

Community Image Small Group Summary

Sauk Prairie Comprehensive Plan

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What currently defines the character or image of the Sauk Prairie area? What are the primary features that bring to mind this character or image?

- The combination of small town atmosphere and proximity to Madison
- Proximity to the Dells
- River
- Bluffs
- Lake Wisconsin
- Eagles
- Agricultural context
- Affordability
- Schools
- Knowing neighbors/familiar faces
- Good people – sense of calm
- Traditional neighborhood feel
- Diversity of residential architectural styles (not tract)
- Bedroom community
- Parks/open spaces with neighborhoods
- Walkability to various goods and services
- Two business districts
- Festivals (Cow Chip)
- Perception from outside – great schools, consolidation wars (why?), Highway 12
- Divided governments (negative)

Does community character differ between the Village of Prairie du Sac, the Village of Sauk City, and the Town of Prairie du Sac?

- Historic perception: Prairie du Sac—Protestant/Progressive
Sauk City—Catholic/Conservative
- Not as much difference as it used to be
- People of younger generation care very little about maintaining separate governments
- To newcomer: indistinguishable between Villages
- Sauk City has Highway 12 traffic, commercial use; that's why some businesses in Prairie du Sac struggle

What role does the river play in defining community character?

- Very important
 - Eagles
 - Canoeing
 - Good fishing
 - Birding/migration
 - Aesthetic – Looks different every time

- River walk/bike trail has great potential
- Stormwater impact on river is an issue

What role do the villages' downtowns play in defining community character?

- Revitalization to downtowns critical – based on recreational opportunities
- Draw is the beauty – bike path will bring people in (like ferry in Merrimac)
- Important more as “white collar” business location
- Bad buildings need to be improved
- Have to get a critical mass of tourist oriented uses
- Visual appearance/aesthetics need to improve and condition of sidewalks is critical to encourage people to stop
- Sauk City Historical Park needs to be open and available for community events on a regular basis
- No rail through Sauk Prairie area!

What role do buildings play? Can they enhance or detract from a positive community image?

- Height is an issue – new building on Water Street
- Do we need ½ acre lots in Villages? Smaller lots use less land
- Lots of variety in housing – not tract housing
- New buildings should blend with community character
- Backs of stores in Sauk City is very critical – try to enhance them – this is gateway – use them for commercial purposes (Uniuvo Café, Blue Spoon)
- Be proactive and court types of business that we want to attract – e.g. high-tech industries/offices
- We should not go after big retail uses or if there is big retail should be on bypass at a specific area in the plan (disagreement among group on this issue)
- Some feel okay to accept large-scale uses; others concerned about impact on existing businesses and disagree
- If Sauk Prairie Hospital needs to grow should it happen there? Most people say yes – it's important to have a good hospital. It would be better to go up than out.

How does Highway 12 contribute to community character or image?

- Want to promote locally owned businesses to enhance community and local small town feel
- Downtowns could be incubator space for small business on second and third floors
- Important to help local businesses expand as a first priority

How do residential neighborhoods contribute to community character or image?

- Need to have through streets – not isolated cul de sac neighborhoods – also makes services relatively easier
- Want narrower streets
- Should have neighborhoods with a mix of different housing types rather than separate enclaves

Do the schools factor into your perception of community character or image?

- Maybe new school site should be further west – within future neighborhoods (Split opinion on this – having many small schools make it more difficult to transition to bigger schools)
- Having healthy local businesses and institutions is important to community image.

What role do parks and open space play in the area's character?

- Neighborhood parks – smaller parks
- Don't think we need big parks
- Want a variety of park experiences
- Every larger subdivision should have a park
- Larger recreation park (soccer complex) would be good - take pressure off middle and high school fields
- Some solution to park/recreation space management needs to happen