



CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2039

DRAFT PLAN OVERVIEW

April 29, 2019

Planning Process

- Work on this plan began in early 2018, led by a large Steering Committee chaired by Mayor Esser.
- Public meetings and a community survey in May of 2018 attracted more than 2,000 people to contribute opinions and ideas.
- A series of focus groups and visits with community organizations and City committees engaged more than 150 community leaders in conversations about the City's challenges and opportunities.
- Planning documents have been developed by MSA Professional Services, with significant input and review by City staff and the Steering Committee, which will meet a total of 15 times before recommending the final plan.
- The Draft Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for a Public Hearing at Plan Commission on July 9, with possible City Council adoption on July 23. The completed plan document will be available on the City website for at least one month prior to the public hearing.

DRAFT Community Vision

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

Major Issues and Opportunities, and the Plan Response to Each

COMMUNITY GROWTH AND IDENTITY

Sun Prairie has 32,000 residents today, headed to 40,000 in the next 10 years due to regional growth. Most residents favor growth, but there are concerns about loss of character and the neighborhood impacts of larger, multi-unit housing projects.

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

BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS

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

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

URBAN DESIGN QUALITY

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

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

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

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

The Plan describes the need for various on-street and off-street improvements and calls for an Active Transportation Plan. The Sidewalk Policy is reaffirmed with minor edits to support more predictable decisions about when they will be added along existing streets.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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

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

HOME AFFORDABILITY

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

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

WORKFORCE LIMITATIONS

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

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

SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

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

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

COORDINATION WITH NEIGHBORS

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

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

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

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

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

Plan Implementation

This plan is only as good as the sustained efforts to use it. Implementation efforts shall include:

- City Council commitment to use the plan and seek consistency with its goals and policies.
- Direction for key City committees and City staff to use this plan routinely to guide decisions.
- Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan Annual Report to inform and guide the City's annual budgeting process.
- Periodic review of plan implementation by an on-going Comp Plan Steering Committee.
- More than 100 specific actions to be completed in the coming years.