

Economy Small Group Discussion Summary

Sauk Prairie Comprehensive Plan

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What is driving the economy in the Sauk Prairie area?

- Local businesses, base industries, McFarlane's, Milwaukee Valve, Rainmakers, Fiskars, and hospital
- Bedroom communities for Madison bring income from Madison
- Growing tourism industry

Opportunities

- The river is an excellent opportunity to increase tourism
- Sauk Prairie is a unique area that is under utilized
- Villages should encourage people to spend more money locally
- Highway 12
- Proximity to Madison – Sauk Prairie area is next place down the road from Madison
- Possibility of attracting high tech industries? – every community in the world is looking for high tech
- Businesses should be encouraged
- New businesses to area include restaurants, hardware store, etc.

Effects of Neighboring Communities

- Although Sauk Prairie is an excellent place to live, 58% of employees working in Sauk Prairie live in Madison
- A large portion of people working in Madison/living in Sauk Prairie are professionals
- Madison growth connections
- Limiting growth in Springfield and Roxbury will accelerate growth in Sauk Prairie area
- Sauk Prairie wants to be more than just a bedroom community for Madison, the community has a lot going for it. Don't find a more beautiful place with friendly people. There is tremendous potential for the area.
- Comparison between rural Milwaukee to suburbs and growth between Madison and the Sauk Prairie area

Amenities

- People outside the community are using natural amenities more than community members
- The school system is a big benefit – it is good and is getting better
- Employers in the community - haven't developed recreational activities

- Activities that support a certain quality of life are missing

Highway 12

- Hodge podge of development
- Access on Highway 12 is terrible
- Piggly Wiggly is looking for a new location
- The highway expansion is going to bring more people to the area, more services will need to be provided for them

Airport

- (One individual shared most of the following thoughts)
- The airport helps distinguish Sauk Prairie from other nearby areas
- The airport should be converted to a public entity—opportunity to receive 80 percent of its funding from the FAA if it is publicly owned
- Baraboo and Reedsburg have larger airports due to the types of industry they have
- Airport needs to expand in the future-limited on the south by PF and Dog park
- Help to bring in more industry – Culver’s and Mueller’s planes are in Madison
- 80% funding from feds if public owned
- Will only work if publicly owned – must be owned jointly
 - Town of Prairie du Sac has worked very well with the airport
 - Village of Prairie du Sac has always contributed money

How is the expansion of Middleton and Baraboo airports affecting the Sauk Prairie area?

- Reedsburg also just expanded
- The cost of buying the land is significant
- Sauk Prairie airport has more hangers than the other airports in the area
- Airport hangers group supports the airport

Assume airport stays there, what uses are appropriate around that area?

- Agriculture is top choice, but feeling is it won’t be staying there
- Look at context of the whole intersection – more businesses without signalization would be confusing

If the runway were expanded, what would be the benefits?

- Already have spray businesses, flight teacher
- Design of this area is important as it is a community entrance
- Expansion with an east/west runway instead of a north/south runway?
 - Would need to have 5000 foot runway for charters – currently length is approximately 2500 feet
 - Pattern would be less over the village
- Is it worth designing the whole community around this airport with two good airports within 15 minutes?

Agriculture

- Sauk Prairie is an agricultural hub, but the economy is changing. For example, there used to be 5 or 6 agricultural implements dealerships now there is only one.

Downtowns

- Downtown not conducive to more growth – lack of parking is a problem
- Don't expect people to fund improvements out of their own money, Villages should help
- First impression is bad
- Need to encourage people to modernize and improve their lots and the water frontage

Commercial Development

- Aesthetics important to the health of the community
- Small stores need to offer something different than the Walmarts – can't be old tired stores, different products
- Do not expect a lot of heavy industry
- More retail, but where to locate? Limited affordable sites
- Chamber of Commerce is doing a market research study of the retail sector with the UW Extension – the surveys are out right now
- Can live without large-scale commercial
- Big box stores in Baraboo and Madison limit what will be developed in Sauk Prairie area
- There is a need for more restaurants and lodging – for example, people travel out of town for dinner
- Finding a place to meet at lunch is nearly impossible – there is “no place” to have a business lunch.
- Possible locations for new restaurants is limited by:
 - Availability of parking
 - Cost of land near Highway 12
 - Land limited on edge until sewer inceptor
 - Utilities are significant limitation when making decisions about location

Industrial Development

- Existing industrial parks are land-locked

Are there particular types of businesses located in the existing industrial parks?

- Prairie du Sac Industrial Park has businesses related to construction
- Sauk City has diversity
- Manufacturing is diverse with potential to expand

Should the Villages consider developing a joint industrial park?

- It would be better
- Less confusing for outsider – they are competing head to head – not positive, two communities fighting
- Would need to figure out the cost and financing – not insurmountable

- From a marketing perspective, should be marketing area, not community, except on a site-by-site basis
- Strength of one is probably the weakness of the other
- One universal strategy between the two communities

New Development

- Land cost analysis—\$25,000 - \$35,000 per acre
- Time factor in selling land—want sites that are ready—few are left
- 29 acres south of Highway 12 and west of park – historic preservation house
- Highway 12 bypass is up in the air
- Property owners at edge of the communities are not selling
- Smaller buildings and properties could be redeveloped along Highway 12 to river, close to 30-40 acres that could be combined into a “city center.”
 - Controlled by people who might let something happen
 - Utilities are already in place
 - Old Dairy is for sale by Foremost, may not be suitable for housing due to neighboring business
 - Canoe places can take off from there—could be a tourist destination
 - Coop interest may own this frontage area

Business Climate

What can communities do to help business climate?

- Consistent message throughout whole thing – what happens in Sauk City affects Prairie du Sac and vice versa
- New economy may dictate the consolidation of the two villages
- Don't think small communities can support the kind of high level of services people expect
- Municipalities should consolidate – it will be more difficult as they grow