007.

These changes in the community are important to remember when making decisions about future City services and when considering changes in policy under any of the required plan elements.

## BABY BOOMER IMPACTS

The expected increase in the senior population over the next two decades as a result of the "Baby Boomer" generation entering retirement age is likely to have profound impacts on all levels of government, and on other service providers for seniors.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Between 2000 and 2030, the percent increase in Sun Prairie's overall population is expected to be about 115%, but the projected increase in the over 65 age cohort is expected to be 309%.
- Senior housing facilities of all kinds are likely to be in greater demand, as well as ranch condominiums which offer owner-occupied living arrangements without the typical maintenance associated with the detached single-family home.
- Demand for detached single-family homes could lessen, although the "Echo Boomer" generation, primarily made up of the children of "Baby Boomers", will continue entering their potential home buying years and could mitigate this effect to some extent.

Sun Prairie will need to determine how this demographic shift will impact future development demands in the community, as well as the types and levels of services that it provides to its residents. This topic is addressed as part of the Housing and Utility and Community Facilities chapters.

## HOUSING MIX

Sun Prairie's housing mix has been changing over the past twenty years, with single-family homes making up a smaller percentage of the overall housing supply in the City. This is a trend that is not specific to Sun Prairie, but rather is occurring in many other communities in Dane County, particularly those with similar characteristics to Sun Prairie. At the same time, homeownership rates have been increasing – an indication that the condominium form of ownership is becoming more prevalent. However, the changing mix is not being well received by the community, which is calling for a change in policy to place an emphasis back on single-family homes as the primary component of the City's housing stock. It is noted that current market conditions make such a shift difficult, but that over time, market corrections will likely occur and such a policy may be achievable.

The make-up of the multi-family housing stock is also being questioned, particularly with respect to its suitability to accommodate an expected increase in the senior population over the next two decades. Many of the recent multi-family developments in the City consist of two-story dwelling units in townhouse or row house configurations, as well as multi-story buildings not designed with accessibility and convenience for seniors in mind. This should be taken into account for new multi-family developments that do occur in the years to come so that the needs of this particular segment of the housing market are met.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- From 1990 to 2007, single-family homes as a percentage of the overall housing stock in Sun Prairie decreased from about 62% to 56%.
- During the 1990's, the rate of homeownership in Sun Prairie increased from 56.3% to 60.8%.
- Recently, Sun Prairie elected officials have been clearly expressing concerns about the changing mix of housing and have been cautious with respect to the approval of additional multi-family housing in the community.
- The "Baby Boomer" generation is expected to have a big impact on the housing market over the next three decades as this group enters its senior years. Condominiums and senior housing facilities are likely to play a bigger role, but the type of unit being provided needs to reflect the needs of this particular segment of the population. More emphasis on ranch-style condos and condo flats with accessible components and features will be needed to accommodate this growing population.
- Regional agencies having influence over growth in Sun Prairie are encouraging increased densities and more efficient growth as a means of slowing the consumption of undeveloped land.

Clearly, market forces and regional influences are somewhat at odds with local public input the City is receiving with respect to its housing mix. The Housing and Land Use chapters address this issue in more detail.

## HOUSING MARKET

Residential building activity was remarkably high from 1998 through 2006, with several record years in terms of permits for new dwelling units being added to the City. However, the recent down turn in the housing market raises a great deal of uncertainty about future housing needs and demands. The desire for a greater share of single-family housing in the coming years may not be well aligned with the demands of the housing market in future years, and one of the outcomes could be decreased housing growth. In addition, it is recognized that due to the pace of platting activity that occurred in the early 2000's, and the approval of a number of large planned developments with long-range phasing plans, the City has already approved about ten years worth of future growth for which it has little control over in terms of dwelling unit mix and the pace of growth. New policies adopted as part of this plan can be implemented on new development projects that are submitted for approval after the adoption of this plan, but not on previously approved development projects, and therefore such policies will have minimal impact in the short term. However, it is still important to establish sound policies for the future as part of this plan.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Over 53% of the City's current housing stock was constructed since 1990.
- During the 1990's, about 2,700 residential units were added to the City.
- From 2000 to 2007, about 3,750 residential units were added to the City.
- There are approximately 4,000 residential units currently approved and not yet constructed within fifteen active subdivisions in the City – accommodating an estimated ten years worth of growth.
- Building permit activity has fallen off dramatically within the past two years, but housing values continue to rise, although at a slower pace than in the recent past (nationally, housing values are decreasing).

Accurately predicting and forecasting future population and housing growth under current economic conditions is a challenge. Regardless, it should be recognized that policies and recommendations contained in the Housing and Land Use chapters may have little impact in the short term.

## REDEVELOPMENT/INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Downtown revitalization efforts have been successful to-date, and more land is available for further redevelopment in and near the Downtown. Other opportunities for redevelopment of lands within the City exist as an alternative to spreading out into rural areas at the edge of the community.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Since 2003, a total of 276 dwelling units have been constructed downtown, and generally they have been well-received in the marketplace.
- About 120,000 square feet of new commercial space has been added downtown.
- Proposed redevelopment of lands located along S. Bristol Street in downtown could add another 7,500 square feet of commercial space and about 130 dwelling units (including 50 senior assisted living units).
- TIF-8 was modified to expand and correct the district boundaries, and take advantage of additional redevelopment opportunities near the intersection of STH 19 and CTH N.
- TIF-10 has been designated along W. Main Street to encourage reinvestment in this area, and other potential redevelopment sites have been identified throughout the City.

There appears to be a market for continued redevelopment and revitalization downtown, but public assistance will likely be needed to make these projects work financially due to the high cost of land, demolition, and environmental remediation. Housing is often an important component of redevelopment projects as a means of helping them be financially feasible. How do we balance this with the needs of other potential redevelopment areas like the Main Street Corridor? Also, what is the appropriate land use mix for these projects, given the community's apparent position on multi-family housing? The Housing, Economic Development, and Land Use chapters explore these issues further.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN/CHARACTER

The character of Sun Prairie neighborhoods platted in recent years has been changing as new models for neighborhood design are being implemented. Development models such as Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) and other formats that attempt to combine New Urbanist concepts with conventional subdivision design (referred to as hybrid developments) have been used to guide several large planned developments in recent years, with varying levels of success. In general, these neighborhoods have been received as well as or slightly better than conventional neighborhoods in the marketplace. However, concerns about the single-family to multi-family ratio, and a desire for fewer apartments, have been expressed by the community, suggesting that the City may want to look more closely at the housing mix contained within such developments in the future.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- As a result of rising land costs developers have looked at more efficient use of land and an increase in the density/intensity of development.
- Since 2000, Sun Prairie has approved a number of New Urbanist developments, characterized by mixed-uses and more urban densities, in an effort to develop more efficiently and address neighborhood design issues related to increased densities.
- Sun Prairie has also approved a number of hybrid developments, which make use of New Urbanist concepts to some degree (the idea favored by most participants in the public process for the Westside Neighborhood Plan).

- These neighborhoods seem to have fared as well as or better than conventional developments over the past several years from a market standpoint, based on building permit statistics.
- Questions have been raised about some aspects of the New Urbanist or TND neighborhood model, and the fact that Sun Prairie has so many of these projects underway. The small lot sizes, use of alleys for access and parking, and mixed densities and housing types seem to be acceptable to some in the community, but are concerning for others.

Sun Prairie will need to determine whether to focus future development in a more conventional fashion, or continue to be open to all models rather than adjusting policies to favor one or the other. Developers will need some direction for the future, although the need for new development projects is likely not imminent due to the current slate of approved developments and the slowed economy. The Land Use chapter addresses this issue.

## RETAIL

Retail space in Sun Prairie is poised to increase quickly, and is planned to increase by 200% to 250% over the life of the twenty-year planning horizon covered by this plan. The opening of new large-format businesses on the City's Westside will substantially increase the retail floor area available in the City. While this will draw in new customers from outside of the area, it remains to be seen whether this increase can be supported by the community.

Changes to the City's inventory of retail grocery space will be even more substantial. The net addition of grocery space with the recent construction of two new Copp's stores and Target, offset by the pending closure of the Pick'n Save store on McCoy Road, results in an increase in grocery square footage in the City of over 100%. In addition, Woodman's has received approval to build in the coming years, and speculation continues regarding the possible expansion or replacement of the existing McCoy Road WalMart, which would bring the increase to over 300%. A 2003 market study suggested that the Sun Prairie market could only accommodate one additional grocery store (size undefined) without some impact on existing stores.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Prior to 2009, existing retail space citywide totaled about one million square feet, of which about 100,000 square feet was grocery space.
- A relatively low vacancy rate over time, and general community sentiment, suggests that more retail is needed in Sun Prairie.
- Retail space has increased by 20% to 25% in recent years (Copp's, Target, Walgreens, other Westside construction, Downtown), including over a 100% increase in grocery space.
- Over two million square feet of additional potential retail space is proposed on the Westside, including an approved 217,000 square feet of additional grocery space (Woodman's).

Due to anticipated retail activity on the Westside, the existing Main Street Corridor is likely to suffer, and may require significant public investment to remain viable. Steps have already been taken to support these efforts with the designation of TIF-10, along W. Main Street, and the reconstruction of the roadway, including aesthetic enhancements to the public right-of-way and better traffic flow. Commercial services for east side residents may become more of an issue if business continues to move to the Westside. This issue is further addressed in the Economic Development and Land Use chapters of this plan.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT/CITY COMMUNICATIONS

Since 2000, school enrollment has increased more in Sun Prairie than any other community in Dane County. The Sun Prairie Area School District (SPASD) is affected by growth and development decisions being made by the City and surrounding municipalities within the district boundaries. To help foster communication, a School Board member sits on the City's Plan Commission, and SPASD staff is provided with information on all development proposals and is invited to City staff level meetings to discuss such proposals. The SPASD also initiates contact with the City when they are proposing the expansion of existing, or construction of new facilities. Despite these efforts, the public perception is that communication between the two bodies is not adequate. It is important to note that growth within the City of Madison will begin to have a much greater impact on the SPASD as Madison's Northeast planning area begins to develop.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Since 2000, two new elementary schools have been constructed, and both middle schools have been expanded to accommodate increased enrollment.
- A new high school is under construction, and the existing high school will be converted to an eighth and ninth grade upper middle school.
- According to the SPASD Administration, the current construction should address capacity needs for the next ten years or more.
- School redistricting, as a result of new growth and new facilities, is a major area of concern among many parents, and causes a great deal of controversy. As part of this dialogue, concerns about growth and the impact on the school district have been expressed.
- The school district owns property on the Westside for a potential second high school at some point in the future.

Efforts should be made to investigate avenues for increased communication between the SPASD and the City, particularly with respect to growth and development issues. The public perception is that the two groups are not working together, even though efforts have been made to encourage communication. The SPASD should also establish a dialogue with the City of Madison. This issue is addressed in more detail in the Intergovernmental Cooperation chapter of this plan.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

EMS and Fire Department calls are increasing at a faster rate than the City's population, placing increased demands on these departments and the need for expanded services. Since public safety has been identified through the household survey as being a high priority and a high quality of life factor, it will be important to continue to monitor these services and identify issues to be addressed early on, before they become problems.

### SOME FACTORS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:

- Fire calls have increased over time with population increase: 2004 – 486 calls; 2005 – 579 calls; 2006 – 582 calls; 2007 – 682 calls; 2008 – 673 calls.
- EMS calls have nearly doubled over the past seven years, increasing from 1,121 calls in 2000 to 2,042 calls in 2007.
- EMS call frequency has increased from about 50 calls per 1000 population to 70 calls per 1000 population since 2000.
- Significant upgrades and expansion of EMS service has occurred in recent years with increased staff and a transition to full paramedic status.
- The Sun Prairie Fire Department is an all volunteer department.

The continued growth of the community and increased demands for emergency services may eventually require increased staffing and/or upgrades to the levels of service offered by these agencies. Discussions with Fire Department officials regarding these increased demands, to gain their perspective, have occurred as part of this planning process. The Utilities and Community Facilities chapter contains policies aimed at continued monitoring of these trends.

## SUSTAINABILITY

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As noted earlier, a plethora of other issues beyond those listed on the previous pages have been identified and are addressed under each individual plan element. However, the issue of sustainability cuts across all of the required plan elements. While each individual plan element incorporates policies and recommendations aimed at sustainability, the topic warrants additional discussion and consideration as an over-riding principle, and is discussed in more detail below.

The topic of sustainability is not a plan element that is required by the comprehensive planning statutes. However, it is a concept that is woven through Wisconsin's fourteen planning goals listed in the sidebar on the facing page, and is a concept that is important enough to warrant extended discussion as part of this Comprehensive Plan. Due to the very broad and interconnected nature of the concept, aspects of sustainability are incorporated into the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations of all of the elements included in this plan. This section of the plan is intended to provide a description of the concept as it relates to local government planning, and a more centralized set of policies that describe the City's overall approach and level of commitment to sustainability.

### WHY SUSTAINABILITY?

Regardless of whether or not it is recognized as an official policy, most communities are making efforts toward becoming more sustainable. Any efforts to reduce costs through efficiency in terms of development patterns or energy consumption, to protect natural resources, to achieve a balanced economy that provides a reasonable mix of employment, shopping, recreation and housing opportunities, or to provide affordable housing options for those in need, could be considered as efforts toward creating a more sustainable community. It is not difficult to understand why many local governments, other public and private institutions, private corporations, and individuals are beginning to emphasize sustainable practices and policies as key components of their long range and short range planning. When well planned and implemented, such measures can produce significant benefits, as illustrated by the following examples:

- Over a two year period, the Onalaska School District (Wisconsin) cut its energy use by thirty percent, saving more than \$445,000, through simple conservation measures at its various facilities.
- The City of Columbus, WI, has decided to replace a large portion of its street lights with high efficiency LED fixtures, an effort that is projected to pay for itself through reduced energy costs within a few years, and resulting in substantial annual savings in operating and maintenance costs for the community thereafter.
- Ann Arbor, MI, is projecting savings of approximately \$112,000 per year in energy costs by switching a portion of its city street lights to LED fixtures. Ann Arbor estimates that it has realized about \$7 million in savings over the past decade as a result of energy conservation measures.
- In an effort to address rising costs being brought on by a shortage of asphalt (a result of the increasing cost of crude oil), the City of Chattanooga, TN, is now using up to fifty percent recycled asphalt in its surface paving efforts on city streets, resulting in a twenty percent cost savings overall, and reducing its demand for new material.

In addition to potential reductions in costs such as those mentioned above, such efforts often provide positive environmental benefits as well, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and waste materials being sent to landfills, among other benefits. However, not every sustainable development practice or policy will result in such measurable short term fiscal gains. For some measures, the benefits are less tangible and much longer term in nature, such as those aimed at protecting natural resources or at easing our community's dependence on the automobile over the long term. Sun Prairie will have to determine to what extent such policies will be incorporated into its long-range planning and day-to-day decision making.

### WISCONSIN STATUTE PLANNING GOALS

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

### LOCAL CONTEXT

There is growing concern worldwide regarding the rate that land and resources are being consumed, and the long term impact that mankind's recent trends and practices will have on the health and welfare of future generations. Sustainability, in a general sense, is the capacity to maintain a certain process or state indefinitely. The term is used in many fields to refer to a number of different, but very interrelated, ideas. In the context of the built or developing environment, sustainability has to do with the impacts of growth and balancing this with other economic, social, and environmental concerns, and making decisions and taking actions with the long view in mind.

“Think globally - act locally.” This is a popular catch phrase used to promote the idea of sustainability. Given the breadth and scope of the concept, however, one may wonder what role a local municipality such as the City of Sun Prairie can play in making a difference over the long term. Not all of the issues surrounding sustainability can be addressed at the local level, and the notion of dealing with this topic may seem overwhelming. However, it is important to realize that most of the decisions being made about growth and development are occurring at the local level, and as such are influenced by the policies and recommendations of local community plans. Collectively, the actions taken by local communities to implement such policies will play a major role in ensuring a sustainable future.

Planning for sustainability promotes responsible and well thought out development – it is not an exercise in discouraging development. Moderate and responsible growth is vital to the economic and fiscal sustainability of a community, and expands opportunities to attract and develop amenities and services that add to its quality of life – further expanding opportunities to achieve a sustainable mix of land uses. A wide range of sustainability measures exists to be considered for implementation at the local level, including energy conservation strategies, incorporating renewable energy sources, the use of green building technologies, the continuation of recycling and waste reduction policies, and the adoption of standards aimed at achieving more land-efficient development patterns, among others.

## SURVEY RESULTS

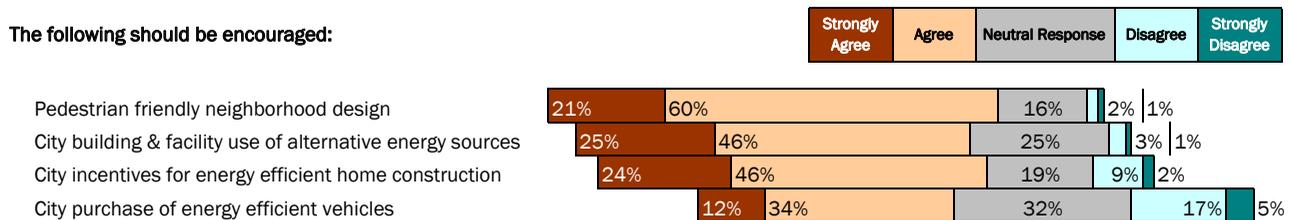
The household survey did not include sustainability as a specific topic area, but did contain a number of questions that can be used to help gauge community attitudes regarding a variety of issues having to do with the topic. From these responses, one can make some assumptions about the overall acceptance of the idea of sustainability by Sun Prairie residents.

Most specific to this topic were a series of survey questions related to energy efficiency and conservation. Respondents seemed to indicate a great deal of support for this idea. The following is a summary of the survey findings contained in the survey report:

Residents were generally supportive of energy conserving options for the City. Large majorities supported the use of alternative energy in City-owned buildings as well as City-sponsored incentives for private homes and buildings to be constructed for greater energy efficiency. More than twice as many respondents (46%) supported purchasing more expensive energy efficient vehicles for City use as were opposed (22%); nearly one-third have yet to make up their minds on this issue.

In a separate question, asking respondents to prioritize a number of community issues by choosing the four most important issues out of a list of fourteen provided, increasing energy efficiency in public buildings ranked second to last in terms of importance. So, although residents would support efforts aimed at energy efficiency, this is not perceived to be a critical area for most of them.

**FIGURE 2-1**  
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS**



Source: 2008 Household Survey

Residents indicated support for a number of transportation options that could be considered as sustainable options. There was strong support for sidewalks (both in commercial areas and as desirable components in residential neighborhoods) and the development of bike lanes and trails in the city, as well as the connection of these facilities to the rest of the region. The possibility of a park-and-ride facility received strong support, but residents were fairly evenly split on the issue of whether or not they would use commuter rail and bus service.

Residents were less certain about issues related to development patterns. While there was strong support for the idea of creating pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, respondents were fairly evenly split in their opinions about alternative development types, such as clustering of homes to preserve open space.

## CURRENT SUN PRAIRIE EFFORTS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Sun Prairie has already been involved in many projects that would be considered very “sustainable” actions. Examples of these existing practices include, among others:

- The use of methane gas produced as a result of the wastewater treatment process to power equipment that is in operation at the water pollution control facility.
- The use of a renewable, more environmentally sensitive, and more readily available deicing agent (a beet juice/salt water mixture) for City roadways.
- Implementation of recycling and waste collection programs that encourage higher levels of recycling by charging additional fees for curbside collection of excessive amounts of waste.
- Community support of local agriculture by providing land for community gardens and use of a City parking lot for the local farmers market.
- An emphasis on redevelopment and reuse of under-utilized land in the City’s downtown.
- An emphasis on pedestrian-friendly neighborhood design in many new neighborhoods, and pedestrian accessibility to new commercial developments.
- The amendment of the Municipal Code to allow Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, or NEVs, to operate on City streets.
- LED lights installed along W. Main Street.
- Sun Prairie Power and Light and the Sun Prairie School District have implemented geothermal systems.

## SUSTAINABILITY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan's sustainability recommendations are intended to build upon these positive measures already taking place in Sun Prairie. The policy recommendations contained in this plan are generally based on the premise of the government leading by example in the area of sustainable practices. This plan recognizes both the need for incorporating such policies into the City's day-to-day practices and decision-making processes, as well as the potential long-term financial, social and environmental benefits that could result from implementing such policies. The plan also recognizes the political difficulties associated with imposing such policies on private citizens and the business community through regulatory means. Therefore, the policies recommended herein suggest an approach that establishes realistic expectations for actions and decisions of the City as a governmental unit, together with policies and recommendations aimed at educating and encouraging the private sector to follow suit.

Policies aimed at encouraging sustainable development and decision-making are arranged under the broad topics of Resource Conservation/Reuse/Recycle; Energy Efficiency; Renewable/Alternative Energy; Building/Architecture; Environmental; Transportation; Neighborhood Design/Development/Redevelopment; and Social/Economic. Within each topic area, policy recommendations are further divided into policies that are recommended specifically to guide actions of the City of Sun Prairie as a governmental unit, and those intended to be applied to the private sector. As noted above, the former emphasizes the need for local government practices to adequately take into account the issues raised herein, while the latter is aimed at encouraging the private sector to do likewise, although some regulatory measures in certain key areas are recommended, as well.

## RESOURCE CONSERVATION/REUSE/RECYCLE

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding resource conservation, reuse, and recycling:

- 1 Continue to search for opportunities to reuse waste materials generated by City processes, such as that occurring at the Water Pollution Control Facility with the reuse of clean effluent for vehicle maintenance and the use of methane produced from the treatment process to power equipment at the facility.
- 2 Consider the adoption of a policy aimed at encouraging the recycling of construction waste materials on public construction projects.
- 3 Consider expanding sustainability criteria in City purchasing policies to place a priority on sustainable business practices, while ensuring that the maximum value is still obtained for every dollar expended. For example, if two bids are determined to be equal, then preference would go to the vender offering the more sustainable option. Some examples of sustainable business practices to investigate include:
  - a. Giving priority to supplies and equipment made from recycled materials where available
  - b. Selecting suppliers that incorporate sustainable practices, such as reduced/limited packaging materials, offering recycled materials, recycling construction waste, etc.
  - c. Purchasing materials, supplies, and services locally to reduce transportation demands on roadways and associated vehicle emissions.
- 4 Consider the incorporation of high efficiency fixtures and equipment in public buildings and building additions to reduce energy consumption.
- 5 The City should participate in and strive to achieve the goals of the Office of Energy Independence 25 x 25 program, aimed at getting 25% of our energy from renewable energy sources by the year 2025.
- 6 Consider using the City's biomass resources (brush collection, yard waste) for renewable energy or bioheat generation, by utilizing it in City facilities or selling to other interested parties.

## RESOURCE CONSERVATION/REUSE/RECYCLE

### Policies and Recommendations to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices in the area of resource conservation/reuse/recycling through the following measures:

- 1 Continue trash/recycling programs that encourage recycling by charging additional fees for curbside collection of excessive amounts of waste.
- 2 Continue operation of the recycling center for use by City residents, and when appropriate consider expanding and/or improving opportunities for the recycling and reuse of materials.
- 3 Consider offering incentives to encourage the conservation of water and electricity.
- 4 Encourage the use of low-flow fixtures and energy efficient lighting, appliances, and HVAC in private homes and businesses through public education and incentives.
- 5 Encourage the use of no-flush restroom fixtures in commercial businesses.
- 6 Encourage water conservation and reducing stormwater runoff by offering stormwater utility credits for maintaining an operable rain garden/rain barrel.
- 7 Continue to subsidize costs for purchase of composting bins by city residents, and provide public education/awareness regarding the benefits of composting.
- 8 Provide public education and awareness of recycling opportunities for computers, electronics and appliances.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding energy efficiency:

- 1 Study the potential incorporation of energy saving measures into all new public buildings and building additions, and of retrofitting existing buildings. Potential measures include:
  - a. Energy efficient lighting and energy saving switches
  - b. Geothermal heating and cooling technologies
  - c. Solar lighting, heating, etc.
  - d. High efficiency HVAC systems
  - e. Solar harvesting
- 2 Consider the use of LED, solar or other energy efficient street light fixtures as the standard for newly developed areas and parking lot lights at City facilities, and if feasible, develop a replacement plan for existing street lights as well.
- 3 Consider use of solar lighting and heating at new park facilities and remote sites.
- 4 Conduct energy audits of existing City buildings and facilities and consider implementation of resulting recommendations.
- 5 Consider selectively investing in vehicle operator education and idle reduction technology for vehicles in the City fleet to reduce fuel use and emissions when such education and technology provides a reasonable payback on the investment.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices in the area of energy efficiency through the following measures:

- 1 Continue to offer energy audits for private homes and businesses through SPW&L and WPPI to encourage individuals to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.
- 2 Encourage the replacement of older appliances and fixtures with high efficiency appliances and low-flow fixtures through public education and awareness.
- 3 Encourage the use of no-flush restroom fixtures in commercial businesses.
- 4 Encourage the incorporation of energy saving measures into all private homes, businesses, and building additions by offering education incentives where applicable:
  - a. Energy efficient lighting and energy saving switches
  - b. Geothermal heating and cooling technologies
  - c. Solar lighting, heating, etc.
  - d. High efficiency HVAC systems
  - e. Solar harvesting

## RENEWABLE/ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding renewable and alternative energy:

- 1 Investigate the potential incorporation of renewable/alternative energy technologies into all new public buildings and additions to existing buildings, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Energy efficient lighting and energy saving switches
  - b. Geothermal heating and cooling technologies
  - c. Solar lighting, heating, etc.
  - d. Solar harvesting
  - e. Passive solar design
  - f. Wind turbines
- 2 Investigate grant opportunities related to the use of renewable energy in public buildings, vehicle fleets and municipal sponsored renewable energy programs.
- 3 Consider the purchase of City vehicles that operate on alternative fuels, taking into account life-cycle costs and environmental impacts.
- 4 Consider providing plug-ins for electric vehicles in City parking lots.
- 5 Consider using the City's biomass resources (brush collection, yard waste) for renewable energy or bioheat generation, by utilizing it in City facilities or selling to other interested parties.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding renewable/alternative energy through the following measures:

- 1 Consider adoption of an ordinance that would streamline renewable energy review and approval processes within the City and support state policies favoring the siting of wind and/or solar power facilities.
- 2 Consider providing incentives for incorporation of renewable/alternative energy technology.

## BUILDING/ARCHITECTURE

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding building/architecture:

- 1 Investigate the potential incorporation of green building technologies into all new public buildings and additions to existing buildings, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Energy efficient lighting and energy saving switches
  - b. Geothermal heating and cooling technologies
  - c. Solar lighting, heating, etc.
  - d. High efficiency HVAC systems
  - e. Solar harvesting
  - f. Passive solar design
  - g. Green roof technologies
  - h. Low-flow/no-flush restrooms
  - i. Pervious paving
  - j. Rain gardens
- 2 Conduct a feasibility study that includes a life-cycle verses cost analysis of energy efficiency and green building technology options with all new public buildings.
- 3 Conduct energy audits of existing City buildings and facilities and consider implementation of resulting recommendations.
- 4 Consider LEED certification (or other recognized certification program) of all new public buildings.
- 5 Consider the adoption of a policy aimed at encouraging the recycling of construction waste materials on public construction projects.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding building/architecture issues through the following measures:

- 1 Promote energy efficiency through public education and encouragement, such as regular tips provided in City newsletters or utility bills, raising awareness of incentives offered through WPPI or other sources, the City's website, etc.
- 2 Consider encouraging the construction of LEED certified buildings (or other recognized certification program) by providing appropriate incentives.
- 3 Consider encouraging Green Built/Energy Star certification (or other recognized certification program) for new home construction through appropriate incentives.
- 4 Investigate and promote available incentives offered through WPPI or other sources to assist individuals and businesses with energy efficiency measures.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding environmental issues.

1. Maintain and enforce current ordinances that protect sensitive natural resource from development. Such resources include:
  - a. Wetlands (with buffers), flood plains, and stream corridors, and to a lesser extent woodlands, steep slopes, drainage ways, ridgetops, and prairie remnants
2. Continue to implement best management practices with respect to stormwater management and erosion control measures.
3. Expand use of native vegetation where appropriate on public lands, including:
  - a. Around and near stormwater management basins
  - b. On excess or “land banked” public lands
  - c. In rain gardens or other infiltration areas on public properties
4. Consider the use of rain gardens and rain barrels at City facilities.
5. Support efforts aimed at protecting and enhancing open space/natural resource areas, such as the Patrick Marsh area and surrounding lands.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding environmental issues through the following measures:

1. Continue to keep residents informed about stormwater quality and measures that they can take to assist with these efforts, including:
  - a. Information and programming on local cable access
  - b. Information in City newsletters, website, regular mailings, etc.
  - c. Decals on storm sewer inlets
  - d. Other education/outreach activities as deemed appropriate
2. Continue to participate and consider expansion of the Green Tier erosion control/stormwater management program.
  - a. DNR program of self regulation/reporting erosion control efforts
  - b. Veridian is only private sector participant currently
3. Consider adoption of ordinances that provide protection of potential mineral resource areas.
  - a. Protect resource areas from development until extracted for use
  - b. Implement policies/measures that require a percentage of materials to be extracted to be used locally and not transported elsewhere

## TRANSPORTATION

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding transportation:

- 1 Continue to support and expand shared-ride taxi services, including shuttles to Madison and transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities, until such time that alternative public transportation modes are feasible.
- 2 Consider the implementation of an in-town shuttle if demand would support such a service.
- 3 Continue to monitor and investigate the potential for regular and/or express bus service within the City and between Sun Prairie and Madison.
- 4 Continue to monitor and investigate the potential for commuter rail within the region and Sun Prairie's connection to this system.
- 5 Continue to expand upon and fill gaps in the City's bicycle and pedestrian network through the following:
  - a. Continue to require sidewalks on both sides of all streets in new developments
  - b. Continue to incrementally improve the pedestrian network in older parts of the City by installing sidewalks with street reconstruction projects and in key locations where gaps exist in the sidewalk network
  - c. Coordinate sidewalk construction plans with the Safe Routes to School Plan recommendations
  - d. Adopt a future bike trails and routes map that identifies key connections and links so that these facilities can be constructed as development and redevelopment projects occur
- 6 Work with The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to identify an appropriate location and develop a park-and-ride lot within the City.
- 7 Consider the adoption of a "no-idle" policy for City vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and emissions (with appropriate exceptions for emergency vehicles), and selectively investing in vehicle operator education and idle reduction technology for vehicles in the City fleet to reduce fuel use and emissions when such education and technology provides a reasonable payback on the investment.
- 8 Consider the purchase of City vehicles that operate on alternative fuels, taking into account life-cycle costs and environmental impacts.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding transportation through the following measures:

- 1 Support and encourage residents to participate in available van pool/rideshare programs through public education.
- 2 Provide public education regarding the costs and environmental impacts of unnecessary vehicle idling, and consider adopting ordinance restricting or limiting idling of certain vehicles for long periods of time, such as delivery trucks/semis and school buses.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding neighborhood design/development/redevelopment:

- 1 Place a greater emphasis on redevelopment and infill development on brownfield sites or under-utilized sites in need of redevelopment, verses development on the edge of the community.
  - a. Reuse of existing buildings and sites
  - b. Incentives for redevelopment verses development on the edge
    - Ordinance waivers - flexibility
    - TIF assistance where applicable
- 2 Continue to work toward encouraging diversity in the City's economy and job base – balance with housing.
- 3 Ensure contiguity of new development to avoid “leapfrog” development and associated costs.
- 4 Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy to ensure that the entire right-of-way is routinely designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transit users of all ages and abilities. Complete streets have some or all of the following components: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and similar facilities.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding neighborhood design/development and redevelopment through the following measures:

- 1 Continue existing policies that encourage the efficient use of land and allow the following:
  - a. Mixed-use developments
  - b. TND/New Urbanism design principles
  - c. Grow with a moderate density to help ease the pressure to expand outward
  - d. Decreased lot sizes
  - e. Pedestrian oriented neighborhoods
    - Design to help encourage non-motorized travel/less reliance on cars
    - Sidewalks/paths – new and infill of gaps in older areas
  - f. Mixed housing types
    - Housing for all/variety of families and life situations
    - Life-cycle housing
    - Market rate
  - g. Planning for transit
- 2 Encourage solar-friendly neighborhood design and identify and eliminate potential barriers to this type of development within City ordinances and policies.

## SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

### Policies to be Applied to Local Government

The City of Sun Prairie shall strive to become more sustainable by bringing its actions and decision making in-line with the following policies regarding social/economic issues:

- 1 Continue to support the Farmers' Market by providing space for the Market to operate and use of support facilities if available nearby.
- 2 Continue to support the Community Gardens and expand or add a second site if demand exists.
  - a. 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
- 3 Investigate the potential for the development of a public market as recommended in the City's Downtown, Phase II Plan, as an outlet for more locally grown food products.
- 4 Implement the City's 2009 Strategic Business Development Plan in an effort to create more quality employment opportunities in Sun Prairie and provide a more sustainable balance between housing, jobs, and shopping.
- 5 Participate in multi-jurisdictional efforts aimed at regional sustainability.

### Policies to be Applied to the Private Sector

The City shall encourage private sector businesses and city residents to make sustainable choices regarding social and economic issues through the following measures:

- 1 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).
- 2 Encourage local businesses such as grocers and restaurants to buy more local food products.
- 3 Provide public education and awareness of local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunities and of the availability of county voucher and other sponsored programs available to support CSA efforts.
- 4 Encourage local institutions to incorporate sustainable practices into their planning for community events and festivals, such as:
  - a. An emphasis on locally produced food and products
  - b. Providing opportunities for participants to recycle waste products, such as cans and plastic bottles
  - c. Planning for the composting, rather than landfilling, of organic waste (Cornfest)
- 5 Consider supporting efforts to create a small business incubator as a means of growing local businesses and offering local entrepreneurs more opportunities for business start-ups.



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