



RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW

Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Housing Work Group	1
Upcoming Meetings	1
Summary of Issues and Opportunities Element	2
Summary of Economic Development Element	3
Summary of 2035 Population, Household & Employment Projections	4

Racine County Comprehensive Planning Team:

Julie A. Anderson
Director of Planning and Development
Racine County

David Schilling
Principal Land Use Planner
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Thomas Moes
Land Use Planner
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Kristen Lie
Community Planning Educator
Racine County UW-Extension

Housing Work Group

The housing element is one of the nine planning elements required by the Wisconsin Smart Growth law. It assesses current housing conditions, looks at projections for future housing demand, and develops goals, objectives, and policies to help guide residential development for the next 20 or so years.

In order to address countywide housing issues, the Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC) decided to form a Housing Work Group, consisting of representatives from different housing interest groups, including builders and real estate professionals, the Housing Authority of Racine County (HARC), Racine City Development, and the Homeless Assistance Coalition.

The first work group meeting, on February 26, 2008, provided an overview of the comprehensive planning process in Racine County and a review of the plan's draft Chapter II, "Inventory of Population, Housing Stock, and Economic Base." The housing work group then began a discussion of housing issues and trends in the County and Region, which followed through to the March meeting.

Generally, housing issues identified by the group could be categorized into broad topics, including: residential development patterns; housing costs, choices, and types; and government cooperation and regulations. Within these topics, some specific issues were: housing affordability; matching housing types with community jobs and incomes; existing regulations that impact housing and construction costs; designing strong neighborhoods with mixed uses and good transportation flow; ensuring that development projects consider immediate and long-term impacts on community infrastructure; and meeting the housing needs of seniors and persons with disabilities.

At upcoming meetings, the Work Group will review the preliminary Housing Element draft and discuss countywide housing programs and organizations.



MJAC MEETINGS
Meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of each month, from 6:30—8:30 pm in the Ives Grove Auditorium (14200 Washington Ave).
Upcoming dates include:
April 17, 2008
May 15, 2008
June 19, 2008

Upcoming MJAC Meetings

The Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee continues to develop goals, objectives, and programs that will help to address development issues through the year 2035. This spring, the MJAC will review draft plans for transportation (April) and housing (May). As always, community members are encouraged to attend these meetings, learn about the plan, and share their comments and concerns.

Draft Chapter VIII: Issues and Opportunities Element

The issues and opportunities element defines a desired future for Racine County and each participating local government. It is one of the nine elements of a comprehensive plan required by the *Wisconsin State Statutes*, and must contain a statement of overall goals to guide the future development and redevelopment of the County through the year 2035.

Visioning Process

Racine County's comprehensive plan vision statement broadly encompasses what the County strives to be in the future. The Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MJAC) was responsible for preparing and recommending the following vision statement:

"Racine County will work to preserve and enhance a vibrant, healthy, environmentally and economically sustainable community that enables opportunities for people of all ages, income levels, ethnicities, and cultural heritages."

This vision, with its themes of environmental, economic, and social sustainability, is based on key findings from:

- information collected and mapped in the inventory chapters of the comprehensive plan (Draft Chapters II-VI);
- population, household, and employment projections (Draft Chapter VII; see page 4); and
- public participation efforts, including the countywide comprehensive plan public opinion survey and three SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analyses conducted during public informational and MJAC meetings.

Issues & Opportunities

The visioning process also helped to identify of countywide issues and opportunities, which included:

- preserving and enhancing community character and quality of life
- planning for coordinated and sustainable future growth
- preserving agricultural and historic resources
- protecting natural resources and improving recreational opportunities
- promoting integrated consideration of the built environment—housing options, land use, transportation, and economic development
- improving transit and transportation services
- planning for environmentally and economically sustainable infrastructure—public utilities and community facilities
- encouraging targeted economic development to provide living-wage jobs

Further explanation of these issues, as well as summaries of public participation efforts, can be found in the complete draft chapter, available on the Smart Growth website:

<http://racine.uwex.edu/cnred/SmartGrowth.html>



This element outlines sixteen overall goals for the comprehensive plan. Some are included below and on the adjacent page. The complete list is available online.

OVERALL PLAN GOALS

- Guide future growth in a manner that preserves and enhances the quality of life and character of urban and rural communities.
- Preserve open space to enhance the total quality of the environment, maximize essential natural resource availability, give form and structure to urban development, and provide opportunities for a full range of outdoor recreational activities.
- Provide a multi-modal transportation system that provides appropriate types of transportation needed by all residents of the County at an adequate level of service; provides choices among transportation modes; and provides inter-modal connectivity.
- Maintain the environmental assets of the community and develop methods to protect and preserve valuable natural features, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, groundwater resources, and floodplains.
- Provide opportunities for an adequate housing supply that will meet the needs of all residents and a broad range of choice among housing designs, sizes, types, and costs, recognizing changing trends in age-group composition, income, and household types.
- Reevaluate the comprehensive plan regularly (at least once every ten years) to ensure that it continues to reflect current County and community objectives.

Draft Chapter XIV: Economic Development

One of the nine required plan elements, the economic development element compiles goals, objectives, policies and programs that promote the stabilization and expansion of Racine County's economic base and quality job opportunities. It also includes a look at the County's strengths and weaknesses in attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, as identified by the MJAC and community members, as well as a summary of assistance programs, financial tools, and organizations that focus on economic development strategies.

The economic development element was developed with the assistance of the Racine County Economic Development Corporation (RCEDC) and it incorporates much of the Economic Development Plan (EDP), version 4.0, which was adopted by the County Board in March of 2008.

The EDP identifies five main challenges for Racine County's economic development:

- To cultivate an entrepreneurial culture
- To focus on the importance of technology and innovation relative to the growth of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses
- To utilize the existing natural and cultural resources, recreational opportunities and business location advantages to promote a positive image of Racine County to existing residents and those outside the County
- To take advantage of the development opportunities that exist as a result of the Chicago-Milwaukee corridor and to properly link land use with future business development countywide.
- To link education and training in a manner that provides a competitive workforce to meet present and future needs of local employers and to create opportunities for low-income, disadvantaged, and minority individuals to prefer for and obtain employment

There are currently 19 industrial/business parks in Racine County, encompassing a total of 2,100 acres. The RCEDC is now aggressively promoting the expansion of these parks, and the revitalization and re-use of environmentally contaminated sites.

Seven of the sixteen overall comprehensive plan goals relate directly to economic development; these are listed on the right. Objectives and policies to address these challenges and goals were developed by the RCEDC and are outlined in EDP 4.0; additional objectives were created for the comprehensive plan, such as:

- Maintain and enhance the economic vitality of Racine County by encouraging a diversified tax base of agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential uses.
- Encourage and promote a viable and sustainable agricultural economy through existing and new programs designed to support the farm industry.
- Foster tourism that promotes the natural features, cultural resources, and unique heritage of Racine County.

The element concludes with a summary of some of the federal, state, and local economic development assistance programs, financial tools, and lead partner organizations that are available to the public and private sectors in Racine County. These include, but are not limited to: Tax Increment Financing Districts, Business Improvement Districts, Revolving Loan Funds, Workforce Development Programs, and Brownfield Remediation Programs.



OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities
- Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.
- Encourage development patterns that promote efficient and sustainable use of land, that can be readily linked by transportation systems, and utilize existing public utilities and services.
- Maintain the agricultural base, preserving productive farmland and related environmentally sensitive areas.
- Protect and enhance cultural structures, historic sites and districts, and archaeological sites
- Promote the redevelopment and infill in areas with existing infrastructure and services, enhancing existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas
- Encourage intercommunity planning efforts to make effective use of resources and to resolve conflicts.

The Racine County Economic Development Corporation's Economic Development Plan, 4.0, can be found on their website:

<http://www.rcedc.org>

RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW

Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

For more information, please visit:
<http://racine.uwex.edu/cnred/SmartGrowth.html>

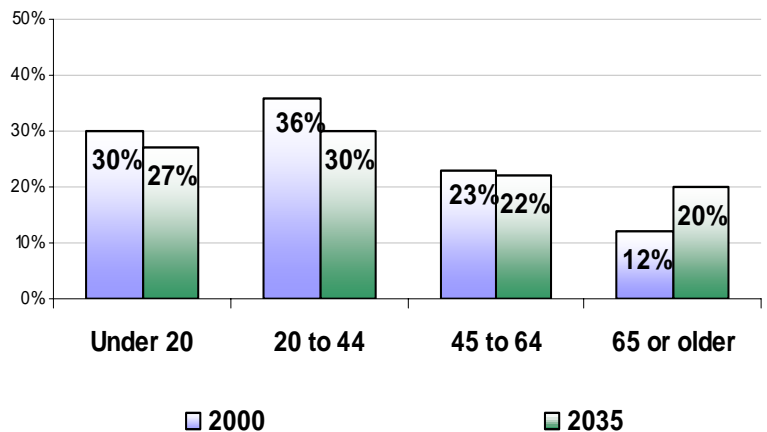


Draft Chapter VII: Population, Household and Employment Forecasts

The future demand for land, housing, transportation facilities and services, and other community facilities is tied directly to future population, household, and employment levels in the County. Therefore, developing projections of the number of people, households, and jobs for the year 2035 is an essential step of the planning process.

In 2004, SEWRPC prepared a set of projections for the Region and its seven counties for the 2035 regional land use plan. Each set included a range of projections: low, intermediate, and high—with the intermediate projection being the most likely to be realized. In Racine County, SEWRPC's intermediate projection indicates a population increase of 24,800 persons, or 13%, growing from 188,800 persons in 2000 to 213,600 in 2035. This projection includes a change in the County's age composition—in particular, an 86% increase is projected in the population of persons age 65 or older, and they will constitute 20% of the overall population (compared to 12% in 2000).

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED AGE COMPOSITION IN RACINE COUNTY:



Source: US Bureau of the Census and SEWRPC

The Comprehensive Planning Team is currently meeting with local governments to discuss two alternative projections—one based on SEWRPC's regional plan and the other based on population and household trends since 1980. Each government is being asked to decide what is most likely to be realized in their community by 2035, or to provide its own locally-derived projection. These will then be used to compile the plan's final countywide projections.