



RACINE COUNTY TOMORROW

Racine County's Smart Growth Newsletter

Inside this issue:

City of Racine Comprehensive Plan	1
Town and Village of Rochester Consolidate	1
Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Progress	2
Revisions to Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element	3
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Water Supply Plan Update	4

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City of Racine Comprehensive Plan

According to Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law, any government unit that engages in land use regulation actions is required to adopt a comprehensive plan. In Racine County, this means that a community can adopt the County's multi-jurisdictional plan as the community plan, or it can create a plan of its own that is consistent with the county plan.

In the fall of 2008, the City of Racine began work on its 2035 comprehensive plan. The City has a strong history of planning and outreach, and it has numerous neighborhood-level plans, such as the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan, Uptown Improvement Plan, and Downtown Racine Plan: 2025, as well as city-wide plans like the Park and Open Space Plan for the City of Racine: 2020. Racine City considers public participation to be an essential part of the comprehensive planning process to ensure that the plan reflects the hopes and ideas of City stakeholders.

To obtain input from city stakeholders about what the City should look like and how it should function in 2035, Racine City Development and Plan Commission, SEWRPC and UW-Extension developed an online survey that encompasses community issues such as land use, economic development, housing and transportation. The survey may be accessed from any computer with an internet connection, including public computers at the library and other community spaces.

City Principal Planner Matt Sadowski stated, "The city has invested a great deal of time and effort over the past eight years into implementing the recommendations of our individual neighborhood and area plans. This survey will provide good insight into how the public views the results of these past and current efforts while giving direction as to how to proceed into the future with a citywide strategy."

Results from the survey will be shared and discussed at a community input session in February 2009. Both the survey and comments received during the input session will help to develop a vision statement, goals and objectives for the City's comprehensive plan. For more information, please visit the Racine City Development website (<http://www.cityofracine.org/Depts/development/>) or call 262-636-9151.

Town and Village of Rochester Consolidate

On November 4, 2008, residents of the Town and the Village of Rochester approved a referendum to consolidate into a single village. This incorporation will lead to several changes; for example, Rochester will have independent planning and zoning authority, and its lands will be protected from annexation by neighboring villages; and all public services—such as fire & rescue service, police protection, garbage collection, and road maintenance—will be shared, which may lead to savings and improvements. Rochester continues to be a partner in the County's multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CITY OF RACINE!

Are you a resident, worker,
or business owner in the
City of Racine?
Have a say in your city's
comprehensive plan:

Take the online survey:
www.cityofracine.org

Attend the community
input meeting:

February 11, 2009
(more details to follow)



Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Progress

2008 marked the second year in Racine County's three-year multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process timeline, as required by the grant received from the Wisconsin Department of Administration. In order to meet the target completion date in the spring of 2009, the comprehensive planning team has been working with the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (MJAC).

According to the Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law, a comprehensive plan consists of the following main sections: an inventory of existing conditions in 2000; an issues and opportunities element that provides population and household projections for Racine County and defines a shared vision for a desired future for the County and each participating local government; seven planning elements that are intended to guide land use decisions through the year 2035; and implementation measures to ensure that the plan is put into action and remains viable over the next 25 years.

The second year of comprehensive planning has mainly involved the development of the seven planning elements. By the end of December 2008, the Racine County MJAC had approved the introductory and inventory chapters of the plan (Chapters I through VI), as well as drafts of the agricultural, natural and cultural resources element, housing element, and economic development element. The issues and opportunities element and transportation element were completed and reviewed, and are now undergoing revisions. It is expected that the utilities and community facilities element will be completed and reviewed by the MJAC in January 2009.

Now, the comprehensive planning effort is focused primarily on the land use element, which provides the foundation for the entire plan. Since the fall of 2007, Racine County communities have been working with SEWRPC staff to develop or update their land use plan maps which will guide where and what type of development may occur in each community. All seventeen maps have been completed and endorsed by each local government, and are now available on the Smart Growth website.

Following the completion of the required plan elements, a series of open house meetings will be conducted to provide community members with an update on the plan and to receive public comments. In addition, members of the public are always invited to attend and offer input at the monthly MJAC meetings, or to contact Kristen Lie, Kenosha/Racine Counties UW-Extension Community Planning Educator at (262) 886-8467, kristen.lie@goRacine.org with comments and ideas.

For additional information on the plan, including draft plan chapters, MJAC meeting agendas and minutes, local land use plan maps, and upcoming public participation opportunities, please visit the Racine County Smart Growth website:

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

STATE REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Issues and Opportunities
Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources
Land Use
Transportation
Utilities and Community Facilities
Housing
Economic Development
Intergovernmental Cooperation
Implementation

Italics indicate that the element has a completed draft chapter which has been reviewed by the MJAC.



The advisory committee typically meets on the third Thursday of every month, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm in the Ives Grove Auditorium.

Meetings are subject to change, so please check the website for up-to-date information.

MJAC MEETING DATES

January 15, 2009
February 19, 2009
March 19, 2009

Revisions to Chapter X, “Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element”

Through the fall of 2008, the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (MJAC) and the Racine County Comprehensive Planning Team have been developing the agricultural, natural and cultural resources element, which provides recommendations for the preservation and management of these resources. Following detailed discussions, additional information, objectives and policies were developed, particularly in order to address stormwater drainage management and practices, which have become an increasingly high priority issue.

According to the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), about 44 percent of Racine County (approximately 151 square miles) consists of soils that are somewhat poorly, poorly, or very poorly drained—that is, in these areas, water may remain at or near the ground’s surface for long periods of time. In rural areas of Racine County, manmade agricultural drainage ditches and farm drain tiles have been used to improve stormwater drainage so that land is suitable for productive agricultural purposes. The long-term management of these drainage ways has increasingly become a concern in the County, as damaged tiles that have not been properly maintained, or have been broken, can have far-reaching negative effects on areas established for farming. The types of drainage problems that impact farmers can also cause downstream problems in neighboring developments, which can result in an undue financial burden.

The comprehensive plan recommends that local governments consider developing stormwater management plans and, when appropriate, creating stormwater utility districts or farmland drainage districts. These districts would have the authority to carry out the tasks necessary for the maintenance of stormwater management systems.

To implement these stormwater-related recommendations, local governments should take into consideration the following: input from community members and adjacent communities; existing flood/drainage problems; technical data and expertise with respect to soils, existing drainage systems, floodlands, rainfall and runoff; watershed (or subwatershed) approach to make sure that there are community-wide or multi-jurisdictional long-term benefits; and County or local ordinances to ensure compliance with management plans.

A revised draft of Chapter X, “Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Element” is available on the Racine County Smart Growth website.



ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE

⇒ Protect natural and manmade/engineered drainage ways in the County to minimize the impacts of stormwater runoff on existing natural resources and urban and agricultural land uses.

SOME ADDITIONAL POLICIES

- Prepare, update, and implement comprehensive stormwater management plans on a watershed, or subwatershed, basis to facilitate the implementation of the Racine County land and water resource management plan and the regional water quality management plan.
- Develop local ordinances that require landowners to maintain drainage systems on individual properties and that in lieu of landowner compliance with the ordinance, grant the local municipality the authority to repair and maintain drainage systems.
- Consider developing growth control ordinances in rural areas to ensure a growth rate compatible with local services and long-term land use objectives
- Encourage the preparation of multi-jurisdictional stormwater management plan, including communities in counties adjacent to Racine County.

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Send us your e-mail address and
we can e-mail you the next
newsletter!
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Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Water Supply Plan: 2035

Since 2005, SEWRPC has been working with the seven Southeastern Wisconsin counties (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, Waukesha, and Walworth), U.S. Geological Survey, the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and many of the water supply utilities serving the Region to develop a regional water supply plan. The preliminary plan was completed in the fall of 2008.

The water supply plan is intended to provide a sound and workable plan for the provision and protection of long-term, sustainable sources of water for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. The plan's major components include:

- Development of water supply service areas and of forecast demand for water use.
- Recommendations for water conservation efforts to reduce water demand.
- Evaluation of alternative sources of supply, culminating in identification of recommended sources of supply for each service area and in recommendations for development of the basic infrastructure required to deliver that supply.
- Identification of groundwater recharge areas to be protected from incompatible development.
- Specification of any new institutional structures necessary to carry out the plan recommendations.
- Identification of any constraints to development levels in areas of the Region that may arise from water supply sustainability concerns.

Bob Beibel of the Regional Planning Commission gave an update on the planning process, and on plan recommendations specifically for Racine County, to the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee on November 20, 2008. This presentation is available on the Smart Growth website. Additional information and the preliminary draft of the regional water supply plan can be found on the SEWRPC website: <http://www.sewrpc.org>

An informational meeting regarding the water supply plan is scheduled for Monday, February 2, 2009, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Ives Grove Complex Auditorium (14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant). Comments on the plan may be submitted to SEWRPC through February 9th.

