



RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW

Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

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Learn more about Smart Growth at the Racine County Fair!

Members of the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning Team and Advisory Committee will be at the Racine County Fair, from July 25–29, 2007.

Information will be provided about the overall progress of the planning

process in our community, findings from the completed inventory draft chapters, results from the countywide public opinion survey, and upcoming public participation opportunities. Displays—including countywide maps of current and planned

land use, community facilities, parks and open spaces sites—as well as fact sheets and newsletters will be also available.

The Smart Growth table will be located in the Commercial Building.

Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee SWOT Results

On May 15, 2007, the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC) conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis to identify issues facing the County, providing information to develop effective goals and strategies which will build on the community's strengths and take advantage of opportunities while minimizing or overcoming the impact of weaknesses and threats. The MJAC identified the following as priorities in Racine County; top priorities are in bold.

Residents will have the opportunity to participate in a SWOT identification workshop at informational meetings scheduled for September 2007.

STRENGTHS

- 1. Improvement in intergovernmental cooperation**
- 2. Proximity to interstate**
- 3. Water resources**
 - Innovative public and private organizations
 - Proximity to Lake Michigan & events at the lakefront
 - Outstanding farmland
 - Some good school systems
 - Wide variety of housing types and affordability

OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Commuter rail**
- 2. Cooperative services between neighboring municipalities**
- 3. Good leadership**
 - Planning – Smart Growth
 - Developable lands
 - Expansion of Abbott Labs
 - Surrounding commercial development
 - Ability to attract industries
 - Land conservation
 - Redevelopment of downtown areas

WEAKNESSES

- 1. Perceived crime in inner city**
- 2. Lack of funding for redevelopment projects**
- 3. Too much unemployment**
 - Development pressures
 - School system
 - Lack of infrastructure along the I-94
 - Proximity to Chicago and Milwaukee
 - Elements of bad behavior creating costs
 - Air quality

THREATS

- 1. Loss of farmland**
- 2. Increasing health care costs**
- 3. Ability to maintain services within budget**
 - Lack of public education and awareness
 - Threats to the water table
 - Job-Population mismatch
- Resistance to change
- Loss of young professionals
- Overdevelopment
- Strong dependence on automobiles

Chapter II: Population, Housing and Economic Base in Racine County

Draft Chapters I– V have been completed, reviewed and received preliminary approval from the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC). These chapters contain inventories of existing and historical data regarding Racine County, such as population, housing, urban growth, transportation, utilities, community facilities, and land use plans and ordinances. Chapter II is summarized below; more chapters will be summarized in future newsletters.

Between 1970 and 2000, Racine County increased by 18,000 persons, or 11%. (In the same time period, the Southeast Region grew by 10%, and 21% statewide.) The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) estimated that there were 194,580 residents in the County in 2006, a 3% increase from 2000.

Changes in population vary from a 14% decrease in the City of Racine, to a 163% increase in the Village of Rochester. The Village and the Town of Waterford also experienced increases of over 100% between 1970 and 2000.

The population characteristics of Racine County are similar to those of the region. The median age of County residents in 2000 was about 36 years. 83% of residents were White; 10.5% were Black or African American; 0.7% were Asian; 0.4% were American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3.7% reported themselves as multi-racial. Federal definitions consider Hispanic to be an ethnic group, rather than a racial one; in 2000, 7.9% of the population (about 15,000 people) were Hispanic.

Of County residents at least 25 years old, 83% had attained at least a high school or higher level of education, and just over 20% had a bachelor or graduate degree.

Correlating with the increase in population, there was a considerable rise in the number of households in Racine County. (A household is defined by the US Census Bureau as all persons who occupy a housing unit.) In 2000, there were 70,800 households—an increase of 42% since 1970. 2.59 was the average household size.

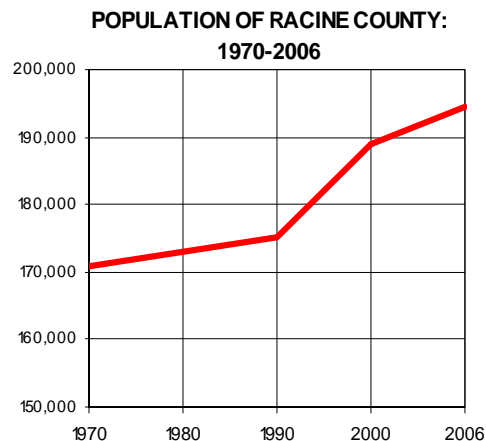
In 1999, the median income for Racine County households was \$48,100, which was higher than the Region (\$46,300) and the State (\$43,800).

There were about 74,700 housing units in Racine County in 2000, and about 95% of these units were occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 71% were owner-occupied and 29% were renter-occupied. The percentage of owner-occupied housing ranges from 60% in the City of Burlington to 99% in the Village of North Bay.

In 2000, there were 96,900 County residents in the labor force. The total number of jobs in Racine County grew from 64,600 in 1970 to 94,400 in 2000 – an increase of 46%, lower than the Region (56%) and the State (77%).

Between 1970 and 2000:

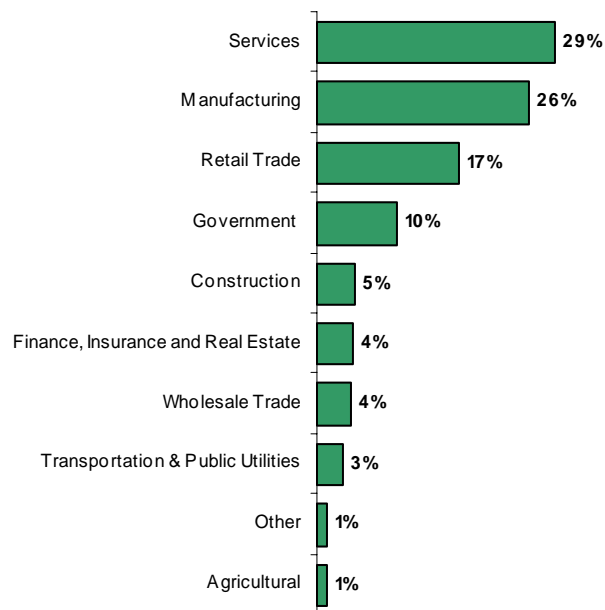
- Service jobs increased 163%; Construction increased 80%; and Retail increased 58%
- Agricultural jobs decreased 50%
- The proportion of manufacturing jobs decreased from 39% to 25.5%



SOURCE: US Census Bureau



PERCENTAGE OF JOBS BY GENERAL INDUSTRY GROUP IN RACINE COUNTY: 2000



SOURCE: US Bureau of Economic Analysis and SEWRPC

Countywide Public Opinion Survey

In Spring 2007, a countywide public opinion survey was conducted to secure public input for the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan. The survey was designed to address the nine required elements of the plan, and results will be one of many components to help guide the plan's development, including long-range goals and objectives for the County. Approximately 4,000 surveys were mailed; almost 600 were returned.

Quality of Life

Residents identified crime rate and safety, emergency services, the quality of neighborhoods, the level of property taxes, and the cost of living as the most important reasons they choose to live in Racine County.

The majority of residents (53%) stated that in the future, they would like their community to be a mix of residential, business and rural areas. 24% indicated they preferred mostly rural; 14% a mix of business and residential; and 6% mostly residential.

Nearly 45% of residents wanted Racine County to develop at a slower rate; 34% liked the current rate of growth; and 4% thought development should be faster. Just over 10% indicated that there should be no more growth.

Housing

Consistent with the majority opinion that growth should be slowed or stopped, questions about housing needs in the County were met with mostly tepid responses. 21% of survey respondents felt that there should be no more residential development. However, 81% indicated a need for housing designed for elderly persons. (It is important to note that senior citizens were over-sampled in the survey.) Almost 70% reported seeing a need for single-family, owner-occupied homes, and 68% agreed that the County needed more affordable housing.

Transportation

Less than one percent of respondents use public transportation on a regular basis; 11% occasionally use transit services. Among these residents, opinions were divided over the adequacy of local bus services, with 37% reporting that services met current need, 38% reporting they did not, and 24% giving a neutral response. About 30% stated that there were no transit services where they lived.

A majority of respondents (68%) stated that the County's overall road network met current needs, but only 52% thought the condition of roads and traffic congestion were satisfactory.

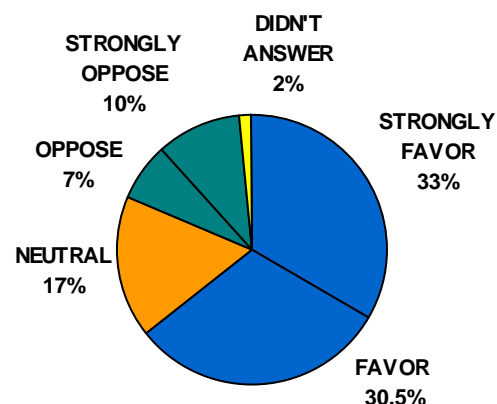
Economic Development

Throughout the County, health care services, industrial & manufacturing and emerging technology were the industries that residents were most interested in seeing developed. In the western part of the County, agriculture-related industry was identified as the most important.

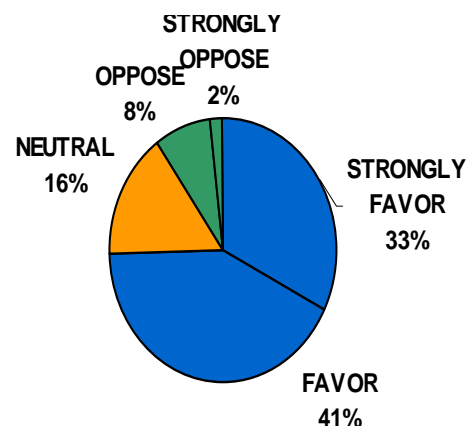
Agricultural and Natural Resources

A great majority of residents indicated it was important to protect natural resources, particularly air quality (98%), groundwater and surface water (97%), open space (93%), forested lands (91%), and farmland (89%).

DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE EXTENSION OF THE COMMUTER RAIL (KRM) FROM KENOSHA TO RACINE AND MILWAUKEE?



IN GENERAL, WOULD YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE HAVING YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARE SERVICES WITH NEIGHBORING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?



Complete survey results
will available August 2007
on the Racine County
Smart Growth website

RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW
Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

Send us your e-mail address and
we can e-mail you the next
newsletter!
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www.racineco.com

Racine County
Wisconsin
Since 1836

Welcome to Racine County's new website. The letters above our new logo design are our new County government directory. We have also added a new quick link section for easy access to the most popular areas of our Internet site. We hope that these changes will make your visit to online Racine County easier to use. We hope you will be back.

Services listed in the grid:
Jail Construction Report
Birth Certificate Application
Budgets
Calendar
Contact & Address Information
County Board Meetings
District Maps
Executive Message
Frequently Asked Questions
GoRacine
Job Postings
Medical Examiner's Office
Park Fees
Parks
Press Releases
Quality of Life Task Force
Real Estate Recording Fees
Ridgewood Nursing Care Facility
Smart Growth Planning
Tax Inquiry
Visitors Bureau
Vital Records
Web Feedback Form

Link to
Smart Growth
information