

F. Sauk Prairie Area Opportunities & Recommendations

1. Overall District Opportunities

The Sauk Prairie Area is the southern gateway into Sauk County and the Highway 12 Study Area. The three main communities in this area - the Village of Prairie du Sac, Village of Sauk City, and Town of Prairie du Sac - make up 28% of the population of the nine-community Detailed Planning Area. The medical and educational sectors are area's largest service employers. Milwaukee Valve and Fiskars are the area's largest manufacturing employers. Some of the smaller businesses in the two industrial parks are focused in the agricultural and bio-tech sectors. The Sauk Prairie Area is also home to a productive agricultural economy.



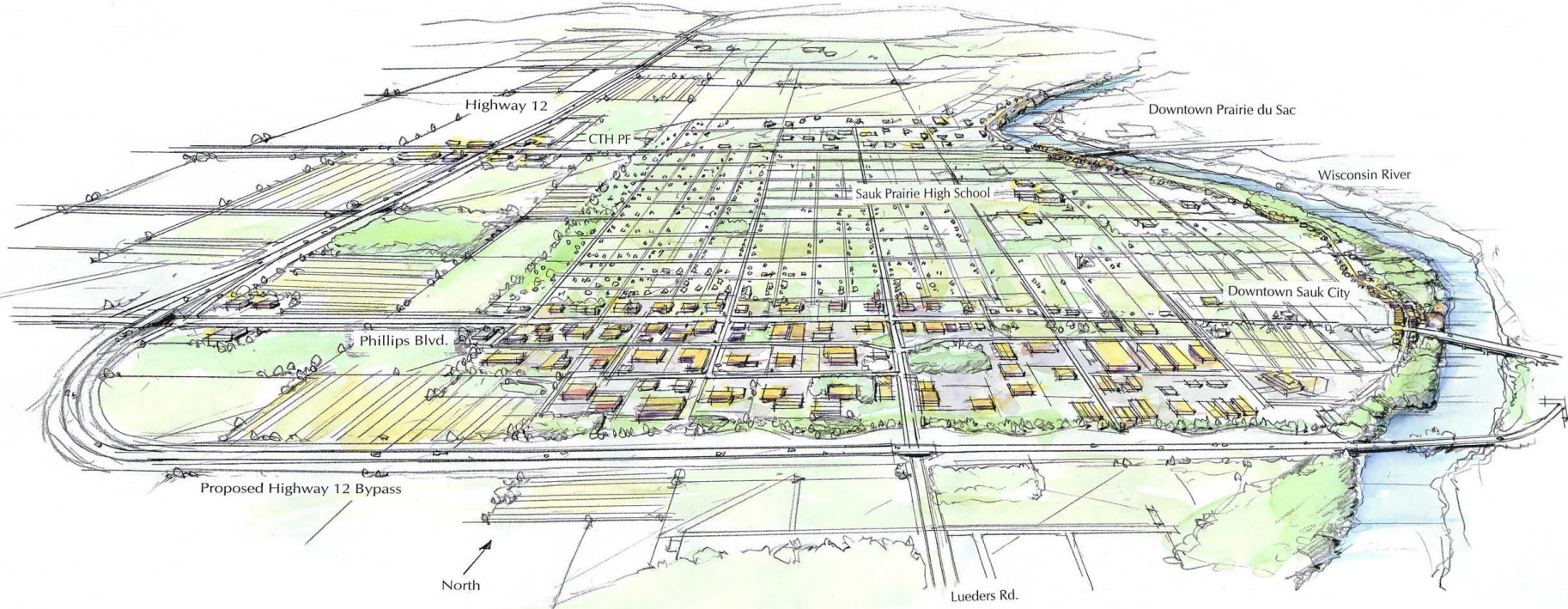
“Lower Prairie” and “Upper Prairie”

– now Sauk City and Prairie du Sac respectively - developed as two individual villages with different cultures. In recent years, the villages have worked together to provide a consolidated police department, ambulance service, and sewerage commission. The villages also prepared a joint Comprehensive Plan and worked with the town to prepare an Extraterritorial Plan and Zoning. Probably not coincidentally, the communities have not experienced the consequences of “bad” land use decisions that typically accompany intergovernmental conflict.

Map 11 and Figure 11 illustrate a long-range growth concept plan based on the recommended future vision for the Sauk Prairie Area and with reference to previous local land use planning efforts. Map 11 identifies, in a very general way, areas appropriate for long-range preservation and different types of development, looking forward perhaps 50 years. Figure 11 illustrates the long-range form the Sauk Prairie Area could take over that period, looking to the north.

The future vision suggests that compact, human scale new growth be directed to western expansion areas, patterned after the area's historic neighborhood development form and focused around the Sauk Prairie High School and River Arts Center. Future job growth should be targeted to the northwest and southwest quadrants, which have good highway access. New development would be kept within the north-south segment of Highway 12 and any future bypass, conceptually represented on Map 11. Maintaining a clear edge for new development will help preserve productive farmland, provide a sense of entry, result in lower service costs, and promote efficient land development. New development would be coupled with a coordinated reinvestment strategy for downtown and Phillips Boulevard (existing Highway 12) as activity centers, and associated tourism-based activities focused on cultural heritage and nature-based recreation. Continuing to open up the Wisconsin River should be an overriding goal in this effort to celebrate and enhance the “rivertown” character of the Sauk Prairie Area. Although represented in Map 11, a final decision on if, where, and when to build a Highway 12 Bypass has yet to be decided.

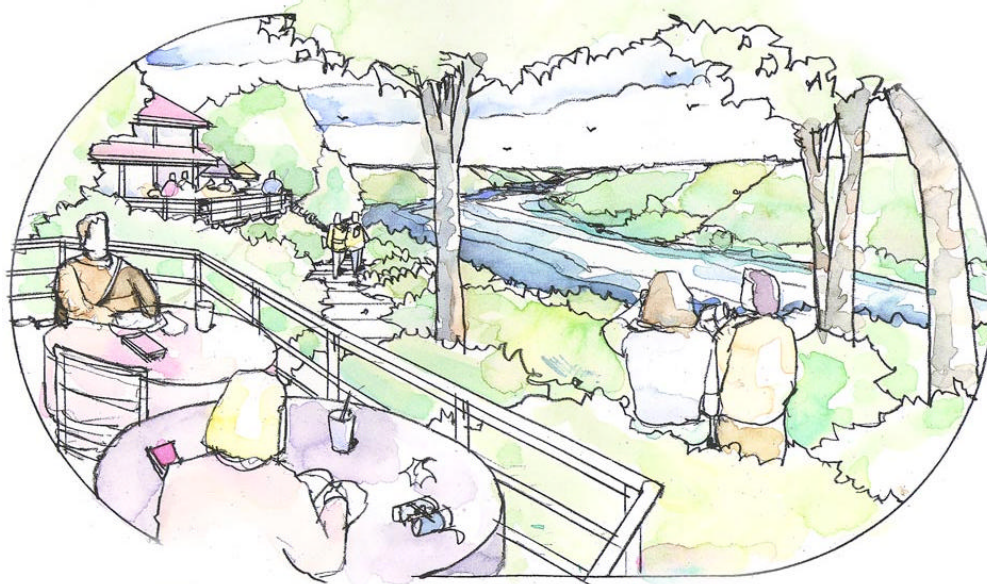
Figure 11: Future Vision of Sauk Prairie Area from South



2. Community Character Recommendations

a) Base decisions on community growth and change around preserving the vital “rivertown” character.

The communities’ traditional “rivertown” character is unique to the region. Following construction of the Highway 12 expansion in Dane County, that character will be challenged by increasing development pressure from the Madison area. Large-scale and cookie cutter developments could overwhelm the Sauk Prairie Area, converting it to “just another suburb” of Madison. Careful decisions on the type, location, scale, pace, and form of new development will be critical in preserving community character. New neighborhoods should be developed according to the principles of traditional neighborhood design, described below. Further, the two Villages should, through their upcoming comprehensive planning process, establish a clear policy direction for future proposals for large-scale commercial development proposals. Such uses could have a profound effect on community character and the well-being of existing small businesses. As such, that policy discussion should consider an upper limit on the size of commercial buildings that would be appropriate as well as building and site design standards. In general, new large-scale commercial uses should be directed to the Baraboo Area and Madison area.



b) Design and install community entry and wayfinding markers.

The Sauk Prairie Area currently boasts well-defined edges—in many cases thanks to Mother Nature—that provide a dramatic transition between “village and country.” Marking these edges with distinctive entryway treatments will better mark the dividing line, instill community pride, and assist visitors in understanding the place and finding their way. The Sauk County side of both Wisconsin River bridges should be marked by major gateway treatments—including entry signage, landscaping, themed lighting, and “signature” buildings (not parking lots) where redevelopment is appropriate. Further, the growing number of visitors would benefit from a simple wayfinding signage system, indicating directions to the two downtowns, the River Arts Center, schools, industrial parks, and nearby tourist destinations. This entire system should be developed around a unified theme that celebrates “rivertown” character.

c) Improve views and access to and from the Wisconsin River.

The Wisconsin River is perhaps the Sauk Prairie Area’s greatest amenity, but that amenity is currently underutilized. A variety of approaches are recommended to open up views, access, and redevelopment potential associated with the River, including:

- Work with WisDOT to complete the Wisconsin Riverfront Recreational Trail as a shared walking and bicycle path. The communities and the County should investigate opportunities to connect the trail to a larger regional system, including a connection into Dane County and a trail connection through the Badger Plant to Devil’s Lake State Park. Part of this discussion may involve abandoning or sharing rail rights-of-way. Within the downtown areas, interpretive signage and resting areas should be incorporated.
- Orient new and remodeled buildings towards the river to capitalize on scenic views through the use of large banks of windows, balconies, and outdoor seating and display areas. The Blue Spoon restaurant in Prairie du Sac provides a good example.
- Adopt design standards for new development and rehabilitation projects to preserve river views and critical habitats and provide public access through dedications or easements.



d) Adopt ordinances that do not allow the placement of any new billboards, at least along existing Highway 12 and any future bypass.

A vast majority of participants in this planning process have expressed dismay with the number of billboards already along Highway 12 and support restrictions on additional billboards. The Sauk Prairie Area communities should adopt strict billboard controls, such as those included in Appendix C.

e) Prepare and adopt building, site, landscaping, signage, and lighting design standards for new development projects.

Appropriate high-quality land development will contribute to or at least not diminish from the Sauk Prairie Area’s small, rivertown character. It will also lead to greater assessed valuation per acre and more rapid appreciation of property values. The communities should adopt detailed design standards for all new non-residential and multiple-family residential projects to ensure that the small-town character of the communities is retained, addressing the following issues:



- Encourage attractive buildings—rather than parking lots—near streets and to frame key intersections. Promote parking to the sides and rear of buildings.
- Provide internal pedestrian and driveway systems that connect to adjoining developments and the public street and sidewalk system.
- Include detailed design standards for projects including multiple-family, retail or commercial service buildings that are 5,000 square feet or greater, and other uses that typically have significant impacts (e.g., gas/convenience stores, fast food restaurants).
- Require high-quality landscaping, signage, and exterior lighting design, as described in the model ordinances included in Appendix C.



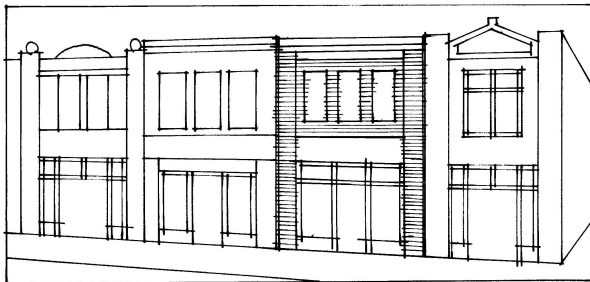
f) Adopt a highway design overlay zoning district.

To ensure that uniform standards are applied to new development along Highway 12, highway design overlay zoning should be strongly considered Sauk Prairie Area communities. A highway design overlay zoning district can provide modern standards for site and building design, signage, landscaping, and exterior lighting—without regulating the type or amount of development. County and local zoning ordinances and maps should be amended to include a highway design overlay zoning district for properties along Highway 12, based on the model included in Appendix C.

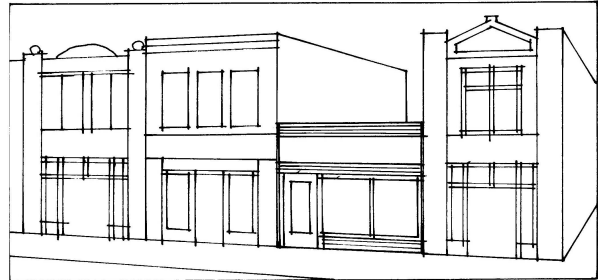
g) Prepare and adopt downtown design guidelines.

The two downtowns would benefit from specialized, illustrated design standards to guide rehabilitation and redevelopment projects. Criteria may cover issues such as building height, width, setback, proportion of openings, horizontal rhythms, roof form, materials, color, sidewalk coverings, and signs. Design guidelines may be incorporated into downtown planning efforts and documents.

This ...



Not This ...



3. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Recommendations

a) **Focus agricultural preservation efforts west of northbound Highway 12 and north of a mutually agreed growth edge between Highway PF and Highway Z.**

The Sauk Prairie Area communities and Sauk County should cooperate on a farmland preservation program in these areas. It should focus on long-term growth and preservation boundaries, targeting conservation easement purchases under the Sauk County Preservation Program, working with farmers to expand and develop markets for agricultural products, limiting non-farm development through exclusive agricultural zoning, and providing limited opportunities to cluster additional houses at very low overall densities and small lot sizes. Preservation of these areas will also have the added benefit of assuring the gravel deposits near Highway Z will be available for future extraction. The area of greatest challenge will be north of Highway PF, where there is no natural growth edge.

b) **Go beyond traditional engineering approaches to stormwater management techniques that focus on Best Management Practices.**

Best Management Practices may include overland transfer of stormwater, natural landscaping to increase infiltration and reduce runoff, bio-infiltration systems, residential roof runoff directed to pervious yard areas, maximum impervious surface ratios for development sites, minimized and localized soil disturbance and compaction during construction, and narrower street cross-sections. The goals are to reduce stormwater release quantities to pre-development rates and produce water quality benefits that exceed typical standards.

Infiltration and retention basins should also serve as amenities for the surrounding development. Natural edge vegetation should be used and buildings should be oriented to take advantage of open space views. Stormwater basins and conveyance routes should be carefully integrated into the surrounding development pattern and be aesthetically pleasing, in addition to serving their necessary functions.

c) **Promote historic preservation to enhance community character and tourism.**

The villages and the Sauk Prairie Area Historical Society should inventory local historic buildings and encourage property owners to preserve and restore their character. To encourage preservation of historic structures, economic incentives may be offered. Federal and State Investment Tax Credits (ITC) are available to rehabilitate historic commercial, industrial, and rental residential properties.

4. Land Use Recommendations

a) **Update the joint Comprehensive Plan to reflect the vision for the Sauk Prairie Area included in this *Growth Management Plan*.**

All three communities are scheduled to update their comprehensive plans in the near future, with state assistance through a recently successful grant application. The villages and the town should work together to cooperatively prepare one intergovernmental Comprehensive Plan for the Sauk Prairie Area, building off of earlier efforts and the concepts in this *Growth Management Plan*. Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the villages and the town should work together on an intergovernmental agreement that addresses annexation and sewer service boundaries, shared use of facilities and equipment, and a cost share agreement on services.

b) **Prepare a detailed neighborhood development plan for the area between Highways 12 and PF west of the developed neighborhoods.**

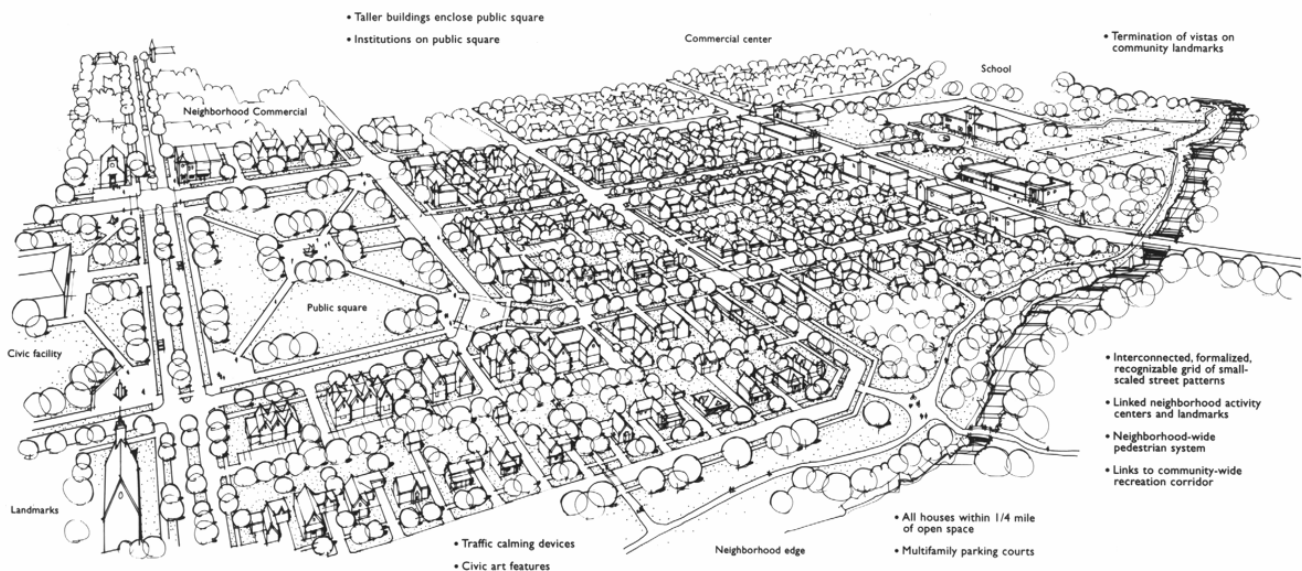
The new west side interceptor will open up existing farmland east of Highway 12 for development. To ensure that this development occurs in a compact and efficient fashion, a neighborhood development plan should be prepared for the area. A neighborhood development plan is a detailed plan for future development in areas where there will be complex land use, transportation, recreation,

utility service, and environmental protection patterns and issues. It is typically prepared by a local government in cooperation with private property owners and developers. Following completion of the joint comprehensive plan, the Village’s should work together to prepare a detailed neighborhood development plan for this planning district, using the westside sewer interceptor plan, the Conceptual Official Map (Map 16), and the following principles of traditional neighborhood design as starting points:

- Mix of housing types, lot sizes, and densities, including single family housing, condominiums, garden apartments, and senior housing.
- Promotion of small-lot single family development (e.g., some lot areas of 8,000 square feet or less).
- Neighborhood focal points, such as parks, squares, schools, and neighborhood retail and service centers, within walking distance of homes. Planned crossroads provide the most obvious locations for these uses.
- An interconnected grid of streets sized to correspond to traffic volumes, and generally narrower than the more typical suburban streets.
- Orientation to the pedestrian through sidewalks, paths, and other use interconnections.
- Modest front yard setbacks, front porches, garages pulled back from front facades and other design features to encourage neighborhood interaction and avoid “garagescape” appearances.
- Use of natural stormwater management techniques and incorporation and restoration of degraded environmental features, which are particularly important with smaller lot sizes.

c) Adopt standards to assure that new neighborhoods respect traditional character.

The villages should adopt a new zoning district to accommodate traditional neighborhood development proposals and encourage developers to use that district. A model traditional neighborhood development ordinance is provided in Appendix C. Outside of such districts, the Villages should make sure that their required minimum lot size and width standards are not excessive (a 7,000-8,000 square foot minimum lot size option should be provided), ensure a balance between lot size and house size, require sidewalks along both sides of all public streets, revisit street standards (local streets need not have a pavement width greater than 28 feet or a right-of-way width greater than 60 feet), and adopt design standards to assure quality multiple-family housing developments such as those in Appendix C.



d) Redefine the land use pattern along Phillips Boulevard (existing Highway 12).

The potential long-term relocation and related improvements to Highway 12 would have significant impacts on the land use and transportation picture for Sauk City. The role of existing Highway 12 will need to be redefined to guide this corridor's transition from a pass-through route to a local activity center. A bypass would create significant challenges to the viability of auto-oriented uses along Phillips Boulevard. New opportunities would emerge for mixed-use redevelopment incorporating community-centered retail, office, light assembly, and multiple-family residential uses transitioning into the adjacent neighborhoods to the north. The local comprehensive planning process and analysis of alternatives for Highway 12 alignments should consider these changes.

e) Limit rural residential subdivisions in agricultural areas west of Highway 12

The lands west of Highway 12 should be preserved for long-term agricultural use. Residential subdivisions should be discouraged. If residential uses are allowed, they should be designed to protect to best farmland and sensitive natural features. Density-based zoning and conservation development approaches, as described in the Rural Areas section of this chapter, should be used to preserve these features.

f) Carefully evaluate recommendations for the Highway 12/PF area and lands north of Highway PF.

As part of future planning efforts, a number of issues that intersect near the northwestern edge of the Village Prairie du Sac require detailed consideration (and perhaps reconsideration) of past plans. These issues include:

- Northerly industrial expansion into productive agricultural areas, with no natural or highway barrier inhibiting that continued expansion.
- Existing and likely future conflicts between industrial areas and nearby neighborhoods.
- Improvements to Highways PF and its intersection with Highway 12 that may be necessitated by additional industrial growth in that area.
- The future of the Sauk Prairie Airport. Expansion of that airport may not be beneficial to the communities, particularly given planned expansions to the Baraboo-Dells Airport and Morey Airport in Middleton.
- The advisability of previous recommendations for non-agricultural commercial development at the intersection of Highways 12/and PF, given the impacts on existing commercial centers in the Sauk Prairie Area, traffic at that intersection, and possible future intersection improvements.



5. Transportation Recommendations

a) Adopt an Official Map for the Sauk Prairie Area.

The purpose of an Official Map, which must be adopted by ordinance, is to ensure that areas for planned future public facilities may be reserved. Map 16 is a recommended Official Map for the Sauk Prairie Area, showing general alignments of planned arterial and collector roads, expanded rights-of-way for certain existing roads, and recommended drainageways for stormwater management, possible sewer interceptors, and possible trails. When development is proposed in an area of a feature on an Official Map, the local government may obtain land for that feature through dedication, purchase, or reservation. The Official Map may be amended from time-to-time as desired by the local government. Minimum building setbacks from roads should then be measured from future right-of-way lines as recommended on the Official Map. The Official Map does not include a specific alignment for a Highway 12 bypass, which may be added after the local alternatives study advised below.

b) Complete a local alternatives study for a Sauk City Highway 12 bypass.

During the planning process, many area residents expressed a desire for a Highway 12 bypass around the Village of Sauk City. The Sauk Prairie Master Plan, adopted by both Villages in 1995, suggested a south bypass for Highway 12 that would split from existing Highway 12 near Highway 60 on the west and Highway 188 on the east. That plan provided no details on road improvements at the splits (e.g., at-grade intersection or interchange). The route was planned to generally follow River Road and the abandoned rail bridge. No detailed analysis of this route has been completed. Advantages of the locally-planned route recommendation include:

- Given existing/proposed land use south of River Road, alignment will not divide Village.
- Avoids crossing Mazomanie State Wildlife Area, which is further south across the river.
- Minimizes highway and river crossing length compared to other alternatives.
- Minimizes impact on existing development in Town of Roxbury compared to other alternatives.
- Minimizes visual impact from river by crossing ½ mile downstream of existing Highway 12.

Apparent disadvantages of the locally-recommended alignment, from west to east, include:

- Due to freeway design standards and expected turning movements, the bypass would require a grade-separated interchange rather than an at-grade intersection at Highway 60/existing Highway 12 on the west end of Sauk City. This could require relocation of more existing homes and roadways than may have been previously anticipated.
- The bypass curve from River Road to rejoin the existing Highway 12 west of Sauk City would need to be slightly more gradual than shown by the locally-recommended alignment. In addition, transition curves would be needed. This would extend the length of the curve and shift it further north and east.
- Depending on specific alignment within the River Road corridor, approximately 15 homes and one dairy farm could be impacted by a bypass on that alignment.
- Due to freeway design and heavy turning movements, any south bypass would probably require a grade-separated interchange and curvature of alignment to rejoin existing Highway 12 in Roxbury rather than an at-grade intersection. This could require relocation of more existing homes and roadways in the Town of Roxbury than may previously have been anticipated.

According to the Memorandum of Agreement for Highway 12 signed by county, state, federal, and non-profit agencies, WisDOT cannot propose a bypass of Sauk City until 2020. This does inhibit local planning and careful consideration of different alternatives. Early in the implementation phase of this growth management project, a local alternatives study evaluating different potential

alignments for a Highway 12 bypass should be completed, with input from appropriate state and federal agencies. This study should generally evaluate the environmental, land use, community, intergovernmental, economic, and cost impacts of different options. The options should be infused with a realistic assessment of state and federal highway design standards. Any proposed bypass will likely have to be constructed to the same freeway standards being applied to the Middleton and Baraboo Area bypass projects. These standards would suggest interchanges at the eastern terminus with existing Highway 12, an interchange at Highway 60 West/existing Highway 12, and perhaps an interchange at Highway PF. In addition, grade-separated crossings would also probably be necessary Sauk Prairie Road and Lueders Road.

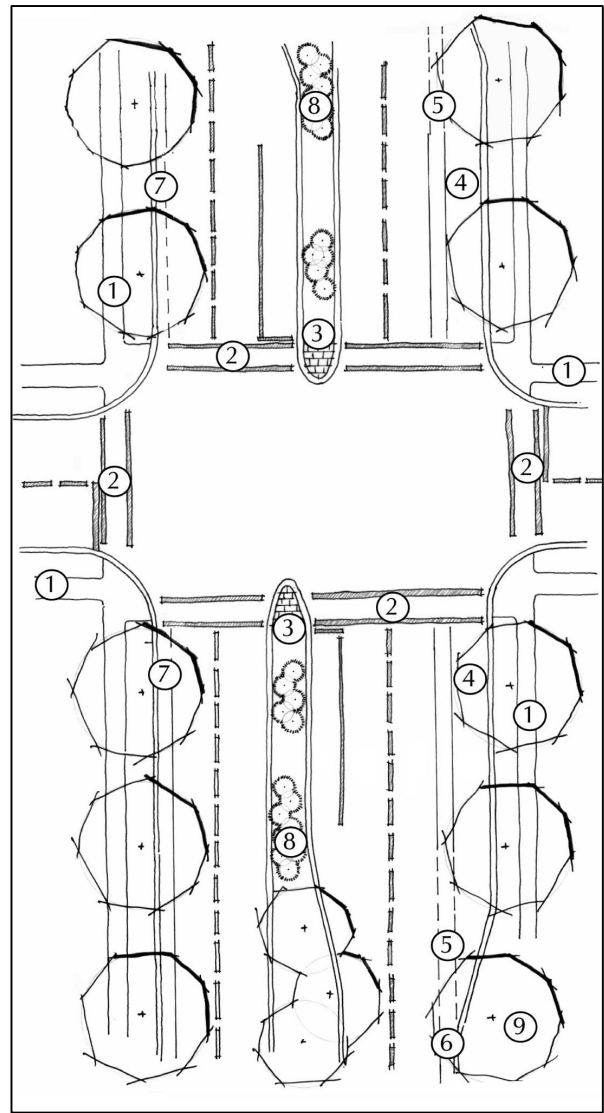
Following this local alternatives study, the affected communities should then include their preferred alternative in their intergovernmental comprehensive plan, in consultation with the Town of Roxbury. The villages could then include that locally-preferred alternative on their Official Maps. This type of analysis and positioning will assist local interests in advocating to state government for their preferred solution.

c) Create a community-sensitive design for the reconstruction of Phillips Boulevard.

Phillips Boulevard is scheduled for reconstruction in 2008. WisDOT, Sauk City, and area property owners should work together on a design that efficiently conveys traffic, facilitates auto and pedestrian cross access through carefully planned refuge medians and well-marked crosswalks, minimizes impacts on property owners, and maintains and enhances aesthetic features like landscaping and lighting. Median openings along Phillips Boulevard should be minimized. The design should also be flexible enough that it can be easily adapted if and when through traffic is removed to a bypass. Such future adaptations could include traffic calming features like bump outs, bicycle lanes, and possibly even on-street parking. The graphic shows a typical cross-section that may be appropriate on Phillips Boulevard west of the railroad tracks. East of the tracks, a median may not be feasible.

Legend

- 1. Sidewalk
- 2. Crosswalk
- 3. Pedestrian Refuge Median
- 4. Right Turn Lane/Acceleration Lane
- 5. Bike Lane (dashed at intersection for merging traffic)
- 6. "Begin Right Turn Lane" Sign
- 7. Bike Lane (dashed at intersection for merging traffic)
- 8. Median Plantings
- 9. Street Trees



Map 16: Official Map, Sauk Prairie Area

d) Control new driveway access points to existing Highway 12.

Too many curb cuts are inefficient and dangerous. The county and local communities should limit driveway access to Highway 12 and other state and county highways. Along Highway 12, private driveways should be limited to one per parcel, or no closer than 250 feet from each other in developed areas and 1,000 feet in rural areas, with more detailed standards included in Appendix D. Public roads intersecting Highway 12 should be spaced 2,000 feet from one another. Also, when new development occurs, the communities should work to consolidate access points, promote shared driveways and interconnected parking lots across lot lines, encourage access to intersecting and “reverse frontage roads” behind sites, and provide for entrance driveway throat depths of at least 25 feet from the right-of-way line for proper vehicle stacking. Frontage roads along existing Highway 12 should generally be avoided. Frontage roads create greater separation of land uses, increased hard-surfaced areas making stormwater management more difficult, push development further from the main traffic route, have negative visual impacts, and often result in overly tight curve radii to get back to the main highway.

6. Economic Development and Housing Strategy

a) Prepare and implement an economic development initiative focused on maintaining the area as a local center for jobs, shopping, and services.

The Sauk Prairie Area businesses are generally locally-oriented and reflect the small-town character of the communities. The local and regional market and highway improvements are creating new opportunities for the Sauk Prairie Area to diversify its economy. An economic development initiative should focus on advancing several of the economic development recommendations that follow, without reducing the character of the communities.

b) Engage in joint marketing of industrial parks.

To avoid unnecessary and costly competition, the Sauk Prairie Area industrial parks should be marketed together, providing new and expanding industry with a range of options. Prior to implementing the joint marketing program, the villages should together define the role, target markets, and types of industries best suited for each park given their unique assets and limitations. Going further, the villages should consider creating a joint industrial park as part of their comprehensive planning process.

c) Target-market business and industrial space to high-technology companies.

The availability of communication infrastructure and the improved access provided by Highway 12 will create opportunities for capitalizing on the growing niche for high-tech companies in the Madison area. The Sauk Prairie Area’s business and industrial parks, small-town quality of life, school system, and recreational opportunities offer high-tech companies an affordable and attractive alternative to Madison’s west side.



d) Work with electrical, cable, and phone providers to establish a “fiber ring.”

The development of high-tech industries will be one of the keys to maintaining a vibrant economy and growing workforce. These types of businesses rely on rapid communication for their daily business. Ensuring that the area is wired with a telecommunications network to adequately serve these emerging industrial and business parks will be an important component of the local economic development program. The City of Reedsburg provides a very good model.

e) Develop quality, affordable childcare facilities.

Quality, affordable childcare is an important ingredient to attracting and retaining a quality workforce as well as creating a healthy and stable community. The non-traditional schedules for today’s high-tech workforce, the number of employers with after hour shifts, more commuters, and the growing number of households with two working parents and single parents will require childcare facilities with hours of operation that complement employee shifts and a wide range of childcare options



(infant care, day care centers, family day care). Local businesses should offer childcare services as part of the benefits package for their employees. In addition, local schools should consider after and before school programs and bus services to after-hours childcare programs.

f) Actively participate in downtown redevelopment.

Downtown revitalization is a key component to the business and community well-being of the Sauk Prairie Area. The Village of Prairie du Sac should continue and enhance its downtown redevelopment effort. Sauk City should engage in a similar planning and implementation effort, but the differences between the two downtowns should be celebrated rather than muted. Community Development Authorities and Tax Incremental Financing districts are important organizing and funding mechanisms for downtown redevelopment.



g) Build on the area's historic, natural, and cultural heritage to promote tourism.

The Sauk Prairie Area is rich in potential for cultural tourism due to its history, intact and vital downtowns, opportunities for eagle-watching and other river-based recreation, events at the River Arts Center, and proximity to other tourist destinations. The communities, the Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce, Sauk County Historical Society, Sauk Prairie Area Historical Society, the Historical Preservation Commissions, and the villages should join together to explore approaches to grow this niche. Efforts may include continuing to restore historic



buildings, developing historic walking tours with interpretive signage along the routes, enhancing the Wisconsin riverfront, forging partnerships with other regional groups interested in heritage-based tourism, establishing a wayfinding signage system, and hosting community and regional events designed to celebrate the Sauk Prairie Area's heritage. The communities may want to consider the use of a room tax or a visitor's bureau program similar to the Wisconsin Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau to fund tourism marketing. Within the downtown the use of tax increment financing or a business improvement district could also provide funds to market historic, cultural, and natural tourist destinations within those areas.

h) Continue to pursue opportunities to consolidate municipal services.

Future service consolidation opportunities may include consolidated fire departments, library systems, and water utility systems. Consolidation of these services does not have to negatively affect the individuality of the two villages. In fact, potential cost savings could allow the villages to focus more of their budgets on projects that enhance and promote their individual small-town character, such as downtown revitalization and heritage-based tourism and marketing.

7. Implementation

The following implementation actions should be completed following the adoption of this *Plan*. Figure 12 includes recommended actions, priorities, and agencies or groups that should work together to complete each action.

Figure 12: Sauk Prairie Area Implementation Strategies

Action	Priority	Responsible Parties
1. Prepare a joint Comprehensive Plan compliant with the new Smart Growth requirements. Following the Comprehensive Plan, pursue an intergovernmental agreement to address annexation and sewer service boundaries, shared services and facilities, and cost-sharing on services.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac
2. Adopt a highway design overlay zoning district for new development abutting Highway 12, based on models in Appendix C.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac
3. Modernize design standards for new commercial, industrial, and multiple-family development, based on models in Appendix C.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac
4. Adopt an Official Map, using or based on Map 19; amend zoning ordinances to require measurement of minimum street yard setbacks from officially mapped rights-of-way. Model language is included in Appendices C and D.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac
5. Complete a local alternatives study for a Highway 12 bypass.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac • Sauk County • Town of Roxbury • State and Federal Interests
6. Incorporate a community-sensitive design for the redesign of Phillips Boulevard.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WisDOT • Village of Sauk City
7. Prepare and implement Downtown Master Plans and design guidelines to direct revitalization, and employ Community Development Authorities, Redevelopment Districts, and TIF Districts for implementation.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City
8. Prepare a detailed neighborhood plan for future development west of Lueders Road.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City
9. Adopt a traditional neighborhood development (TND) ordinance to improve neighborhood design (see model in Appendix C).	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City
10. Adopt as part of town comprehensive plans alternatives to the 35-acre minimum lot size in agricultural areas, including density based zoning and clustering options (see Rural Areas section and Appendix C).	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac

Action	Priority	Responsible Parties
11. Limit new and consolidate existing access points along existing Highway 12 through an access control ordinance (see Appendix D for model).	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Sauk City
12. Engage in efforts to preserve farming through the Sauk County Preservation Program, farmland preservation planning, and linkages between farms and local markets.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ops • Farm Bureau • UW Extension • Local and county gov't
13. Prepare and implement an economic development strategy for the Sauk Prairie Area, including the potential for a joint industrial park.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Sauk County Development Corporation • Alliant Energy • Sauk Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce • Sauk Prairie Area Historical Society
14. Design a gateway treatment program for the edges of the Sauk Prairie Area, including appropriate locations, signage, landscaping, lighting, and nearby private development recommendations implemented in part with federal transportation enhancement funds (see funding source in Appendix F).	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Prairie du Sac • Village of Sauk City • Town of Prairie du Sac • WisDOT

G. Rural Area Opportunities & Recommendations

1. Overall District Opportunities

The Rural Areas are generally located away from Highway 12, but notably also include the Town of Sumpter directly along the highway (see Map 11). The Tourist Entertainment Corridor, Baraboo Area, and Sauk Prairie Area districts are basically surrounded by lands in Rural Areas. Adjacent portions of the Rural Areas will be greatly influenced by development occurring in the communities along the highway. Further, improvements to Highway 12 in Dane County will make the Rural Areas more accessible to commuters, potentially increasing housing demand.

The vision for the Rural Areas seeks to limit large-scale development to protect the economic viability of farming, and the natural beauty and rural character of these areas. The vision suggests that new growth be directed to nearby cities or villages, with some small-scale development in established crossroads areas,



such as the Bluffview area. The vision also suggests that changes in county and local zoning ordinances to allow density-based and clustering development approaches could maintain current development potential, yet also provide local farmers with the opportunity to sell the less productive portions of their properties for limited rural residential development on smaller lots.

Other opportunities to promote the viability of farming are available. The vision suggests that the local farming community work with Sauk County, UW-Extension, DATCP, USDA, the UW Dairy Forage Research Center, and other related agencies/organizations to

develop strategies to add value to locally-produced products. Direct marketing techniques, Agricultural Development Zone tax credits, and heritage-based tourism opportunities should be explored.

Conservation easement purchase programs would provide another option for private property owners.

Map 11 and Figure 13 illustrate a long-range growth concept plan based on the recommended future vision for the Rural Area and with reference to previous local land use planning efforts. Map 11 identifies, in a very general way, areas appropriate for long-range preservation and different types of development, looking forward perhaps 50 years. Figure 13 illustrates the long-range form the Rural Area could take over that period.

Figure 13: Future Vision of Rural Areas



2. Community Character Recommendations

a) Preserve the rural and natural scenic landscape visible from Highway 12.

Local planning, zoning, farmland preservation and marketing, and development rights programs should include recommendations to preserve the rural and natural scenic landscape visible from Highway 12. New development and signs should not be located in this area and should be directed to areas designated for development. More broadly, the impact on the scenic landscape, including distant views of the Baraboo Range, should be carefully considered when new development, sign, and lighting proposals are offered. To ensure that uniform standards are applied to new development along Highway 12, highway design overlay zoning should be strongly considered by the County and rural towns, such as the model included in Appendix C.



b) Minimize the visual impact of development.

To maintain rural character, the visual impact of new development should be minimized. For example, the clear cutting of roadside trees or vegetation that could effectively “hide” the site should also be discouraged. The County should consider developing an illustrative handbook or guide to provide property owners, town officials, and developers with a better understanding of methods for hiding rural residential development.



c) Adopt ordinances that do not allow or limit the placement of new billboards.

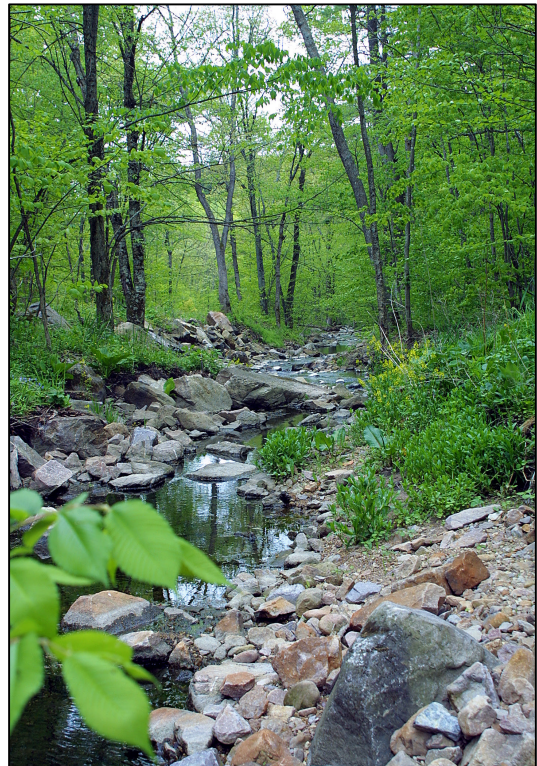
A vast majority of participants in this planning process have expressed dismay with the number of billboards already along Highway 12 and support for restrictions on additional billboards. Many of these have been placed in areas that obscure or diminish views of the rural landscape, which is so critical to the future economic health of Sauk County. County and town governments should adopt strict billboard controls, such as those included in the model sign ordinance in Appendix C.



3. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Recommendations

a) Protect sensitive natural resources and provide for accessible recreational space.

Natural resources and accessible recreational lands are critical components of the rural landscape and economy. “Environmental corridors” is a term used to describe the composite of mainly water-based natural resources like wetlands, floodplains, shoreland areas, and steep slopes (20+%) and woodlands adjacent to water features. Corridors have numerous ecological, passive recreational, stormwater management, flood control, water quality, wildlife habitat, groundwater protection and recharge, erosion control, and scenic values. New development should generally be discouraged in environmental corridors. In addition, while Sauk County is blessed with large state parks like Devil’s Lake and Mirror Lake, these areas can be inconvenient for recreational use by local residents. Particularly in areas planned for significant new subdivision development, smaller scale parks and recreational spaces should be considered. Towns should map environmental corridors and potential areas and policies for smaller parks in their upcoming comprehensive planning efforts.



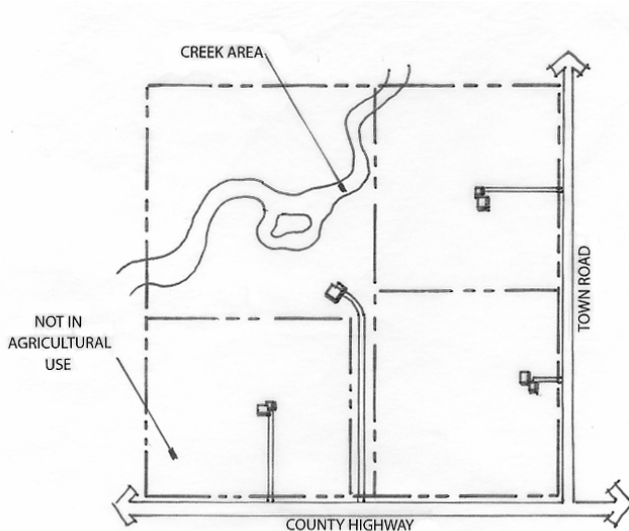
b) Support and participate in the Sauk County Preservation Program.

The pending Sauk County Preservation Program (SCPP) is designed to protect farmland and natural resources by providing landowners with an optional, viable alternative to developing their property. The program is based on the premise that landowners can sell off a portion of their property rights,

while retaining the remainder of those rights. Under the proposed program being considered at the county level, a farm owner would negotiate with a town, the county, a state or federal agency, or an accredited nonprofit conservation organization to exchange any future rights to build on his or her property for a sum of cash. The farm owner would still have title to the property, could still restrict access, and could continue to farm the land.

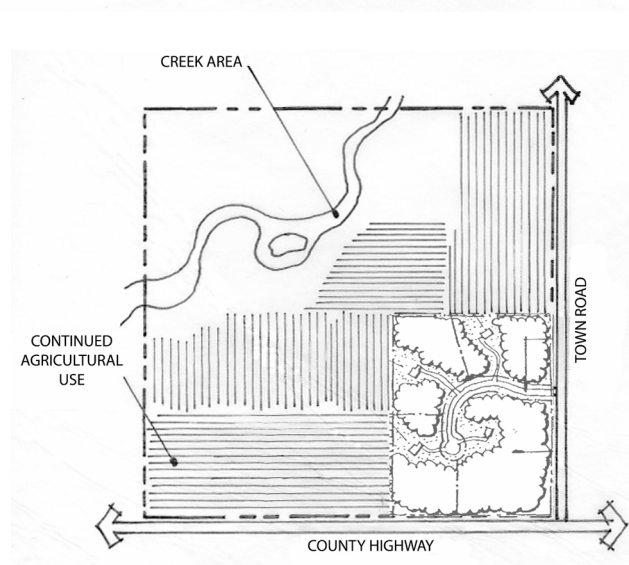
c) Allow density-based zoning and conservation development options.

A density-based zoning approach using 1- to 5-acre residential lots avoids breaking up large farm parcels with large residential lots, while still providing some non-farm economic return for farmers. It is critical to understand the difference between maximum density and minimum lot size. Minimum lot size requirements set how big individual home sites must be; while maximum density requirements set how many home sites or lots can be divided from a larger parcel, regardless of individual lot size. Conservation development options, or clustering, preserve farmland and rural character by placing homes on smaller lots, away from productive fields, and with minimal visibility from main roads. The following graphic provides a visual comparison between conventional development and density-based zoning, using a conservation development approach to designing the land division.



Conventional Development Option

This first graphic shows how a 160-acre parcel could be subdivided under a conventional approach with a 40-acre minimum lot size. The parcel is divided into four large lots accessed by separate driveways and can no longer be used for farming activities. This has been the standard approach for developing land in Sauk County and will probably remain the preferred approach in certain towns and situations.



Cluster Development Option

This second graphic shows how the same 160-acre parcel could be subdivided under a density-based zoning approach using conservation or clustering development techniques. This alternative approach again yields a total of four lots; however, instead of 40-acre lots, lot sizes are considerably smaller—maybe one to five acres each – and placed in one corner of the parcel, thereby preserving the natural features and farmland. This approach also facilitates the efficient farming of the remaining farmland. The third panel also shows how development can be “hidden” from main roads through natural topography, vegetation, and setbacks. This approach may better preserve rural character and provide greater future flexibility.

d) Maintain and improve water quality.

Water resources, both surface and groundwater, are critical to the long-term health of the rural community. The following recommendations address this critical resource.

- The County and local government should promote the preservation of surface water quality by developing construction site erosion control and stormwater management ordinances that include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce post-development run-off.
- Local and county governments should work to keep development out of floodplains, wetlands, shoreland areas, and steep slopes leading to water bodies (i.e., environmental corridors).
- Local governments should work with the County and State agencies in managing livestock waste storage facilities. WisDNR requires a separation of at least 250 feet between livestock waste storage facilities and nearby private water wells. Local governments should recognize and reinforce this requirement during the approval of homesites.
- Local governments should identify and preserve wellhead protection areas for municipal wells. Uses with large amounts of impervious surface and increased potential for groundwater contamination should generally be discouraged in these areas.
- New development should not be allowed near landfill sites. WisDNR requires a separation of 1,200 feet (a little less than ¼ mile) between open or closed landfills and nearby private water supply wells.
- Local governments should ensure the proper placement and maintenance of on-site waste disposal (septic) systems. Improper placement and maintenance of both conventional disposal systems and chemical and biological treatment systems allowed under the new “COMM 83” law can result in groundwater contamination.
- Sauk County, the Town of Sumpter, and the Town of Prairie du Sac should prepare a watershed plan for the Otter Creek Watershed.

e) Promote historic preservation and preserve the agricultural heritage.

Local governments should work with the Sauk County Historic Society to inventory local historic structures and encourage property owners to preserve the historic character of these buildings. The historic farmsteads and outbuildings that contribute to the agricultural heritage and aesthetic beauty should also be preserved. To encourage preservation of historic structures, economic incentives may be offered to private landowners. Federal and State Investment Tax Credits (ITC) are available to rehabilitate historic commercial, industrial, and rental residential properties. The communities should also continue to promote their farming heritage by supporting local festivals, fairs, markets, farm tours, or farm breakfasts.



4. Land Use Recommendations

a) **Complete town comprehensive plans to reflect the vision for the Rural Areas included in this *Growth Management Plan*.**

All Rural Area communities are scheduled to update their master plans, land use plans, or comprehensive plans by the year 2010 to meet the requirements of the 1999 comprehensive planning legislation, many with state assistance from a recently successful grant application. The resulting individual town comprehensive plans should reflect the regional goals for the Rural Areas, but also respect continued local planning and decision-making. Town governments and County staff should work together to reduce conflicts along town boundaries and between local plans and the County plan.

b) **Direct intensive development to existing cities, villages and hamlets.**

Large-scale development projects (e.g., large subdivisions, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial), which have the greatest opportunity for conflicts with farming, should be directed away from productive agricultural lands and sensitive natural features. Instead, these should be directed to cities and villages, where a full array of municipal services are available. Some small-scale development may be appropriate in a few rural crossroads and hamlets areas, particularly Bluffview in the Town of Sumpter. In these hamlets/crossroad areas, a connected pattern of new streets parallel to the major roadways should be designed to avoid the spread of strip development along each roadway; to create depth to the crossroads area; to open up land for infill development behind existing buildings; and to direct traffic off the major roadways.

There are numerous conflicts between houses and farming, including use of roads, noise, odors, and hours of operation. Further, the intrusion of non-agricultural uses in farming areas brings a sense of impermanence, which discourages further investment by remaining farmers. Home sites, along with the private driveways that access those sites, should be directed away from soils best suited for agricultural use (Group I and II soils). Home sites should also be directed away from hydric or alluvial soils, which are prone to flooding or instability.

c) **Preserve access to Wisconsin River as development occurs.**

The housing market along the Wisconsin River is strong. Without detailed regulations, continued development along the river could affect the visual landscape and the river experience. The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board provides regulations for development within those boundaries. The County and local governments should consider standards for riverfront housing in largely-undeveloped areas not regulated by the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board. In addition to these design standards, public access points should be preserved and park space provided to promote long-term nature-based recreation and tourism along the Wisconsin River. Where appropriate, the County and local governments should require access dedications or easements within developments proposed along the Wisconsin River.

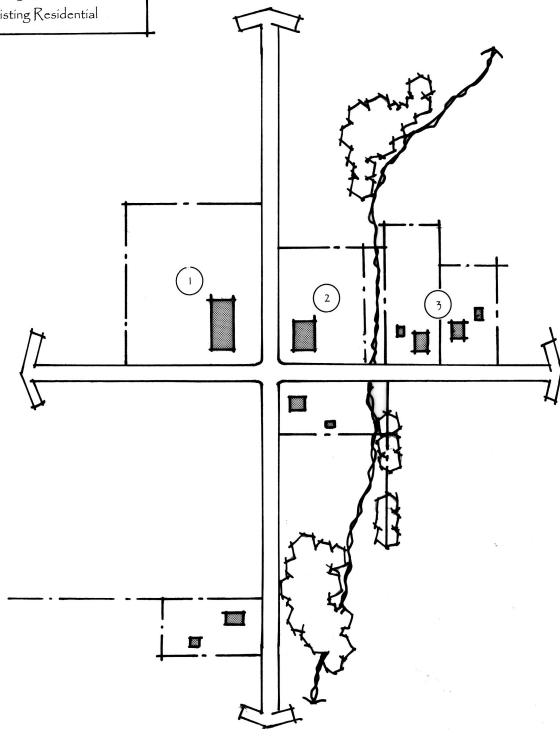


d) Prepare a detailed neighborhood development plan for the Bluffview area.

A neighborhood development plan is a detailed plan for future development where there will be complex land use, transportation, recreation, utility service, and environmental protection patterns and issues. Sumpter’s recently completed comprehensive plan advises preparation of more detailed planning for the Bluffview area, across from the main entrance to the Badger Army Ammunition Plant on Highway 12. The neighborhood development plan should consider future road access and sanitary sewer service, and use the following principles of rural hamlet planning as a starting point:

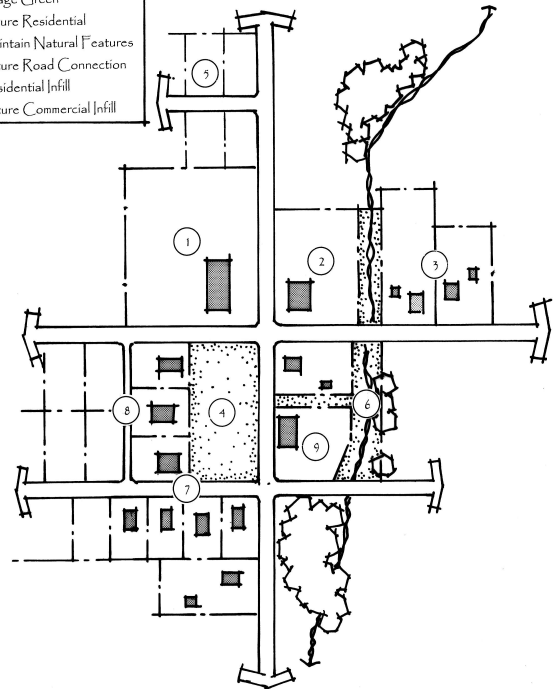
- Plan for small-scale commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential uses in the central area, surrounded by low-density residential uses.
- Promote the close spatial relationship of key community gathering areas (such as a church, town hall, and restaurant/tavern) to housing.
- Arrange land uses to fill in the areas around the center with development served by new roads, rather than developing in strips along current roadways. (see the example below)
- Provide pedestrian/bike facilities oriented the center of the hamlet.

1	Existing Church
2	Existing Commercial
3	Existing Residential



Example of Current Conditions

1	Existing Church
2	Existing Commercial
3	Existing Residential
4	Village Green
5	Future Residential
6	Maintain Natural Features
7	Future Road Connection
8	Residential Infill
9	Future Commercial Infill



Example of Desired Future Conditions

5. Transportation Recommendations

a) Update and implement Town Road Improvement Programs.

The Sauk County Highway Department should continue to work with town governments to update and implement Town Road Improvement Programs (TRIPs) to provide for the appropriate upgrading of town roads. Towns may wish to consider implementing town road impact fees for new development projects to offset the cost of upgrading of town roads. The County and town governments should also maintain road conditions databases for county and local roads. The database should be provided to WisDOT to be included in their Wisconsin Information Systems for Local Roads (WISLR) database.

b) Study a road crossing in Badger consistent with preservation and farming goals.

A cursory review of the Badger Plant area suggests that an east-west extension of County Road C to Highway 78 would merit consideration. In conjunction with the restoration of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, the feasibility, desirability, and general location for this roadway connection should be investigated. This study would include development of purpose and need as well as significant public outreach and agency coordination components. The outcome of this study would be a decision on whether to undertake a detailed environmental study in advance of a road crossing.

c) Study Highway 12 crossing, grade separation, and intersection/change options.

Facilitating the increasing amount of through traffic, while providing safe crossings, suggests the need to study potential interchanges and grade separated (no access) crossings between the Sauk Prairie Area and Baraboo Area. While the Conceptual Official Maps presented earlier in this *Plan* identify potential locations for these crossings, further study is needed to obtain state and local consensus on the need and location of these improvements.

d) Design and maintain town roads to agricultural, not suburban, standards.

Town roads should be designed and maintained for the function they serve. While this may seem obvious, adherence to outdated engineering standards has frequently led to the overbuilding of roads, which can have negative safety, environmental, and community character impacts. Many town roads that primarily serve agricultural traffic are built to residential standards—more expensive to build and maintain. For example, paved shoulders are not necessary for roads mainly used for agricultural traffic. Wide gravel shoulders are sufficient to accommodate farm machinery. On roads that accommodate a mix of agricultural and through traffic, longer turning lanes are important to provide sufficient slowing and turning room for farm machinery. The County and the towns should work together to set standards for rural roads that consider the primary use of the road.



e) Control new driveway access points to existing Highway 12.

Too many access points are inefficient and dangerous to both drivers and pedestrians. The county and local communities should limit driveway access to Highway 12 and other state and county highways. Recommended access control standards for rural highway sections are included in Appendix D. Along Highway 12, private driveways should be limited to one per parcel, or no closer than 1,000 feet from each other in rural areas. Public roads intersecting Highway 12 should be spaced a minimum of 2,000 feet from one another.

f) Provide appropriate regional trail connections.

The Ice Age Trail and a multi-use trail from Sauk City to Reedsburg are key trail connections recommended in this *Plan*. Appropriate local, county, and state agencies should continue to work through public lands, along rail corridors, and with willing private property owners to identify locations for these trails and paths.



6. Economic Development Strategy

a) Develop strategies to promote value-added agriculture.

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) defines value-added agriculture as the process of increasing the economic value and consumer appeal of an agricultural product. Sauk County, town governments, and local farmers should work with UW-Extension and DATCP to identify ways to add value to local agricultural products. Ideas that should be explored include organic agriculture, niche farming, direct marketing to consumers, and new uses for agricultural products. DATCP's Agricultural Development and Diversification Grant Program provides funding for projects likely to stimulate the local farm economy, including value-added products, market research, and new uses.

b) Advance direct marketing of farm products to consumers.

Direct marketing to consumers is a commonly used strategy to add value to locally produced agricultural products. This will become increasingly viable for the Rural Areas as local and regional population and tourism increases. Some direct marketing techniques identified by DATCP include: delivery services, pick-your-own programs, mail order services, farmers markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs. Local producers should also consider enrolling their products in DATCP's Something Special From Wisconsin® program to market their products locally, regionally, and nationally.



c) Participate in the Agricultural Development Zone Program.

Sauk County is one of five counties in the South Central Region Agricultural Development Zone. The purpose of the Department of Commerce Agricultural Development Zone Program is to promote the development and expansion of new and existing agricultural business. The program offers \$5 million in tax credits to each zone for the next 10 years. The tax credits are available to new and expanding dairy agribusinesses. The farming community should work with local governments, Sauk County, and DATCP to access funds through this program.

d) Promote nature-based, heritage-based, and agricultural-based tourism.

Nature-based tourism opportunities abound in the Rural Areas. Heritage-based tourism is also a growing niche and potential compliment to the commercial-oriented tourism in the Tourist Entertainment Corridor and points north. Local governments, Sauk County, area chambers of commerce, and the Department of Tourism should join together to explore approaches to grow these niches. Efforts to consider include farmer's markets, pick-your-own programs, day-on-the-farm programs, bed and breakfasts, and participation in the State's heritage tourism marketing program.

e) Pursue funding for affordable housing assistance, maintenance, and rehabilitation.

Sauk County and local governments should work with state, federal, and non-profit agencies to access programs available to help with affordable, elderly, and assisted housing. Sauk County and town governments should also review and continue to enforce their property maintenance codes in an effort to improve residential areas. Sauk County and town governments should work with state, federal, and non-profit agencies to access funds for housing rehabilitation. A list of potential funding sources is included in Appendix F.

7. Implementation

The following implementation actions should be completed following the adoption of this Plan. Figure 14 includes recommended actions, priorities, and agencies or groups that should work together to complete each action.

Figure 14: Rural Areas Implementation Strategies

	Priority	Responsible Parties
1. Prepare Comprehensive Plans compliant with the new Smart Growth requirements that reflect the vision and recommendations of this Growth Management Plan.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Governments Sauk County
2. Support adoption of density-based zoning, conservation subdivision, and clustering development options.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Governments Sauk County
3. Adopt a highway design overlay zoning district for new development abutting Highway 12, based on models in Appendix C.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sauk County Local Governments
4. Engage in efforts to preserve farming through the Sauk County Preservation Program, farmland preservation planning, and linkages between farms and local markets.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ops Farm Bureau UW Extension Local and county gov't
5. Prepare detailed neighborhood development plan for the Bluffview area.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Sumpter
6. Access tax credits available through the Agricultural Development Zone Program.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Governments Farming Community Sauk County DATCP
7. Consider direct marketing to consumers as a way to add value to locally-produced products.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Governments Farming Community Sauk County
8. Develop strategies to promote value-added agriculture.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Governments Sauk County UW-Extension DATCP
9. Promote nature-based, heritage-based, and agriculture-based tourism.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments Sauk County Historical Society Local and Regional Historical and Tourism Organizations
10. Access funding for affordable, elderly, and assisted housing	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments Sauk County County and local housing authorities