

# *Sauk County* **PROFILE**

*An overview of Sauk County & an Introduction  
to the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan*

***Low Resolution Version. For full color, full resolution document,  
please contact the Sauk County Planning and Zoning Department***

***Positioning Sauk County for the Future***

Prepared by the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning



Photographs courtesy of:  
[www.devilslakewisconsin.com](http://www.devilslakewisconsin.com)  
Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning

Maps by Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning

## CONTENTS

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>People</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Housing</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Land Use &amp; Natural Resources</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Economy</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>County Government</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>	<u>31</u>

# INTRODUCTION

## About the Sauk County Profile

“Where are we as a community, where do we want to go, and how do we get there?” These questions are important ones and an integral part of the Comprehensive Planning process. This Profile is meant as a guide to begin a dialog and help answer ‘Where are we?’

Inside this Profile you will find helpful information pertaining to Sauk County’s key socio-economic data, important trends and much more. In addition to helping familiarize you with Sauk County, this profile also serves as an introduction to Sauk County’s Comprehensive Plan.

Beginning with an introduction to some of Sauk County’s unique attributes, the Profile will move into a more detailed report of where we are as a community. The Profile is organized into seven important categories. These categories are intended to note key characteristics about Sauk County, and not be an exhaustive report.

- *People*
- *Agriculture*
- *Government*
- *Land Use & Natural Resources*
- *Housing*
- *Economy*
- *Transportation*

This report was developed by the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning on behalf of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. We hope this Profile is a helpful introduction to Sauk County and the Comprehensive Plan.

*-Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee*

# INTRODUCTION

*Positioning Sauk County for the Future*

## Executive Committee

Marty Krueger  
Judy Ashford  
Beverly Mielke  
Joan Fordham  
Don Stevens  
William Wenzel

## Guiding Coalition

Marty Krueger  
Kathy Schauf  
Mark Steward  
Dave Tremble  
Brian Simmert  
Aaron Hartman  
Jenny Erickson

## Steering Committee

Doug Blakeslee  
Ed Brooks  
Ken Carlson  
Ron Churchill  
Gene Dalhoff  
Carolyn Davis  
Gilbert Gerdman  
Janine Godfriaux-Leystra  
Alan Green  
Gene Hausner  
Fred lausly  
Benjamin Jones  
Richard Knight  
Tom Kriegl  
Karen Lanter  
Nicholas Ladas  
Gerald Lehman  
Peter Murray  
Keri Olson  
Eugene Robkin  
Marcus Wenzel  
Linda White

## About the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan

Development of the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan is important for many reasons. First, it helps satisfy the State of Wisconsin's requirement to make local government's land use actions consistent with a comprehensive plan. Second, planning can help us address important community issues, such as development growth and the loss of agricultural land. Planning is a tool that allows us to assess our situation and collectively decide how to solve problems. Comprehensive plans must be adopted by their respective local government before January 1st, 2010.

The process for developing such a plan is outlined in the state statutes, but is largely decided by the community. In Sauk County, four important groups have been identified to guide this process.

- *Executive & Legislative Committee*
- *Guiding Coalition*
- *Technical Advisory & Review Team (TART)*
- *Steering Committee*

You can read more about the roles of these groups in the *Positioning Sauk County for the Future Work Plan*.

In addition to this Profile being the introduction to the plan, a Public Participation Plan, Work Plan and finally the Comprehensive Plan are all being developed. For further information about comprehensive plans, see the Frequently Asked Questions section.

All Sauk County residents are encouraged to get involved and help position Sauk County for the future. If you'd like to get involved, please contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning or visit the website below.



# *Sauk County, Wisconsin*

## **The Good Life in Sauk County**

Sauk County has grown and prospered over the years because of several key factors - visionary community leaders, a growing workforce with a strong work ethic, an outstanding quality of life, and a strategic location.

## **Location**

Our logistics are a real asset for business - especially for Midwest distribution. Interstate 90/94 is less than 30 minutes from most of our business and industrial parks. Located in south central Wisconsin, Sauk County is less than 250 miles from Chicago and Minneapolis, about 100 miles from Milwaukee, and as close as 25 miles to Madison. Sauk County is within 500 miles of 14 states, and over one-third of all major U.S. markets. Commercial air service is less than an hour away, and business jets can be accommodated at several airports around the county.

In February 2006, Progressive Farmer Magazine picked Sauk County as the 40th Best Place to Live in Rural America! Counties were ranked by health care, education, climate, pollution, crime, and tax burden. After that, the editorial board of Progressive Farmer looked at intangibles such as quality of life, leisure and cultural activities, and scenery.

Questions?

Contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning 608-355-3285.

# PEOPLE

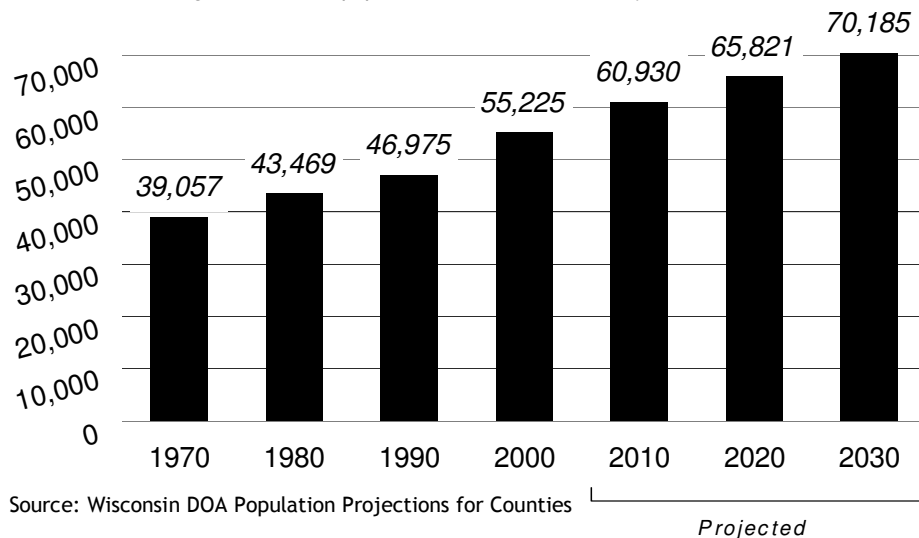
## Population

In 2007, the Wisconsin Department of Administration estimated Sauk County's population to be 60,673. At approximately 848 square miles, this makes Sauk County's population density 71.5 people per square mile. By comparison, the Chicago Region boasts a population density of 1,293 people per square mile. Clearly, population and population density are important indicators when assessing a community - as is the rate of population growth. Sauk County gained 8250 residents between 1990 and 2000, an increase of 17.6%.

figure 1

### Population Growth 1970-2030

This figure shows the population trend in Sauk County.



## Sauk County Population Projections

Sauk County's 20/20 Community Profile published in 1997 predicted that by 2010 Sauk County would have 54,935 residents. That prediction was surpassed 10 years ahead of schedule, in 2000. These population projections are important tools that decision makers can use to plan for future County spending and expansion of services. Accurately predicting future population trends and then planning accordingly can help make sure current and future Sauk County residents are appropriately accommodated.

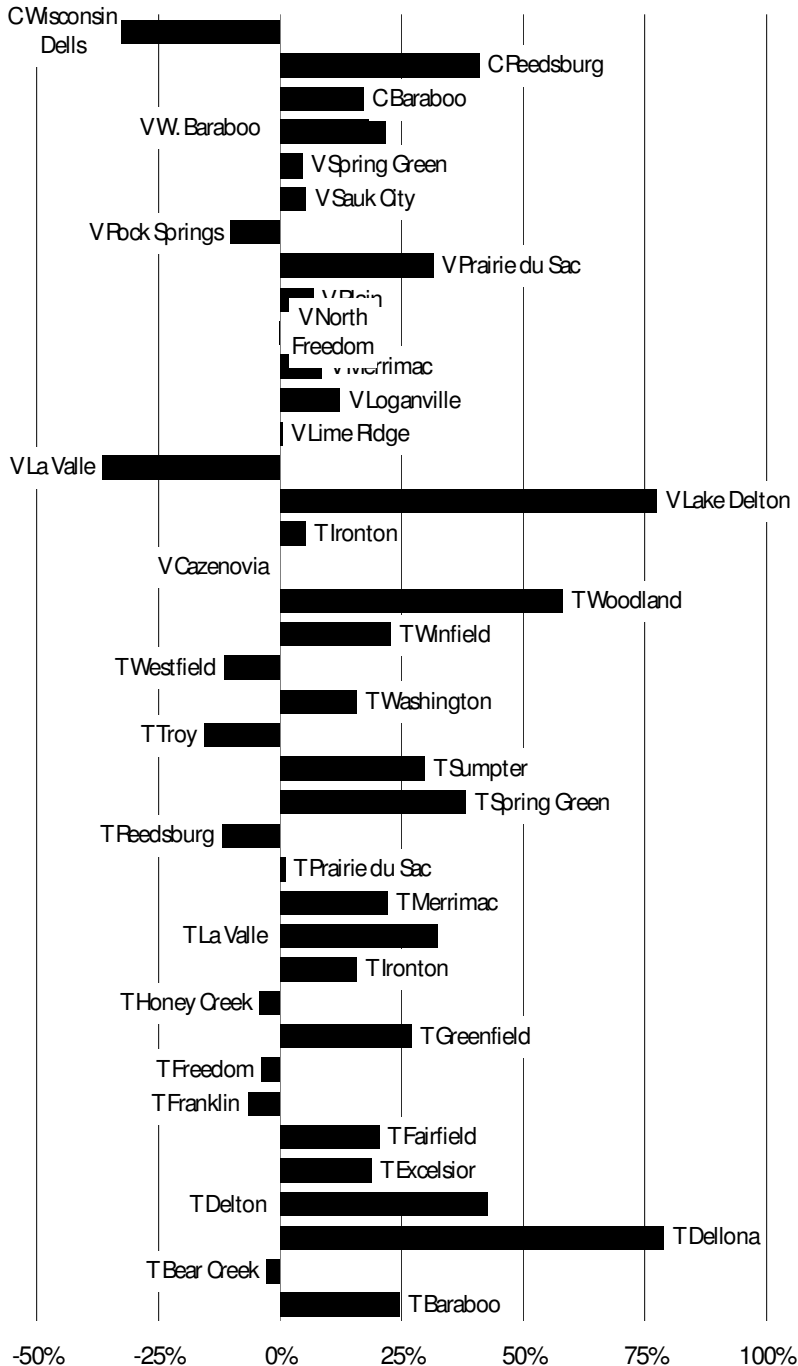
**In 2000, Sauk County had a population density of 65.9 people per square mile. Today? Over 71 people per square mile.**

# PEOPLE

figure 2

## % Population Change by Municipality, 2000-2025

Trends in Sauk County show that some municipalities will grow while others will shrink.



### Projections (continued)

This graph illustrates the percent of change between 2000 and 2025, both positive and negative, that is predicted in all municipalities within Sauk County. The Town of Dellona is projected to record the highest change - a 79% increase in population, while the City of Wisconsin Dells has a projected 36.8% decrease in population.

Sauk County's population is projected to increase 23.5% between 2000 and 2025.

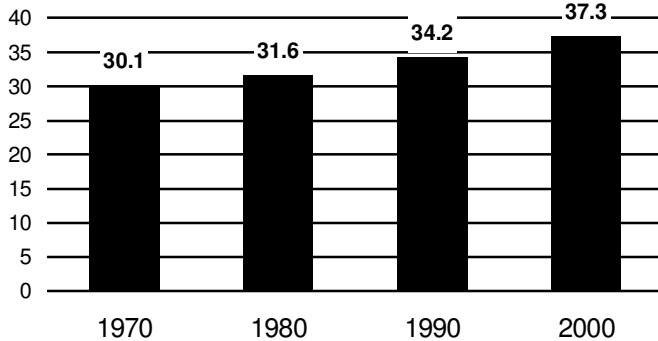
Even though some municipalities are projected to decrease in population, the overall population increase within Sauk County is clear. By 2025, the Wisconsin DOA projects a total increase of 12,983 people since 2000. These projections are crucial in identifying key areas within the County where population changes will occur. This information can then be used by decision makers to accommodate and plan for these future changes.

Source: Wisconsin DOA Population Projections for Counties

# PEOPLE

figure 3

## Median Age, Sauk County



Source: 20/20 plan and 2000 census SF1/DP

## Median Age

Since 1970, the average age of Sauk County residents has risen nearly 20%. This can be attributed largely to the aging baby boom generation.

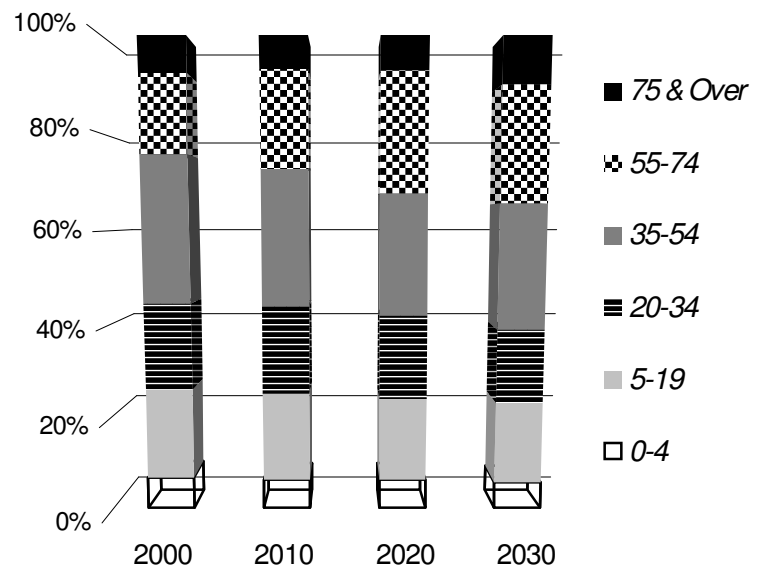
**By 2020, 32% of Sauk County residents will be over the age of 55.**

## Age Distribution

Current population trends in the U.S. indicate a large portion of the population is reaching the 55-74 age range. This is also evident in Sauk County. In 2000, only 16.0% of residents were aged 55-74, but by 2030 that number could reach 25%. In fact, 55-74 is the fastest growing age group. Changing demographics will mean changing housing and social needs.

figure 4

## Age Distribution Projection by Percentage of Population 2000-2030



Source: Sauk Co. Planning & Zoning

# PEOPLE

## Brain Power

In 2000, nearly half of Sauk County residents had some formal education beyond high school. Highly trained individuals with technical or professional skills tend to live in or near urbanized areas, where their skills are most in demand. Sauk County is host to the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo, a two year State College offering technical and professional training leading to an Associate Degree. In addition, Sauk County hosts the Madison Area Technical College (MATC) - Reedsburg Campus, which also serves the area.

## Municipal Population

Sauk County has 3 cities, 12 villages and 22 Townships. In 2005, 40.2% of residents called a township home, while 25.9% lived in a village and 34.0% lived in a city. All municipality types are seeing an increase in population.

figure 5

### Education Attainment, 2000

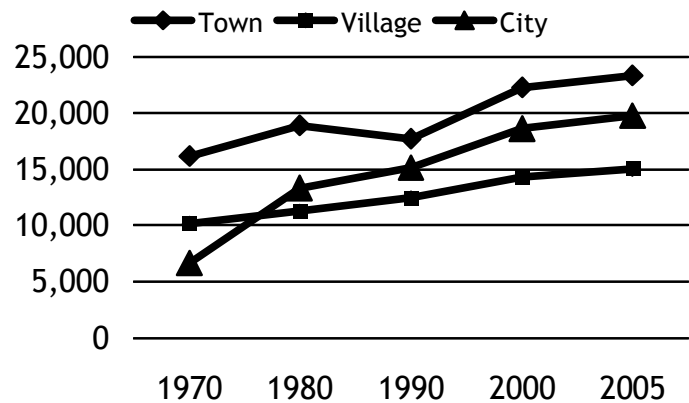
% of population over the age of 25 that has some education beyond high school.

	Sauk Co.	Wisconsin
Male	44.0%	50.6%
Female	47.3%	50.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

figure 6

### Population Distribution by Municipality Type



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

figure 7

### Race Distribution, Sauk County

	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total
White	46,502	98.8%	53,775	97.4%
Black or African American	39	0.1%	142	0.3%
Asian & Pacific Islander	75	0.2%	153	0.3%
Native American & Eskimo	233	0.5%	479	0.9%
Hispanic or Latino	224	0.5%	938	1.7%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, QT-P3

# HOUSING

## Housing

As life expectancy rises and the cost of raising children increases, the average number of individuals in a family declines. In Sauk County, the average household size has dropped from 3.1 to 2.5 people between 1970 and 2000. Smaller households and a continually rising population means more housing units are needed to accommodate more families. Since 1970, Sauk County recorded an increase of 21.2% in the number of housing units.

figure 8

### People Per Household 1970-2000

Year	Average
1970	3.1
1980	2.75
1990	2.61
2000	2.51

Source: U.S. Census 2000

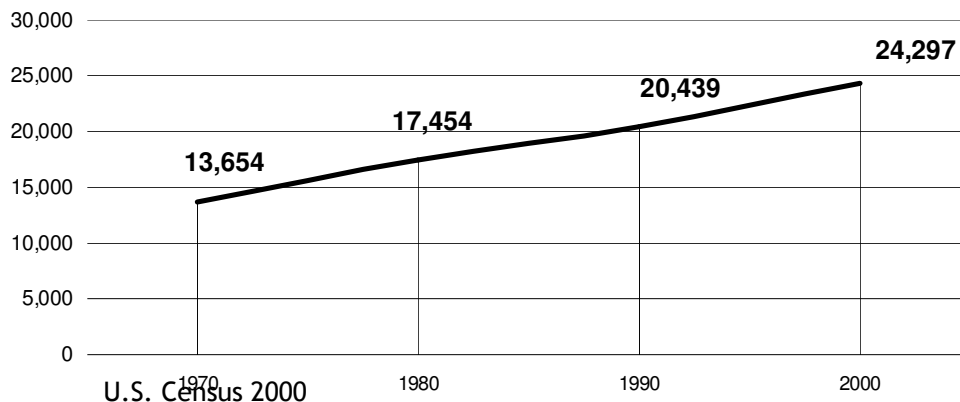
A combination of more demand for housing and an aging housing stock has boosted the need for new housing. This development will likely occur in the extra-territorial districts of villages and cities. To help alleviate development pressure and the loss of these fringe areas to development, a coordinated effort is necessary to update and maintain the current housing stock in addition to encouraging infill development.

It is important to offer residents a significant array of choices for housing. This will take a concerted effort to plan for the future, employing many factors and stakeholders.

figure 9

### Number of Housing Units in Sauk County

1970-2000. These data include vacant units.



# HOUSING

figure 9

## Home Sales, Sauk County

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Year Total
2008	93				
2007	147	205	219	125	<b>696</b>
2006	130	265	215	156	<b>766</b>
2005	120	258	217	168	<b>763</b>
2004	129	166	185	162	<b>642</b>
2003	113	198	215	153	<b>679</b>
2002	106	200	169	148	<b>623</b>
2001	101	171	158	103	<b>533</b>
2000	71	137	144	117	<b>469</b>
1999	31	110	129	84	<b>354</b>
1998	47	67	84	52	<b>250</b>

Source: Wisconsin Realtors Association

## The Cost of Living

Home sales in Sauk County have soared recently, doubling in the last 10 years. In addition, the cost of homes has increased over 50% in the same time. This may be interpreted as indicative of a strong economy, but can also be of concern. These houses do not cater to the affordable housing market nor serve as “starter homes” for new families seeking to move to Sauk County. The median sale price of homes increasing may mean a greater strain on retiring seniors on fixed incomes. Sauk County may also see a decrease in new families moving to or staying in the area. In addition, those that can’t afford home ownership may seek rental properties, creating a shortage of rental availability and increased rent prices.

figure 10

## Home Median Sale Price, Sauk County

	Q. 1	Q. 2	Q. 3	Q. 4	Year Total
2008	\$161,100				
2007	\$147,100	\$158,200	\$164,000	\$167,300	<b>\$158,500</b>
2006	\$160,000	\$161,800	\$158,300	\$158,300	<b>\$160,000</b>
2005	\$150,000	\$152,500	\$158,200	\$155,000	<b>\$154,300</b>
2004	\$135,600	\$146,200	\$160,000	\$140,000	<b>\$143,600</b>
2003	\$125,500	\$129,300	\$138,500	\$130,000	<b>\$131,400</b>
2002	\$125,300	\$127,100	\$124,000	\$118,900	<b>\$123,700</b>
2001	\$111,200	\$124,300	\$112,600	\$124,400	<b>\$117,500</b>
2000	\$105,400	\$103,700	\$125,600	\$119,600	<b>\$114,800</b>
1999	\$127,500	\$104,700	\$102,000	\$105,600	<b>\$105,900</b>
1998	\$98,800	\$103,800	\$109,300	\$100,000	<b>\$104,700</b>

Source: Wisconsin Realtors Association

Questions?

Contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning 608-355-3285.

# HOUSING

## Housing Function

The amount of seasonal residences as decreased since 1990, however the rate of housing vacancy has increased, from 4.0% to 5.3%, during the same time period. The total number of housing units has risen nearly 4000 in the same time.

figure 11

### Function of Housing Units

	Housing Units	Occupied	Vacant	Seasonal	Vacancy Rate	Seasonal Rate
1990	20,429	17,703	818	1,918	4.0%	9.4%
2000	24,297	21,644	1,075	1,578	5.3%	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, DP-4 File 3 Sample

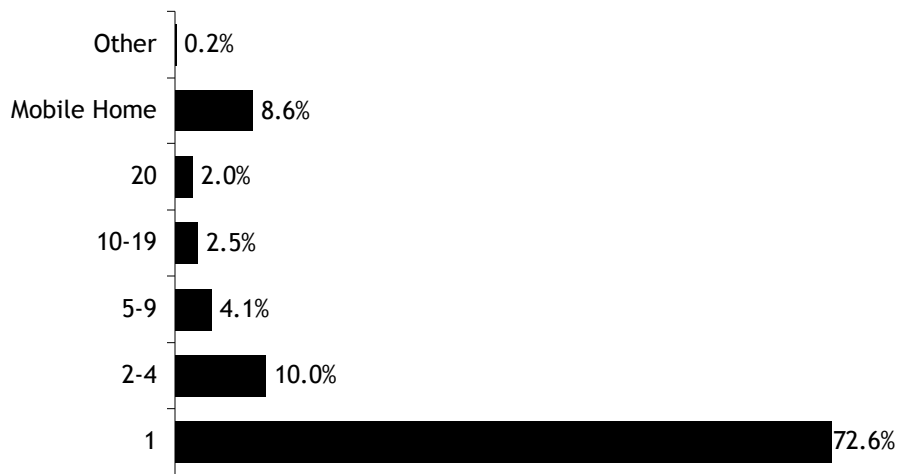
## Housing Characteristics

Nearly two thirds of the housing in Sauk County is considered a single living unit. Duplexes and multi-family housing units make up a minority of housing structures but are important indicators. Higher housing density in urban centers can result in less development pressure on agricultural or environmentally sensitive areas. Encouraging this type of multi-family residences is an indirect way to preserve habitat and farmland.

figure 12

### Structure of Living Units

Data indicates percentages of each living unit by category. E.g. apartment complexes vs. single family homes.



Source: U.S. Census 2000

# HOUSING

## Energy Audit

Like the rest of the Nation, Sauk County residents have felt the strain of rising energy prices. Our lives are heavily dependent on energy resources, particularly petroleum, of which the county has no producing resources. Luckily, Sauk County is in a good location for producing other types of clean, affordable, renewable energy. In 2003, the Sauk County Landfill was fitted with twelve 30 kW Capstone MicroTurbines that burn waste methane gas. These turbines produce enough energy to power about 150 average homes. In addition, Sauk County is home to one of the largest hydroelectric dams in Wisconsin. It produces 28,500 kW of electricity yearly. With the possibility of harnessing our wind resources, Sauk County could explore making wind turbines a permitted use under county ordinance. In 2000, Sauk County residents reported an array of home heating fuel uses, renewables among them.

*figure 13*

### Home Heating Fuel, 2000

	Residences	% of Total
Utility Gas	10,424	48.2
Bottled, Tank or LP Gas	5,099	23.6
Electricity	2,905	13.4
Fuel Oil, Kerosene, Etc.	2,103	9.7
Coal or Coke	2	0
Wood	1,054	4.9
Solar Energy	3	0
Other Fuel	28	0.1
No Fuel Used	26	0.1

Source: U.S. Census 2000

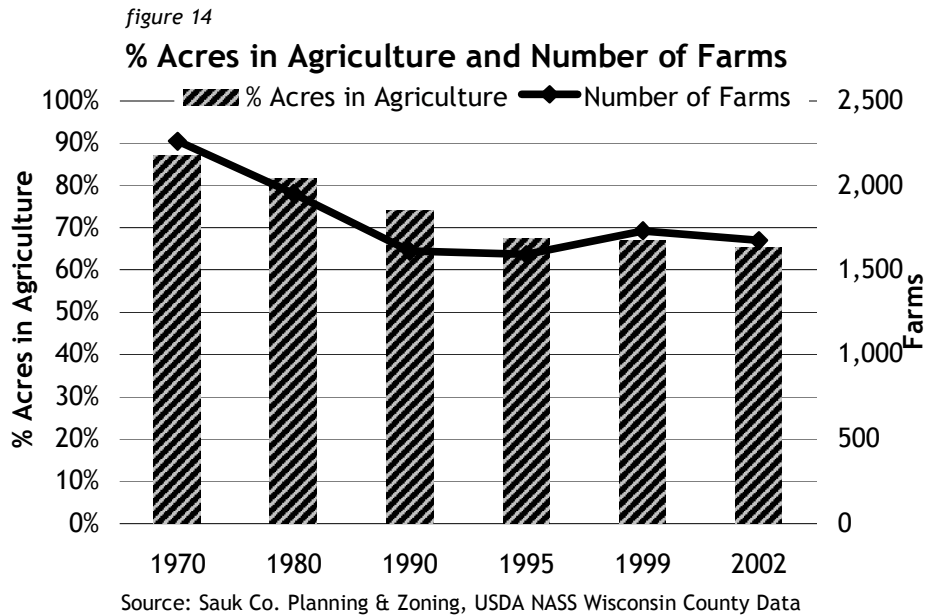
# AGRICULTURE

## Agricultural Resources

Sauk County has a strong agricultural heritage. With some of the best soil resources in the United States, Sauk County residents have long valued the prime farmland and rural landscape they've known for decades. Changing socio-economic conditions have tested these values but agriculture still remains one of Sauk County's strongest assets and defining characteristics.

Sauk County offers a diverse array of agricultural products including corn, alfalfa, soybeans, beef, poultry and fruit. Over 60% of Sauk County's acres are in agricultural use, or approximately 353,104 acres. In 2002, there were 1,673 farms in the county. While the number of 180 to 499 acre farms is dropping, the number of small farms under 180 acres is increasing. The average size of a farm in Sauk County was 211 acres with total farm employment reaching 4,962 in 2002.

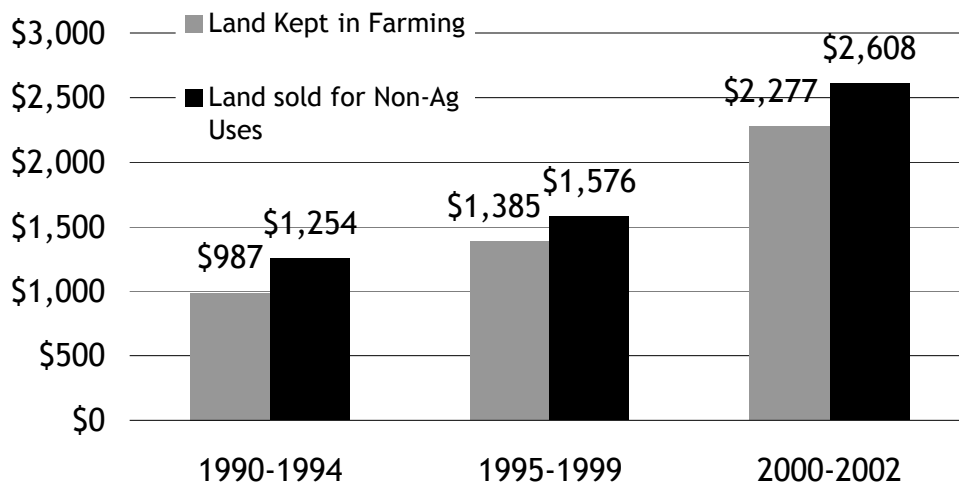
According to the Sauk County Development Corporation, agricultural production accounted for \$116.64 million in market value in 2002. Crop sales accounted for only 17% while livestock products made up the rest. The number of dairy herds in the County is decreasing, while the average size of the herds has increased. Sauk County is also home to large farming companies such as Foremost. There are farmer's markets, cheese factories and canning facilities throughout the county.



## A Changing Landscape

The loss of farmland in the county is of increasing concern. Development pressure, changing land values, land fragmentation and uncertain agricultural product prices all strain farms. While these threats continue, government programs have been enacted to keep farmland productive. Some available programs include the Working Lands initiative, the County Planned Unit Development (PUD) program and other farmland preservation programs. More information can be found by contacting the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning.

figure 15  
**Average Value of Farmland**



Source: PATS

**Sauk County is one of the largest producers of mint, a rare agricultural product.**

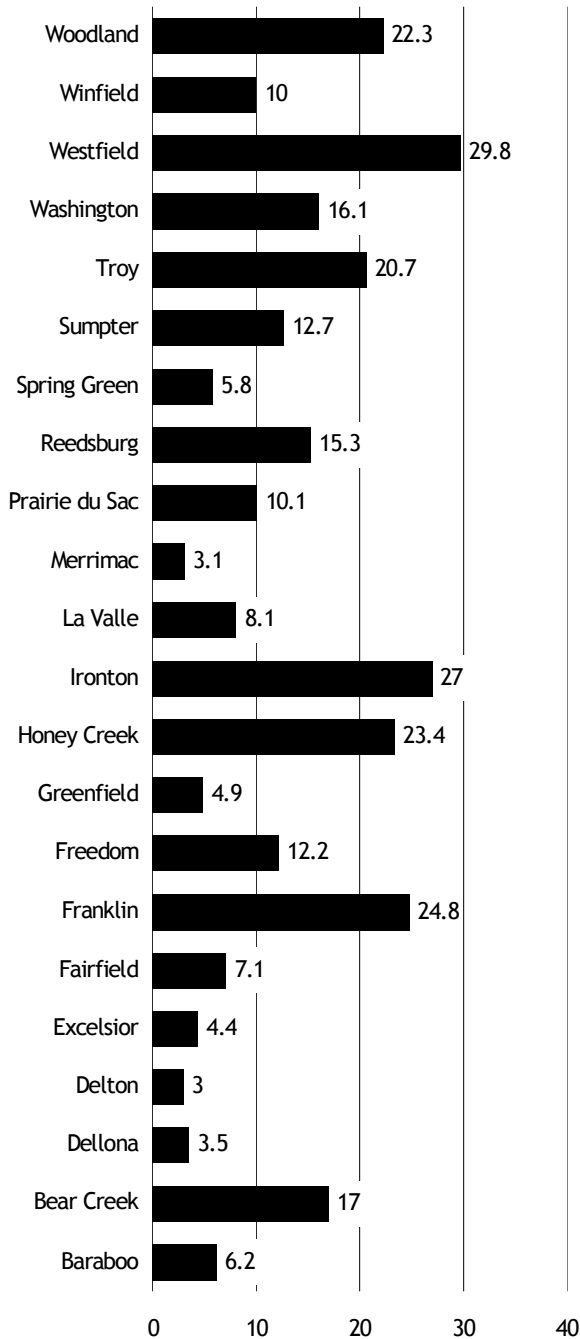
Questions?

Contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning Department 608-355-3285.

# AGRICULTURE

figure 16

## % Employed Adults Working on Farms by Town, 2000



Source: PATS

## Farming as a Way of Life

According to *Sauk County Agriculture: Value and Economic Impact* publication prepared by UW-Extension, Sauk County's agriculture accounts for \$587.4 million in total economic activity and provides 5,611 jobs. The jobs and economic activity include far more than just the procurement of crops. They include feed and fertilizer suppliers, product marketers and transportation support.

In fact, in some Sauk County townships, over a quarter of employed adults work in the farm sector. According to UW-Extension, agricultural related activities account for 9.9 % of Sauk County's income. In addition, agriculture generates \$15 million in state and local taxes, not including those taxes that support local schools. It's clear to see why agriculture is an important socio-economic activity in Sauk County.

## Preserving Farmland

Sauk County has a strong farmland preservation program, employing many different techniques to help keep Sauk County’s farmland. One of these is the Planned Unit Development (PUD) program that allows for smaller lots and more contiguous development. The figures below show the impact that both the PUD program and the Farmland Preservation program have had on land use. In just the first few years of the PUD program, nearly 1000 acres have been preserved.

figure 17

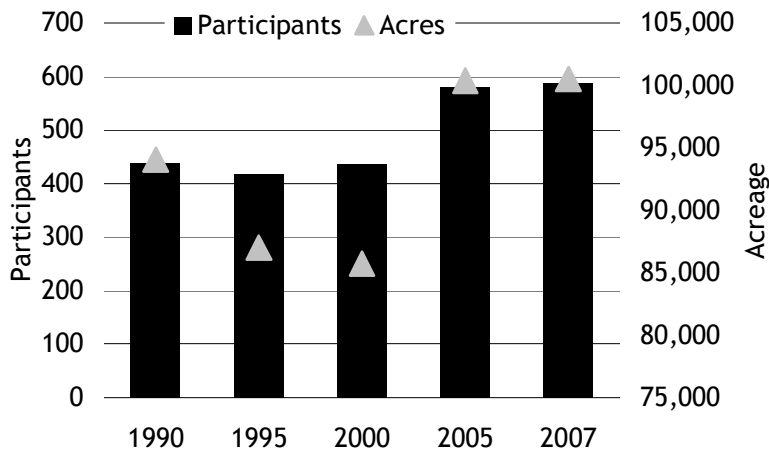
### Sauk County PUD - Cluster Lot Program

	Number of Lots	Acres for Lots	Acres Preserved	Acres 'Developed' under 35-acre rule
2006	19	65	650	665
2007	10	45	320	350
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>1,015</b>

Source: Sauk County Planning and Zoning

figure 18

### Farmland Preservation Participation & Acreage, 1990-2007



Source: Sauk County Planning and Zoning

Questions?

Contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning 608-355-3285.

# LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

## Our Land Ethic

Famous conservationist Aldo Leopold spent time at his Sauk County ‘shack’ pondering our relationship to the land and writing the landmark essay *A Sand County Almanac*. Leopold, an internationally recognized figure, referred to the natural world “as a community to which we belong.” With his legacy in mind, Sauk County has worked not only to preserve sensitive natural areas such as the Baraboo Range, but also to incorporate a responsible land ethic in our use of resources. Sauk County offers a myriad array of recreational opportunities through many parks and natural areas. The Wisconsin Dells, Baraboo Range, Devils Lake and the Wisconsin River are just some of the natural wonders that Sauk County offers. These areas make Sauk County a special place for residents and visitors. Balancing these areas with the pressure to grow is an important task for elected officials, community leaders and residents.

## Land Cover/Use Maps

Figure 19 shows the land cover breakdown in Sauk County, land use acreages will be different, as classifications change. The maps on the following pages identify important land uses within the county. The *Baraboo Range Protected Lands* figure identifies areas along the internationally recognized Baraboo Range. These areas are protected and left in their natural state for recreation and future generations to enjoy. The *Sauk County Public Lands* map identifies government holdings held

*figure 19*

<b>Sauk County Land Cover</b>		
<b>Land Cover</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Urban/Developed	8,227	1.51
Agriculture	220,847	40.67
Grassland	75,661	13.94
Coniferous Forest	7,029	1.29
Deciduous Forest	187,865	34.6
Open Water	6,578	1.21
Wetlands	31,460	5.79
Barren	5,221	0.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>542,892</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Sauk Co. Planning & Zoning

in the public trust such as parks and reserves. Protecting these recreational areas is important for many reasons, including ecological and economic security. Finally, the *Zone of Contribution* map identifies sensitive groundwater recharge areas. Municipal wells draw water from these areas, making the protection and wise use of land above the groundwater paramount.

## LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

*figure 20. High quality color images are available upon request from the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning. These were deleted from this version of the report for faster downloading.*

Image: Baraboo Range Protected Lands

## LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

*figure 21. High quality color images are available upon request from the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning. These were deleted from this version of the report for faster downloading.*

Image: Sauk County Public Lands

## LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

*Positioning Sauk County for the Future*

*figure 22. High quality color images are available upon request from the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning. These were deleted from this version of the report for faster downloading.*

Image: Sauk County Zones of Contribution

## LAND USE & NATURAL RESOURCES

*Positioning Sauk County for the Future*

### Land Development

The land density map below shows the relationship between zoning and development. The dark orange show areas of high development density. Land development in the county is closely related to the structure of Sauk County land use ordinances or township Ordinances, and many times both. A majority of the county is zoned for agricultural use, but rezoning to commercial and subdivision & residential is increasing. A strong and flexible zoning ordinance is important to both preserve farmland and encourage development in appropriate cases.

*\*High quality color images are available upon request from the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning. These were deleted from this version of the report for faster downloading.*

Image: Sauk County Zoning Density

# ECONOMY

## Socio-Economic Connections

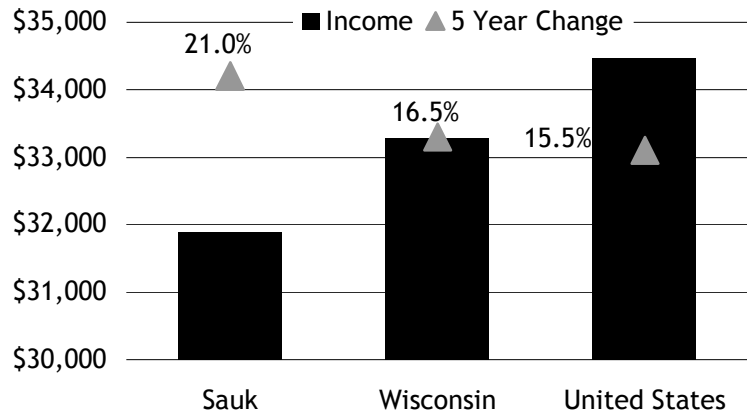
Although *figure 23* shows that Sauk County's per capita personal income is currently below the state and national averages, we're catching up - and fast. Sauk County's average income increased 21% between 2000 and 2005 while both Wisconsin and the National average hovered around a 15% increase.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, high income households often concentrate in urban or suburban areas. Counties similar to Sauk rarely report a substantial number of high income households.

Over the next 20 years  
Sauk County will be one  
of the ten fastest growing  
counties in the state.

*figure 23*

**Personal Income in Sauk County, 2005**  
Income includes wages, dividends/interest and personal transfer receipts



Source: U.S. Economic Census 2005

*figure 24*

**Employment Distribution by Industry in Sauk County, 2000**

Industry	Annual Average	% of Total
Natural Resources	334	0.9
Construction	2,066	5.6
Manufacturing	7,048	19.0
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	7,316	19.8
Information	219	0.6
Financial Activities	1,792	4.8
Professional & Business Services	2,062	5.6
Education & Health	5,230	14.1
Leisure & Hospitality	7,342	19.9
Other services	641	1.7
Public Administration	2,943	8.0
<b>All Industries</b>	<b>36,993</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Training, Quarterly Census Employment and Wages, June 2007. Prepared by Sauk County Development Corporation

Questions?

Contact the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning 608-355-3285.

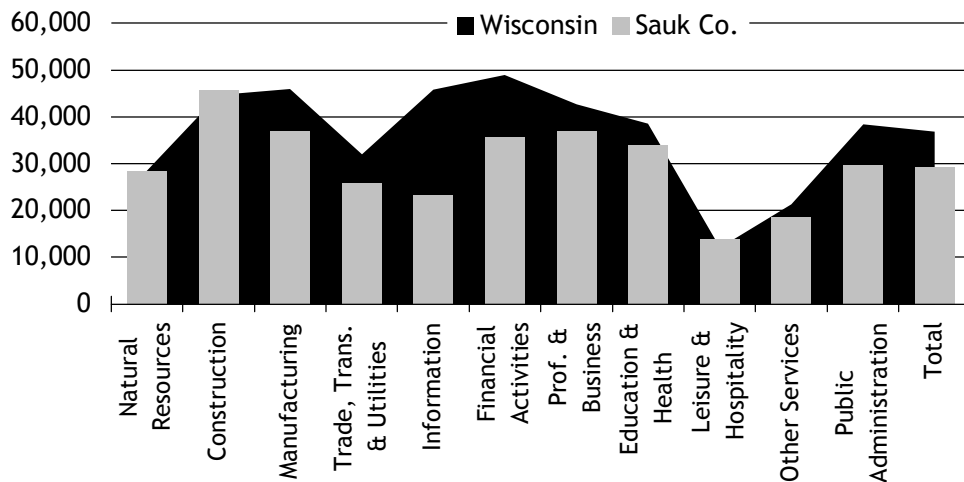
## Economic Indicators

Sauk County has a strong and diverse economy. The county draws income from manufacturing, retail, financial, professional and technical jobs, just to name a few. The cost of living remains low while average wages remain high. The county has thirteen developed business and industrial parks in addition to numerous thriving downtowns. Further economic data can be found through the Sauk County Development Corporation.

figure 25

### Average Annual Wage by Industry, 2006

Industries defined by Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development



Source: WI Department of Workforce Development

## Making Connections

Higher energy prices translate to increased costs for all goods and services that rely on transportation - the vast majority of which is moved by truck. There are many ways to help alleviate the pressure on the pocketbook. One proven method is to buy products produced locally. Buying locally produced products not only reduces our dependence on petroleum as a source of fuel, but also boosts the local economy. Economic impact studies suggest that money used to purchase local products can cycle through the community many times. By buying local, your dollar can help other families throughout the Midwest and region get through high energy prices.

**A Popular Destination**

Sauk County’s natural wonders, amiable people and hospitable climate are some of the reasons that vacationers make Sauk County a popular vacation destination. Over 1 billion dollars are spent by visiting tourists each year, making tourism a driving force of economic activity in the county. Devil’s Lake State Park, the most visited State Park in Wisconsin, calls Sauk County home.

figure 26

**Sauk County’s Largest Employers**

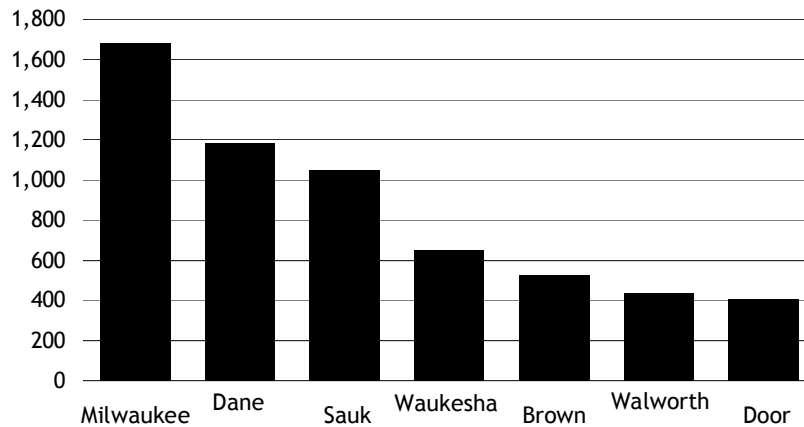
Employers	Est. Employees	Community
Lands' End	1,000 - 2,000	Reedsburg
Ho-Chunk Casino	1,700	Delton
Grede Foundries	835	Reedsburg
R. R. Donnelley	700	Baraboo
Sauk County	664	Sauk County
Sysco Food Services	600	Baraboo
Seats	540	Reedsburg
Baraboo School District	520	Baraboo
Flambeau Plastic company	500	Baraboo
St. Clare Hospital	484	Baraboo
Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital	465	Sauk City
Cardinal IG	457	Spring Green
Sauk Prairie School District	450	Sauk City
Reedsburg Area Medical Ctr.	433	Reedsburg
Reedsburg School District	392	Reedsburg
Milwaukee Valve	325	Prairie du Sac
Kraemer Bros., Inc.	288	Plain
Teel Plastics Co.	260	Baraboo
Seneca	257	Baraboo
Gerber Products	253	Reedsburg

Source: Sauk County Development Corporation

figure 27

**Dollars Spent by Tourists Per Year**

2007, in millions



Source: Tourism’s Economic Impact: 2007 County by County Report, WI Dept. of Tourism

# COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## Democracy in Action

As part of a strategic planning process in 2006, County Board members developed the following mission statement for Sauk County government operations:

*The mission of Sauk County government is to provide essential services to the residents of Sauk County in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes safety, economic development, and stewardship of natural resources while encouraging the development of cultural, social, and community values that enhance human dignity.*

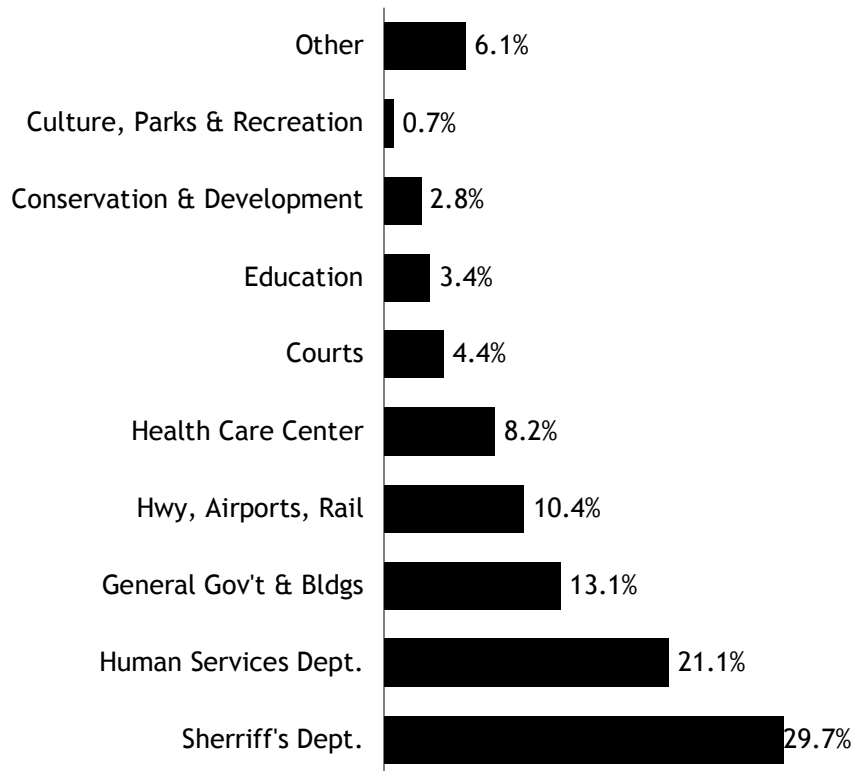
The County Board consists of County Supervisors representing 31 districts. Under the leadership of Chair Marty Krueger, the board regularly addresses a varied array of topics, including developing and approving the annual county budget and overseeing county operations. *Figure 28* breaks down the allocation of Sauk County spending.

The Sauk County Board is the most influential governing body within Sauk County. Residents are encouraged to be proactive in addressing issues and participate in county government. While the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan is being developed by numerous committees, final approval of the plan will rest with the Sauk County Board of Supervisors. Public participation in developing Sauk County's Comprehensive Plan is essential for success. More information about getting involved in the Comprehensive Planning process can be found by contacting the Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning.

figure 28

### County Government Allocation by Category

Data reflects breakdown of Sauk County's 2008 adopted budget.



Source: 2008 Adopted Sauk County Budget

# TRANSPORTATION

## A Pressing Need

Sauk County's population density of only 71.5 people per square mile makes the procurement of a functioning public transportation system a hard sell. However, with rising fuel costs and products heavily reliant on energy becoming more expensive, mass transit is becoming more attractive. The vast majority of Sauk County residents rely on personal automobiles for their transportation needs. With little alleviation for high fuel costs in sight, alternative methods of getting to work such as carpooling or biking will become more prevalent.

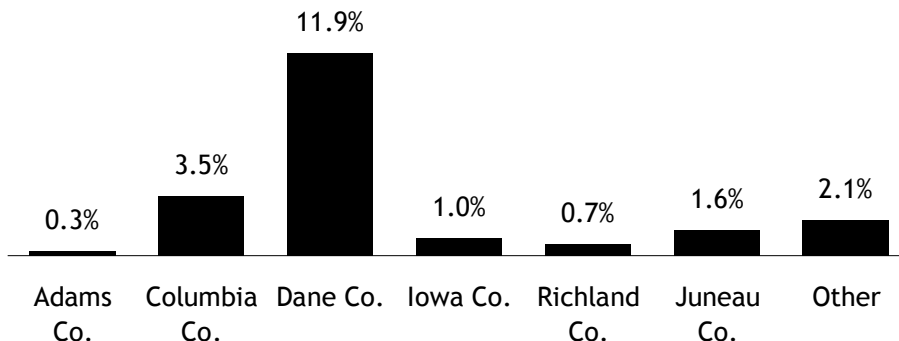
Sauk County maintains a large network of rural roads and county highways. This infrastructure costs a significant amount to maintain. Administrators estimate that 95% of Sauk County's roads were damaged by the historic floods of June 2008 and in need of some type of repair. Costs of these repairs will be shared by county, state and federal agencies. With an emphasis on repairing the road network for vehicle traffic, there will undoubtedly be less time and money spent on investing in alternative transit such as buses, rail, bike lanes and carpool incentive programs in the county.

Sauk County also supports a network of freight rail, interstate highway, state highway and recreational trails. The Wisconsin Southern Railroad Company serves numerous Sauk County municipalities and the Pink Lady Rail Transit Commission (PLRTC) was formed in 1987 to ensure that rail transit within the county remains strong. The 400 recreational trail begins in Reedsburg and the Ice Age National Scenic Trail follows the glacial end moraines through the county.

figure 29

### Workplace by County, 2000

79% of Sauk County residents remain in Sauk County for work, while the remainder commute to other counties.



Source: U.S. Census 2000, County to County Worker Flow Files

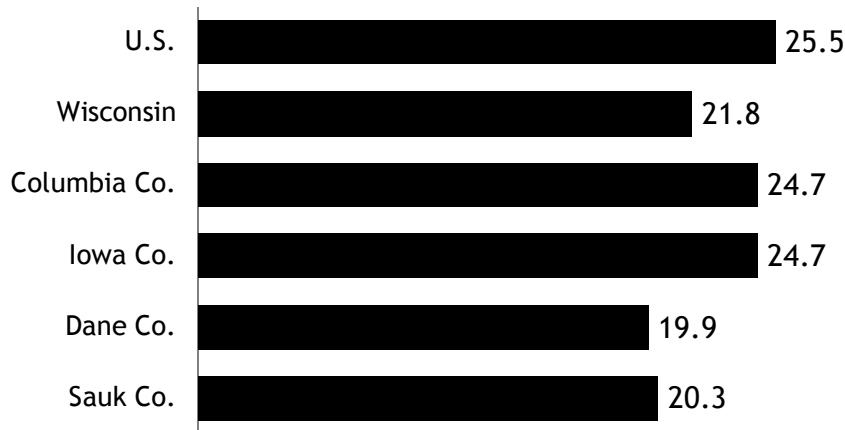
**Transportation Statistics**

Sauk County residents spend an average of 40 minutes traveling to and from work everyday, but a majority of residents work right here in Sauk County. An overwhelming majority also drive to work alone. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, a small portion of residents carpool, walk, or ride a bike or motorcycle, and almost no residents utilize public transportation. As mentioned previously, these methods of commuting to work will likely change due to increased transportation costs. Planning for a more diverse transportation system is no longer the task of future generations. High energy prices are upon us and the viability of communities and livelihoods are dependant upon long-term, creative and sustainable solutions.

*figure 30*

**Average Travel Time to Work, in minutes**

On average, Wisconsinites enjoy a shorter commute to work than other Americans.



Source: Census 2000 Brief: Journey to Work

*figure 31*

**% of Population by Method of Commute to Work**

	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transport	Walked	Motorcycle, bike or other	Worked at Home
Sauk Co.	77.4%	11.1%	0.5%	3.9%	0.5%	6.3%
Wisconsin	79.5%	9.9%	2.0%	3.7%	0.9%	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

## **FAQs**

### ***Why does Sauk County need a Comprehensive Plan?***

The 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 (the biennial budget act) included a “trailer bill” that addressed a consistency requirement regarding land use. It stated that any program or action of a local governmental unit that affects land use, such as zoning, must be consistent with a comprehensive plan by January 1st, 2010.

If a local government does not partake in land use decisions, there is no need for consistency, and thus no need to develop a comprehensive plan. The risk of not having a comprehensive plan, or having an inadequate plan, is that land use decisions of local government may be subject to legal challenge.

### ***What is a Comprehensive Plan?***

A comprehensive plan is the policy framework that communities use to guide development and land use activities. Land uses include housing, roads, commercial and industrial uses, recreation, open space, natural resources, and public facilities.

### ***Does the law mandate “no growth,” “slow growth” or even “planned growth?”***

No, the comprehensive planning statute does not contain any specific mandate regarding the accommodation of growth. At most, the statute requires a consideration of potential need, such as the predication of housing demand.

### ***Are any new powers granted to counties, the state or DNR?***

No, the comprehensive planning statute does not grant any new land regulation authority to any government entity.

### ***Does this change private property law or practice?***

No, the comprehensive planning statute does not change private property law or practice.

