



RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW

Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

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Upcoming Comprehensive Planning Meetings

As of August 2007, the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC) has reviewed and approved the six inventory chapters of Racine County's comprehensive plan. These chapters contain inventories of existing and historic data, and provide the basis for the comprehensive plan's goals, policies and programs. Chapter III is summarized in this newsletter.

At the November 2007 meeting, the MJAC will be reviewing population,

household, and employment forecasts, which will provide a basis to work on the Issues and Opportunities (I&O) Element, as well as future planning elements.

Utilizing community input from the countywide public opinion survey, as well as discussions during the public informational meetings, the I&O Element will present the comprehensive plan's vision for Racine County, and goals, objectives, and policies designed to

help the community achieve that vision. The I&O Element will likely be discussed and reviewed in January-February 2008.

As always, community members are welcome at all MJAC meetings. Typically, these meetings take place on the third Thursday of the month, 6:30–8:30 in the Ives Grove Auditorium (14200 Washington Ave). However, meetings are subject to change, so please check the website for updated information.

Racine County Fair Information Booth

This summer, the Racine County Smart Growth Team and several members of the Advisory Committee provided information regarding the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning project at the County Fair. Fair-goers from throughout the county and region stopped to investigate maps from the inventory chapters of the plan, to pick up informational materials, and to share their hopes and concerns about development in their community.

Given the level of interest displayed by community members, the Smart Growth

Team and MJAC plan to have an informational table again next summer to provide an update to the community and gather more input for the plan.



Summary of Draft Chapter III: Inventory of Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources

Chapter III of the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan provides information about existing agricultural, natural and cultural resources in Racine County. It is essential to protect these resources in order to achieve strong, stable physical and economic development, and to preserve community identity. Minor changes to the draft will be made in response to feedback from the Racine County MJAC.



Agricultural Resources

Based on SEWRPC's land use inventory in 2000 (the most recent available data), 125,188 acres (about 57% of the Racine County planning area) were in agricultural use. In 2002, there were 631 farms in Racine County. About 53% of these farms are less than 50 acres, nearly double the statewide percentage (28%).

Crop-related commodities were the predominant source of agricultural revenue in 2002, accounting for almost 23% of all agricultural revenue in Racine County. This was followed by vegetables (15%, then nursery and greenhouse (12%).

Natural Resources

Racine County contains numerous natural resource elements, including about 15 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, 10 major inland lakes (lakes of 50 or more acres), 101 miles of major streams (streams that maintain a small continuous flow throughout the year), 56 natural areas (tracts of land or water that contain intact native plant and animal communities), 34 critical species habitat sites and 28 aquatic sites that support rare species.

In 2000, approximately 29,640 acres of the County were encompassed in environmental corridors (areas with a concentration of natural resources and scenic, recreational and historic resources). About 11,570 acres were identified as park and open space sites. Wetlands covered about 15,920 acres (7% of the County), and woodlands covered about 12,700 acres.

Cultural Resources

In 2006, there were 47 listings for Racine County in the National Register of Historic Places, including 41 historic buildings or structures and 6 historic districts. Additionally, the County is home to 12 Wisconsin State Historical Markers, and 335 known prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

The County also has many historical societies and museums, including Burlington Historical Society and Museum, Caledonia Historical Society, Friends of Wind Point Lighthouse, Log Cabin Museum, Old Engine No. 3 Museum, Rochester Area Historical Society, and Racine County Historical Society and Heritage Museum.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN RACINE COUNTY COMMUNITIES: 2000

COMMUNITY	AGRICULTURAL LAND (ACRES)	% OF COMMUNITY AREA
City of Burlington	732	16.0
City of Racine	25	0.2
Village of Caledonia	15,727	53.9
Village of Elmwood Park	0	0.0
Village of Mt. Pleasant	12,043	55.5
Village of North Bay	0	0.0
Village of Rochester	49	14.3
Village of Sturtevant	1,131	42.0
Village of Union Grove	371	28.9
Village of Waterford	352	21.8
Village of Wind Point	11	1.3
Town of Burlington	11,381	51.0
Town of Dover	17,501	75.6
Town of Norway	14,267	62.5
Town of Raymond	16,876	73.8
Town of Rochester	5,707	52.0
Town of Waterford	12,127	56.3
Town of Yorkville	16,888	77.1
RACINE COUNTY	125,188	57.4

Source: SEWRPC



WIND POINT LIGHTHOUSE

A complete copy of Draft Plan Chapter III is available on the Racine County Smart Growth website.

Public Informational Open House Meetings

From September through November 2007, a series of public informational open house meetings about the County's multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan are being conducted at various locations in Racine County. These meetings are intended to provide interested community members with background information about the comprehensive planning process and legal requirements, as well as to give an update on the plan's progress in Racine County and to present findings from the inventory chapters.

Meeting participants have also been asked to take part in an issue identification exercise to determine the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Information collected through all the SWOT analyses will be used, along with results from the countywide public opinion survey, to help the Racine County MJAC to develop the comprehensive plan's vision, goals, objectives, and strategies. Some of the issues identified as priorities in the County are listed on the right.



A final public informational meeting is scheduled to take place in the City of Racine, on Thursday, November 8, 2007, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm in the City Common Council Chambers (Room 205 of Racine City Hall, 730 Washington Avenue). If you would like more information about this meeting, please contact Kristen Lie, Community Planning Educator, at (262) 886-8467 or e-mail kristen.lie@ces.uwex.edu.

STRENGTHS

- Quality of people
- Good diversity of people, industries, land uses
- Good mix of urban and rural
- Proximity and access to large metro areas

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of affordable housing for seniors
- Loss of agricultural land and natural resources
- Lack of industry
- Untrained, uneducated workforce
- East vs. West mentality
- Traffic congestion

OPPORTUNITIES

- Smart Growth Planning for balance between urban and rural
- Potential for expanded and improved transportation services & facilities
- Racine County Economic Development Corporation working to bring businesses to the County

THREATS

- Higher taxes
- Elimination of rural character
- Increase in crime — actual and perceived
- Perception of Racine as a dying community

Complete SWOT results will be available on the Racine County Smart Growth website

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Comprehensive Plan Public Opinion Survey

In Spring 2007, a countywide public opinion mail survey was conducted to secure community input for the comprehensive plan. A random sample of approximately 4,000 registered voters was selected to take the survey; other interested residents were invited to participate online or by picking up a survey at their municipal building or public library. Altogether, about 775 people responded to the survey.

The survey was designed by the Racine County MJAC,

with assistance from County Planning & Development, SEWRPC, and UW-Extension, and was intended to provide insight into public perceptions on issues such as housing, transportation, land use, community services, and agricultural, natural, and cultural resources.

Preliminary survey results were shared in the summer edition of "Racine County Tomorrow," and the complete survey results and report are now available on the Racine County Smart Growth website.

www.racineco.com



[Link to Smart Growth information](#)