

CITY OF
BARABOO

2040

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT - September 2024



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the support and guidance of the following individuals and organizations:

BARABOO COMMUNITY

We are especially grateful to the thousands of community members who shared their experiences and guidance during the public outreach and engagement process for this plan.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee was involved throughout the entire planning process to ensure the Comprehensive Plan addressed community needs and reflected the vision.

- Rob Nelson (Mayor)
- Pat Cannon
- Tom Pinion
- Scott Sloan
- Tom Kolb
- John Young

BARABOO CITY COUNCIL

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- David Olson
- Heather Kierzek
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction



1.1. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The City of Baraboo Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap that guides growth and the community's quality of life for the next 20 years.

Recommendations were developed to reflect the community needs and input highlighted by residents and community stakeholders through community workshop events and a community survey. The Plan establishes goals and policies to meet existing and future needs of community members. A Steering Committee made up of community members and City staff, were involved throughout the Plan's entire process to ensure that recommendations addressed the community's vision for the future.

The plan also recognizes and builds upon past and current planning work. Public comments and guidance were integrated with demographic trends and data, existing plans and documents, and anticipated future opportunities and trends. The plan is intended to be used and referenced daily as part of the City's business by residents, City staff, developers, and other stakeholders. The Plan should be updated at least every ten years to ensure it reflects changing conditions and ensures guidance is relevant to the current conditions.

Goals and Policies

The Comprehensive Plan outlines priorities and provides an integrated set of recommendations for housing, transportation, utilities, community facilities, agricultural, natural and cultural resources, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and land use. Each chapter includes goals and policies that supports the community's vision for the future:

- **Goals** are statements of desired outcomes by a community. They are intended to state the Plan's intent as clearly as possible, so that we as a city know what we are working to accomplish.
- **Policies** are high-level statements intended to guide city decision-making in a manner that achieves the Comprehensive Plan goals.

To achieve the goals and policies, the Plan will outline short and medium term actions. The Plan will also be used by city staff and developers to implement those goals and policies for future development. It is used to outline the use of public resources, secure public funding, guide economic development, respond to trends, and inform policy.

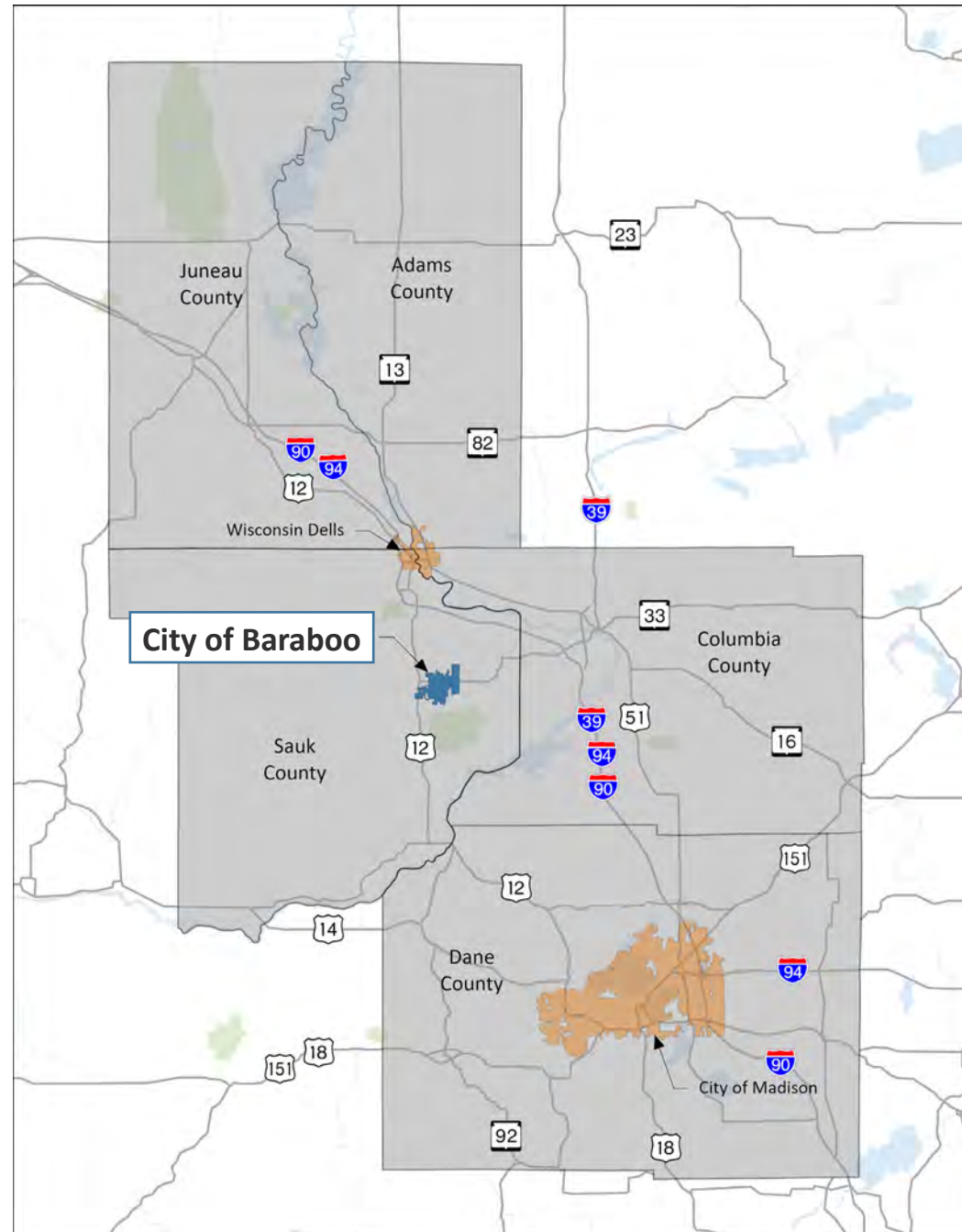
1.2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Baraboo is located in Sauk County and north of Devil's Lake State Park, approximately 40 miles northwest of Madison and 13 miles south of Wisconsin Dells. The area is rich in natural resources and amenities, including rivers, creeks, lakes, unique geology and bluffs, forests, diverse wildlife, and agricultural lands.

1.3. HISTORY

The Baraboo River and its surrounding natural amenities have attracted humans for over 10,000 years. The Ho-Chunk people established a village in the 1820s and 1830s. Euro-American settlement started in 1839 when the first of several dams was built to harness power for industries. The lumber industry thrived and trading for the rich agricultural land surrounding the town soon followed. Baraboo became the County Seat in 1846. Twenty years later, the community became a state-recognized village in 1866. In 1882, Baraboo became a city by State legislative action.

Baraboo earned the nickname "Circus City" because it became home to the Ringling Brothers and other circus families (e.g., Moeller Brothers, Gollmar Brothers, etc.).



1. Introduction

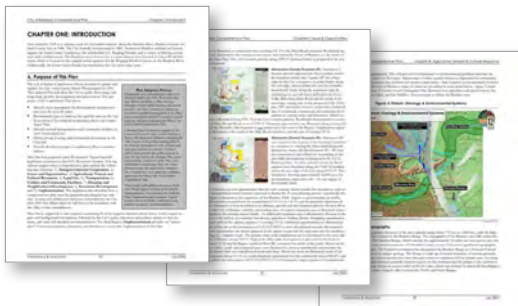
1.4. CURRENT AND PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Baraboo has adopted several planning documents over the past few decades, and these have been instrumental in creating a vision for Baraboo and guiding decision making. Prior to creating this document, a thorough review of these planning efforts was undertaken to provide a foundation for better understanding Baraboo’s current conditions and identifying potential strategies for Baraboo and the surrounding area. Past planning efforts include:

Smart Growth – The Baraboo Comprehensive Plan (2005)

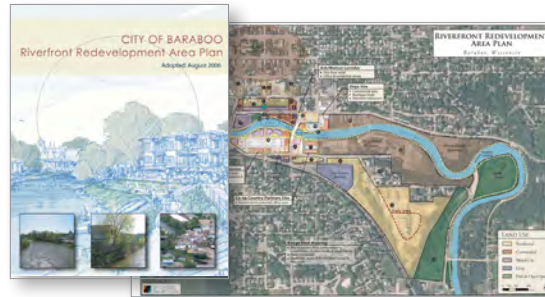
This [Comprehensive Plan](#) replaced the Master Plan (1992) and has been used by the City to guide short-range and long-range growth, development, and preservation. The goals of this Comprehensive Plan were:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the past 20 years.
- Recommend types of land use for specific areas in the City by involving City residents in preparing their own Comprehensive Plan.
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses.
- Direct private housing and commercial investment in the City.
- Provide detailed strategies to implement Plan recommendations.



Baraboo River Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2008)

The City of Baraboo completed a [Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan](#) to explore the development potential along the Baraboo Rapids. The plan included an opportunity analysis and a redevelopment area plan.



Grow Baraboo: An Economic Development Work Plan for the Baraboo Area (2015)

The 2015 [Work Plan](#) identified opportunities for providing an exceptional quality of life for residents; building a healthy business climate; protecting Baraboo’s abundant natural resources; and retaining the best qualities of Baraboo’s small town atmosphere. This workplan focused on improving the economic, social, and environmental health of the Baraboo Area, including the City of West Baraboo, Town of Baraboo, and Town of Greenfield.

Housing Study (2022)

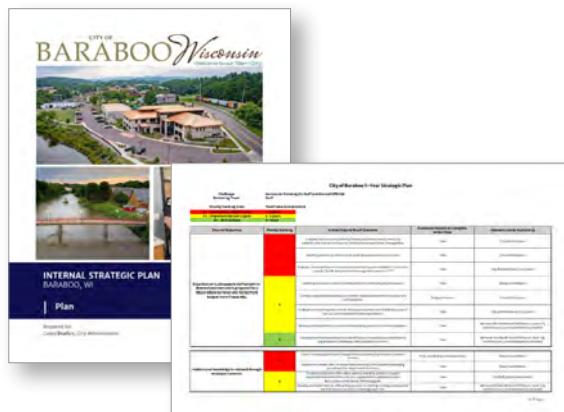
The City’s [Housing Study](#), developed in 2022, evaluated the current state of the Baraboo housing market by evaluating several factors such as existing single-family home sales, existing townhome / condominium home sales, as well as new single-family and townhome / condo homes currently available for sale. This study also examined a selection of larger-scale rental apartment communities located in Sauk County. This study identified there is strong demand and opportunities for housing Baraboo. This study serves as a five-year outlook for what the City, developers, bankers, and the real estate community can expect in upcoming years.



City of Baraboo Strategic Plan (2022)

The [Strategic Plan](#) was created to establish a roadmap to guide city staff and elected officials towards common goals. The plan assessed the local community and economic conditions to formulate goals, objectives, and strategies that are:

- Compatible with the community’s vision;
- Financially and politically feasible;
- Visionary and innovative; and
- Implementable



Resilient Baraboo Report (2022)

The City of Baraboo received a grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop an [Economic Development Recovery and Strategic Plan](#) for the city overall and specifically the area including South Blvd. and Westside Development Area. This study also included an economic risk assessment as well as recommendations to improve the community’s economic resilience.

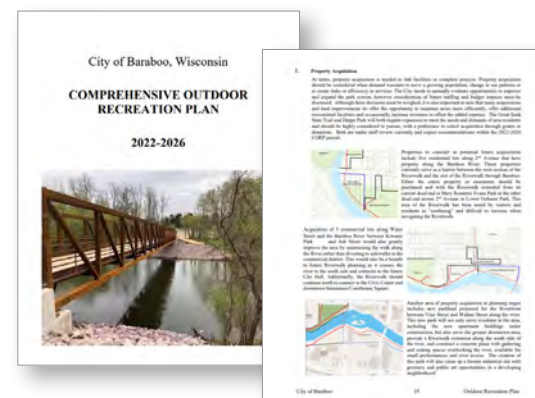


Economic Development Report (2023)

The [Economic Development Report](#) provided an overview of anticipated development in fiscal year 2023 for the City of Baraboo.

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) (2022-2026)

The [CORP](#) was created to address the task of ensuring that adequate park and recreational resources are available for both present and future residents of the City. This document also identified ways to continue to protect and enhance local park and trail areas.



1. Introduction



1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THIS PLAN

According to Wisconsin Statutes, comprehensive plans shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community. In accordance with existing and future needs, comprehensive plans will promote public health, safety, and general welfare of the entire community. Wisconsin Statutes require that zoning, official mapping, and subdivision regulations be consistent with a municipal comprehensive plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is being prepared through the guidance of the Baraboo Plan Commission, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and from public input received from the community survey, public workshop, pop-up workshops and public hearings. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a framework for the City to help guide its growth and development through the 2043 planning horizon.

To align with Wisconsin Statutes, this Comprehensive Plan includes ten chapter elements, listed on the following page and in the image to the left.

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction: Purpose and Background**, outlines the purpose and role of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the community vision that guides the Plan.
- **Chapter 2 – Community Profile**, outlines Baraboo’s rich history, its community overview, and describes its current physical, economic, and social factors.
- **Chapter 3 – Housing**, provides a summary of existing housing characteristics, identifies potential demand, and provides goals and policies for future development relative to need and demand.
- **Chapter 4 – Transportation**, discusses key findings associated with the current transportation network, including the trail system, evaluates current and future transportation needs, and establishes goals and policies for attaining a more connected network.
- **Chapter 5 – Community Facilities and Utilities**, discusses the condition of current facilities and utility systems, including water, sewer, and storm sewer systems. It evaluates current and future needs, and provides goals and policies to guide the maintenance of existing systems and to address future facility and utility needs.
- **Chapter 6 – Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources**, describes the value of agricultural lands and natural and cultural resources located within Baraboo and its surrounding area. This chapter also outlines recommendations to conserve rich agricultural land and ways to preserve natural areas and protect wildlife habitats.
- **Chapter 7 – Economic Development**, discusses the state of Baraboo’s economy (including employment, areas of specialization, and competitive advantages), and establishes goals and policies to sustain existing businesses and attract additional economic growth to support a healthy local economy, expand the tax base and create additional jobs.
- **Chapter 8 – Intergovernmental Cooperation**, describes current relationships with neighboring and overlapping governmental jurisdictions, and puts forth a set of goals and policies to guide future collaboration and coordination
- **Chapter 9 – Land Use**, identifies issues and opportunities related to growth and land use, analyzes the current land use pattern, and recommends a set of possible development principles, goals, and policies.
- **Chapter 10 – Implementation**, provides strategies and approaches to achieve goals and implement objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Introduction



WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is used throughout this Comprehensive Plan. The aim of its use is to meet current and future needs while considering the community's financial vitality, conservation of the natural assets and resources, and strategies to create long-term solutions. This Comprehensive Plan includes three main pillars of "sustainability:" environmental, financial, and long-term maintenance. When "sustainability" is used in this plan, it references these three pillars.

Environmental

Environmental sustainability focuses on the conservation and protection of natural resources and ecosystems. It involves practices that reduce pollution, conserve biodiversity, and promote the responsible use of resources. Key strategies include reducing contamination, minimizing waste, and promoting efficient energy uses (including renewable energy sources). The goal is to acknowledge and protect the natural assets that define Baraboo's character for future generations.

Financial

Financial sustainability refers to the ability to manage resources effectively to ensure long-term financial health. This involves prudent financial planning, efficient resource allocation, and the creation of economic value in a way that supports ongoing operations and growth. Financial sustainability ensures that the City, residents, businesses, and community groups can withstand economic fluctuations and continue to thrive without depleting their financial resources.

Long-term Maintenance

Long-term sustainability is the overarching goal that integrates both environmental and financial sustainability. It emphasizes the importance of planning and acting with a long-term perspective, considering the impacts of today's decisions on future generations. This involves creating policies and practices that are resilient, adaptable, and capable of addressing future challenges. Long-term sustainability aims to create a balanced community where economic growth, environmental health, and social well-being are all maintained over time. It also plans for necessary maintenance that perpetuates the life of public infrastructure and resources.



DID YOU KNOW?

Public engagement and community participation is a critical component in developing a Comprehensive Plan that truly supports the needs and visions of a community.

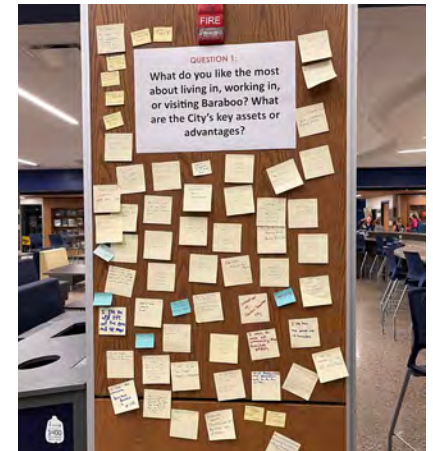


1.6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

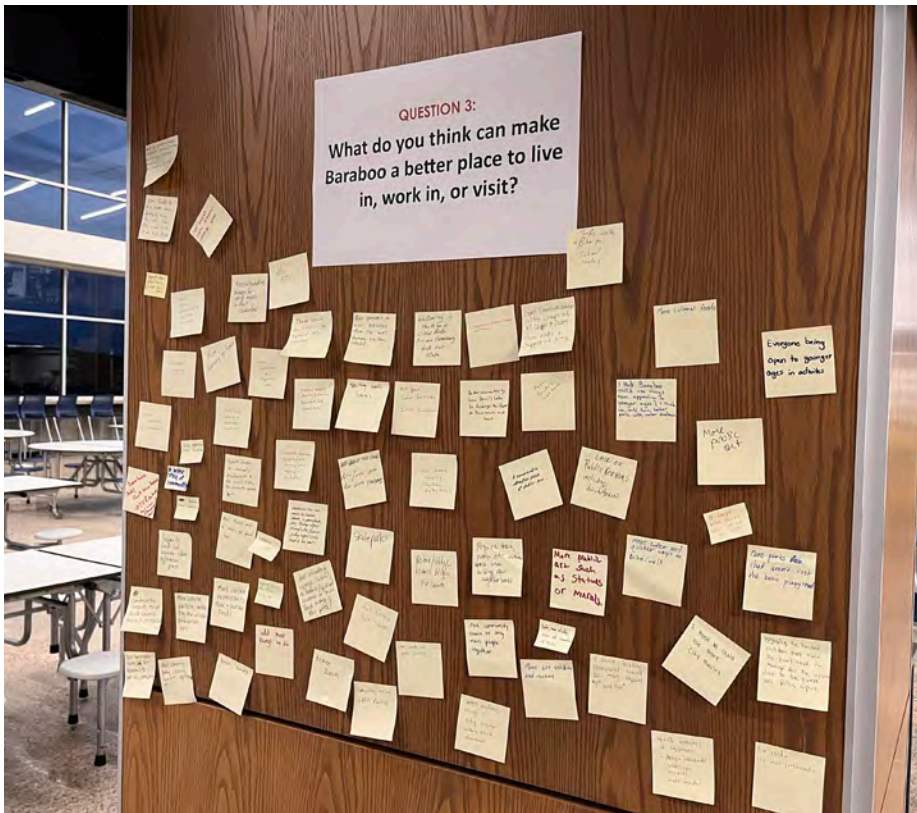
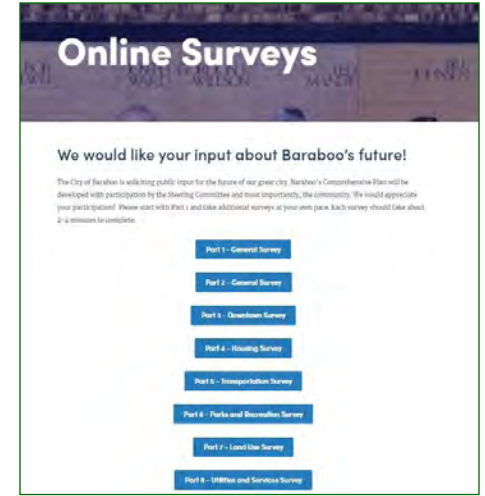
The City has been committed to a robust public involvement and outreach process that actively engages community members from a wide range of backgrounds. Engagement activities were typically hosted at events where community members were already gathering, such as community festivals and markets. The City outlined its public engagement strategy in a Public Participation Plan, which was adopted by the City Plan Commission and City Council in 2023. The adopted Public Participation Plan is found in Appendix B.

A project website for the Comprehensive Plan was developed to provide information regarding upcoming meetings and surveys, project progress, and draft chapters. The City conducted a community-wide survey, an open house public meeting, and hosted pop-up workshops at Concerts on the Square, and Night Market to gather public input. Community members identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for the City. Additionally, all City meetings related to the Comprehensive Plan were ADA accessible and open to the public.

Based on community input, the City developed goals and objectives that identify incremental steps towards achieving a vision for the future. Please reference each individual chapter to learn more about the key themes highlighted by the public for housing, transportation, public utilities, community facilities, agricultural lands, and natural and cultural resources.



1. Introduction





CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

2. Community Profile



2.1. INTRODUCTION

The Community Profile chapter is intended to serve as the Issues and Opportunities Element of the Comprehensive Plan and is designed to be the primary source of background information for the Plan. This element will be referred to throughout the document and much of the information contained in this section will be used when considering goals, objectives, and policies for the Plan.

The City of Baraboo is a picturesque and vibrant community located in Sauk County, Wisconsin. Nestled amidst the scenic Baraboo Range, this city offers residents and visitors a blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and a thriving community spirit.

Baraboo is situated approximately 40 miles northwest of the state capital, Madison, providing easy access to natural wonders like Devil's Lake State Park and Baraboo River.




2.2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic information obtained from the 2020 US Census and American Community Survey (ACS) will provide a baseline of existing conditions and projections for the future that will help inform the goals, objectives, and policies for the Comprehensive Plan.

Population Growth

The City of Baraboo had a population of 12,556 in 2020. The City saw a population increase (4.2% growth) between 2010 and 2020, which was slower compared the previous decades (16.4% between 2000 and 1990, and 12.4% between 2010 and 2000). This slow growth was consistent with Sauk County and may have been due to the impacts from the great recession (2007 to 2012).



In 2022,

12,703

people lived in Baraboo.

Looking forward, the city’s population is expected to experience steady growth over the next twenty years. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) projects that the City’s population will increase to 14,450 by 2040, an increase of 1,894 residents (15% growth) compared to the 2020 population. Table 2-1 shows population growth between 1980 and 2040.

Population projections are factors used to assess future development prospects and community facility needs. Population forecasts can be used to evaluate potential housing needs, economic conditions, and the level of demand for public facilities and services. This estimate of future growth is also valuable information for establishing management techniques in order to provide for orderly growth and development.

Figure 2-1. Population Growth (1980 - 2040)

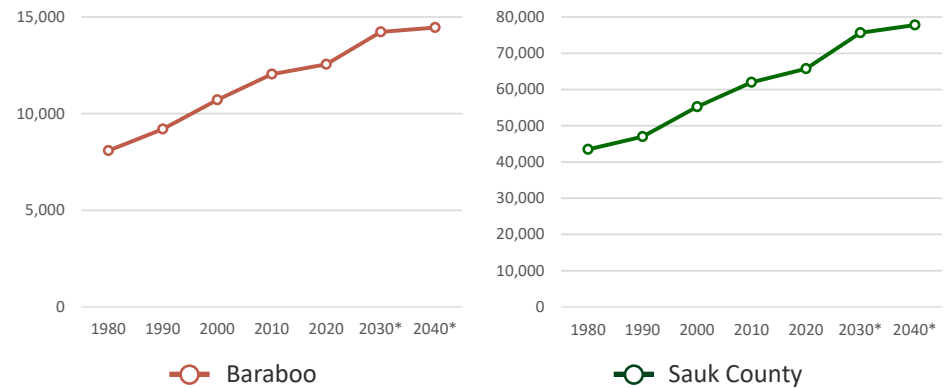


Table 2-1. Population Growth (1980 - 2040)

Year	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Pop.	% change	Pop.	% change
2040*	14,450	1.5%	77,815	2.8%
2030*	14,230	13.3%	75,660	15.0%
2020	12,556	4.2%	65,763	6.1%
2010	12,048	12.4%	61,976	12.2%
2000	10,711	16.4%	55,225	17.6%
1990	9,203	13.9%	46,975	8.1%
1980	8,081	1.9%	43,469	11.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

*These are population projections based on Wisconsin DOA, Demographic Services Center data.

2. Community Profile

Age and Sex

Understanding the age of residents in Baraboo is useful in assessing current and future community needs, including housing, employment, recreational, and commercial services. Table 2-2 shows age distributions within Baraboo and Sauk County. In 2021, Baraboo had less percentage of residents under the age of 18 (18.4%) than Sauk County (23%), and about the same percentage of residents over the age of 65 (18.2%) as Sauk County (18.4%).

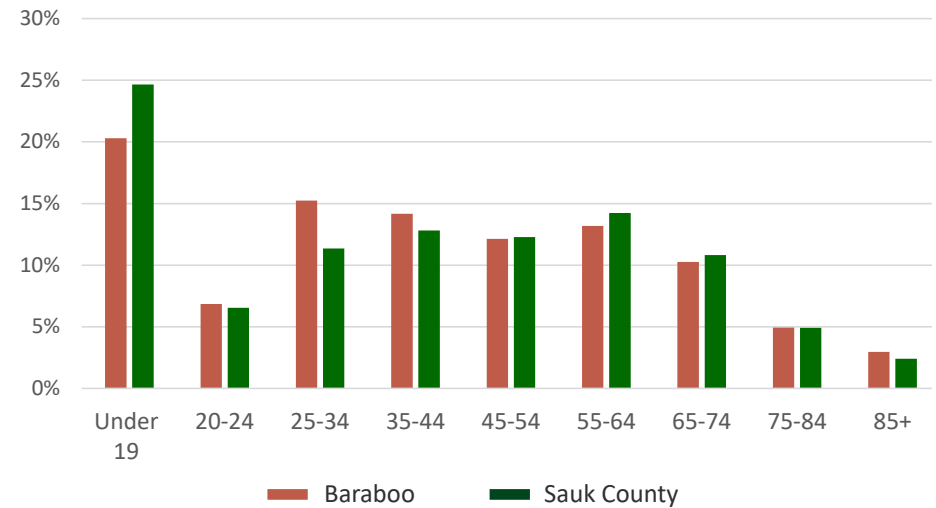
According to 2021 ACS estimates, 48.2% of the City's population was male and 51.8% was female.

Table 2-2. Age Distribution (2021)

Age	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Pop.	%	Pop.	%
Under 19	2,526	20.3%	16,374	24.7%
20-24	851	6.8%	4,338	6.5%
25-34	1,896	15.2%	7,532	11.3%
35-44	1,762	14.2%	8,506	12.8%
45-54	1,510	12.1%	8,152	12.3%
55-64	1,641	13.2%	9,453	14.2%
65-74	1,276	10.3%	7,187	10.8%
75-84	615	4.9%	3,261	4.9%
85+	369	3.0%	1,595	2.4%
Under 18	2,291	18.4%	15,021	23.0%
Over 65	2,260	18.2%	12,043	18.4%
Median Age	39	N/A	41	N/A

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2-2. Age Distribution (2021)



Ethnicity

The population of the City of Baraboo, Sauk County, and the country as a whole, are becoming increasingly diverse. The Hispanic/Latino population almost doubled between 2010 and 2020. The City should remain conscious of the diverse residents they serve and the individual needs and priorities of all population cohorts in the community.

Table 2-3. Ethnicity

Ethnicity	City of Baraboo				Sauk County			
	2010		2020		2010		2020	
	Population	Proportion	Population	Proportion	Population	Proportion	Population	Proportion
Hispanic or Latino	446	3.7%	745	5.9%	2,675	4.3%	4,050	6.2%
Black or African American alone	159	1.3%	166	1.3%	330	0.5%	578	0.9%
White alone	11,115	92.3%	10,869	86.6%	57,331	92.5%	57,868	88.0%
Asian alone	64	0.5%	123	1.0%	332	0.5%	394	0.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	98	0.8%	139	1.1%	690	1.1%	764	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone	6	0.05%	2	0.02%	13	0.02%	15	0.02%
Some other ethnicity alone	6	0.05%	29	0.2%	30	0.05%	148	0.2%
Population two or more ethnicities	152	1.3%	483	3.6%	575	0.9%	1946	3.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010 and 2020

2. Community Profile

Household Size

The average household size in the City is approximately 2.1 persons per housing unit. For Sauk County, the estimate is about 2.4 persons per housing unit. The average household size by housing tenure is located in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4. Average Household Size by Tenure (2021)

	Owner-Occupied unit	Renter-Occupied Unit
City of Baraboo	2.4	1.8
Sauk County	2.6	2.0

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household and Housing Unit Projections

Baraboo had 5,776 total housing units in 2020. This was approximately a 2.8% increase from the 2010 U.S. Census count. During that same time period, Sauk County experienced a higher rate of only 3.6% growth in the total number of housing units. However, between 2000-2020, Baraboo experienced an increase of approximately 22.2% total housing units.

Table 2-5. Number of Housing Units

	2000	2010	2020	2010 - 2020 Perc. Change
City of Baraboo	4,727	5,619	5,776	2.8%
Sauk County	24,297	29,708	30,784	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000, 2010, and 2020

By 2040, the City is projected to have an average household size of 2.1 compared to 2.6 for Sauk County, as shown in Table 2-6. Both are anticipated to decrease by approximately 7% from the 2010 average household size.

Table 2-6. Persons per Household

	2010 Census	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	2040 Projection
City of Baraboo	2.7	2.2	2.2	2.1
Sauk County	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.3

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013

Housing projections are helpful when estimating how much land will be consumed by future development. As housing units and households increase, there is an increased demand for public facilities and services. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) projects that the City of Baraboo will experience an increase of 849 households or 14.8% from the 2020 projections to the 2040 projections as shown in Table 2-7. Sauk County is expected to see an 18.8% increase during the same period.

Table 2-7. Household Projections

	2010 Census	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	2040 Projection
City of Baraboo	5,161	5,730	6,385	6,579
Sauk County	25,192	28,522	32,314	33,887

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013

Household and housing unit projections are intended to provide an estimate of the number of housing units that will be developed in future years. The City will continue to experience growth in residential development to meet market needs and to accommodate the projected increase of 194 households between 2030 and 2040.

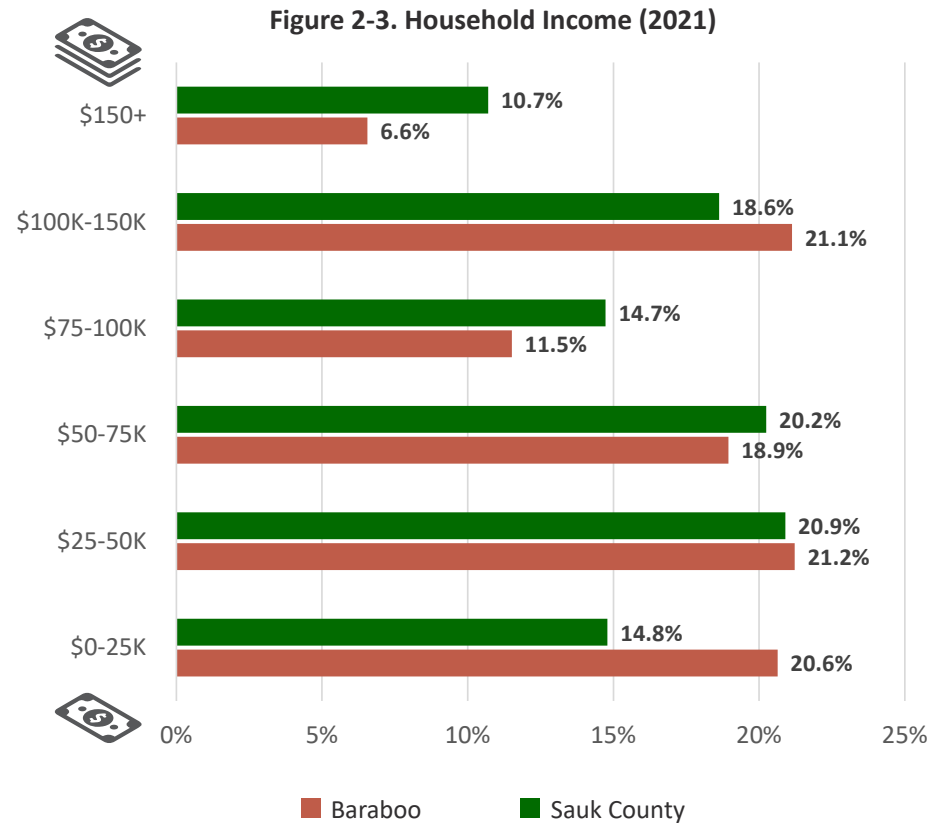
Income

In 2021, the median household income is \$60,427 in Baraboo, compared to \$67,702 for Sauk County and \$67,080 for Wisconsin. Per capita income in the City is \$33,546, compared to \$34,524 for Sauk County and \$36,754 for Wisconsin. Household income for Baraboo and Sauk County residents is detailed in Table 2-8 and Figure 2-3.

Table 2-8. Household Income (2021)

Income	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$5,000	10	0.2%	452	1.7%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	189	3.4%	490	1.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	303	5.4%	845	3.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	270	4.8%	968	3.6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	389	6.9%	1,218	4.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	548	9.7%	2,467	9.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	646	11.5%	3,144	11.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,066	18.9%	5,436	20.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	648	11.5%	3,956	14.7%
\$100,000 to \$150,000	1,189	21.1%	5,001	18.6%
\$150,000 or more	369	6.6%	2,873	10.7%
Median HH Income	\$60,427		\$67,702	
Mean HH Income	\$74,159		\$83,281	
Per Capita Income	\$33,546		\$34,524	

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Businesses along South Boulevard

2. Community Profile

Education

Education impacts cities' growth and development. It drives economic prosperity and creates a skilled labor force. Investing in education is like planting seeds for future success, and it plays a pivotal role in shaping resilient and thriving cities.

The U.S. Census Bureau provides information on educational attainment levels, which are summarized in Table 2-9. In 2021, 92.9% of Wisconsin residents 25 years and over have a high school diploma or higher level of education. Comparatively, the City of Baraboo average (90.7%) is lower than the Wisconsin average and the Sauk County average (91.8%).

The City of Baraboo and Sauk County are both below the state average in terms of bachelor's degrees or other higher education levels. Approximately 31.5% of Wisconsin residents have earned at least a bachelor's degree, while the 26.3% of City residents and 24.9% of Sauk County residents have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

Table 2-9. Educational Attainment (2021)

Highest Education	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than 9th grade	205	2.3%	1,162	2.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	631	7.0%	2,595	5.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,460	27.1%	15,128	33.1%
Some college, no degree	1,971	21.7%	9,623	21.1%
Associate degree	1,418	15.6%	5,810	12.7%
Bachelor degree	1,804	19.9%	8,051	17.6%
Graduate or professional degree	580	6.4%	3,317	7.3%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Schools

City residents are served by the Baraboo School District. The Baraboo School District has a total enrollment of 2,701 students as of 2022. The high school completion rate in the district is 94.8%.

In addition, there were approximately 216 undergraduates that attended the University of Wisconsin-Platteville at Baraboo Sauk County.

Table 2-10. District Information

District Information	Baraboo School District		
	2012 - 2013	2017 - 2018	2022 - 2023
Total Enrollment	3,094	2,995	2,701
High School Completion Rate (4 years)	91.3%	90.2%	94.8%
Average ACT Score	22.8	20.4	18.7
ACT Participant Rate	54.5%	97.0%	82.9%
Home School Enrollment	120	195	180

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Data from 2022-2023)



Baraboo High School



University of Wisconsin-Platteville at Baraboo Sauk County

2. Community Profile

Municipal Growth in Net New Construction and Equalized Value

The City of Baraboo has experienced steady growth in its total equalized value in the past eight (8) years (Figure 2-4). Between 2016 and 2022, real estate and personal property within the City increased \$368,731,600, an increase of approximately 47%, according to WI Department of Revenue data.

The largest percent of growth by land use category/real estate classification, excluding undeveloped land, occurred in the residential real estate class with an increase of over \$296 million (59.2%). Commercial real estate grew by \$66

million (28.5%) and manufacturing grew by \$78,314,200 (23.0%).

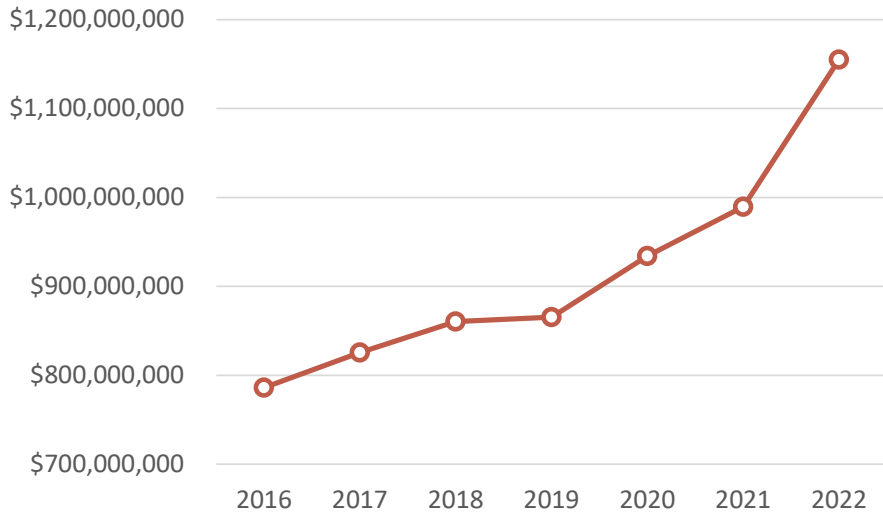
The real estate portion of the City's total equalized value is composed of several different land use types (Table 2-11). The residential class provides approximately 70% of the total equalized value in the city, which has slightly increased in the past ten years. The commercial class accounts for approximately 26.22% of the total equalized value and has declined slightly in recent years. The manufacturing class comprises only 3.68% of total equalized value in the City.

Table 2-11. City of Baraboo Real Estate Classes

Real Estate Classes	2012 Equalized Value	% of Total Real Estate	2022 Equalized Value	% of Total Real Estate	% Change 2012-2022
Residential	\$472,225,700	64.30%	\$796,347,200	70.00%	68.64%
Commercial	\$226,960,700	30.90%	\$298,291,300	26.22%	31.43%
Manufacturing	\$33,989,300	4.63%	\$41,818,200	3.68%	23.03%
Agricultural	\$228,300	0.03%	\$315,500	0.03%	38.20%
Undeveloped	\$24,300	0.00%	\$126,000	0.01%	418.52%
Forest / Ag Forest	\$165,300	0.02%	\$218,200	0.02%	32.00%
Other	\$797,400	0.11%	\$459,700	0.04%	-42.35%
Real Estate Totals	\$734,391,000	-	\$1,137,576,100	-	-
Personal Property Total	\$20,601,000	-	\$17,380,900	-	-
Aggregate Equalized Value	\$754,992,000	-	\$1,154,957,000	-	-

Source: WI Department of Revenue, Statement of Merged Equalized Values

Figure 2-4. Baraboo Aggregate Equalized Value (2016 - 2022)



Source: WI Department of Revenue, Statement of Merged Equalized Values

Equalized Value

The Equalized Value represents the estimated value of all taxable real and personal property in each taxation district, categorized by class of property, as of January 1. It is certified by the DOR on August 15 of each year. This value is calculated to ensure statewide fairness and equity in property tax distribution. It serves as the basis for the fair apportionment of school district and county levies to each municipality. The process of equalization brings all property values to a uniform level that is comparable across different jurisdictions. It involves tools such as market sales analysis, random appraisals, and local assessors' reports.

Assessed Value

The Assessed Value is the value assigned to a property by local assessors. It represents their estimation of the property's worth for taxation purposes. Local assessors evaluate properties based on factors such as physical characteristics, location, and market conditions. They consider information like recent sales, property improvements, and other relevant data. Unlike equalized values, which are calculated at the state level, assessed values are determined locally within each municipality. The assessed value serves as the basis for property tax calculations, including determining the amount of property tax owned by the property owner.

Summary

In summary, equalized value ensures consistency across jurisdictions, while assessed value reflects the local assessment of a property's worth for tax purposes. Both values play essential roles in property taxation and equitable distribution of tax burdens.

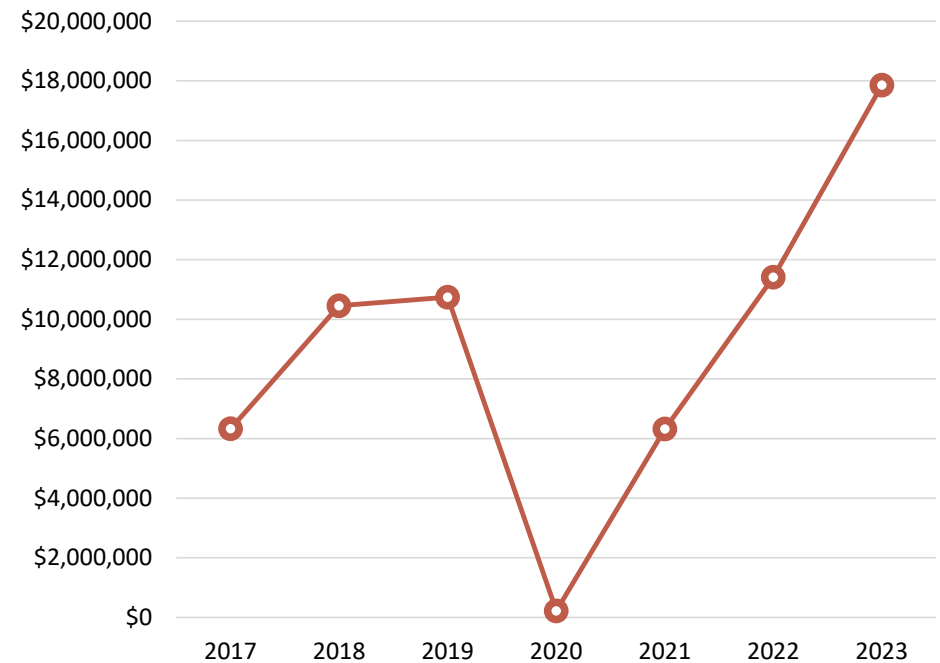
2. Community Profile



One of the factors in the growth of the City's equalized value is new construction, especially commercial construction. From 2017 to 2023, the City experienced steady growth in new construction (Figure 2-5). The COVID-19 pandemic completely halted new construction in 2020.

Over the course of seven (7) years, the average net new construction growth was higher than most surrounding communities (Table 2-12). This table reports net construction numbers that include new construction reduced by any demolition or destruction of buildings, and may include corrections to the prior year.

Figure 2-5. City of Baraboo Net New Construction Growth (2017 - 2023)



Source: WI Department of Revenue, Statement of Merged Equalized Values

Table 2-12. Net New Construction

City	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	"Average (2017-2023)"
Baraboo (City)	\$6,330,100	\$10,455,400	\$10,740,000	\$223,600	\$6,322,300	\$11,412,700	\$17,862,900	\$9,049,571
West Baraboo	\$978,500	\$1,476,400	\$1,315,400	-\$959,900	\$300,000	\$2,207,100	-\$68,300	\$749,886
Reedsburg	\$3,144,600	\$5,918,900	\$23,619,500	\$18,597,100	-\$5,066,200	\$14,540,500	\$19,857,500	\$11,515,986
Portage	\$5,680,700	\$4,577,400	\$11,275,100	\$6,494,900	\$4,610,800	\$5,521,100	\$7,119,900	\$6,468,557
Prairie Du Sac	\$6,853,700	\$3,340,500	\$8,744,200	\$3,668,900	\$5,510,800	\$7,740,300	\$6,279,200	\$6,019,657
Sauk City	\$2,052,900	\$5,146,500	\$5,352,400	\$2,443,700	\$1,941,700	\$6,528,600	\$13,692,400	\$5,308,314

Source: WI Department of Revenue

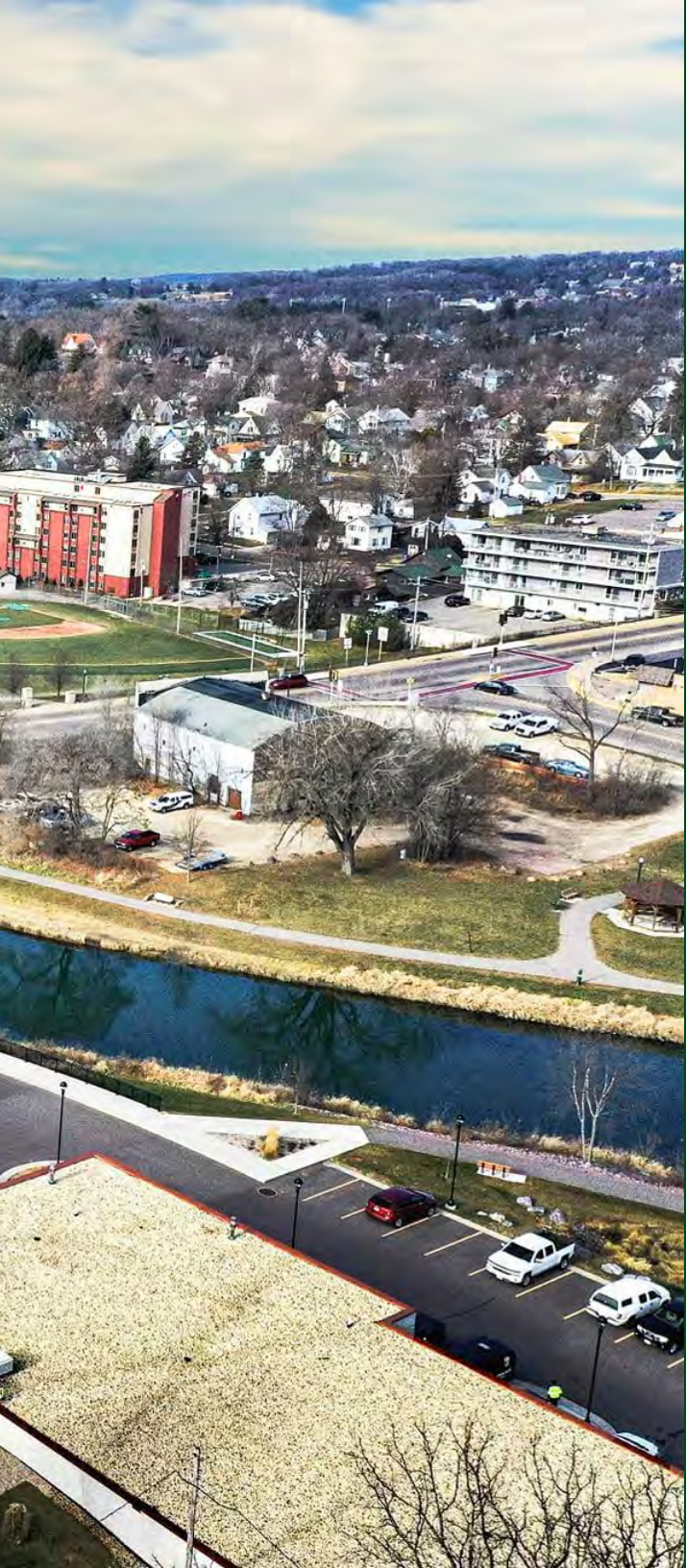
Table 2-13. Net New Construction, Percentage Change from Previous Year's Total Equalized Value

City	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	"Average (2017-2023)"
Baraboo (City)	0.81%	1.27%	1.25%	0.03%	0.68%	1.15%	1.55%	0.96%
West Baraboo	0.88%	1.27%	1.11%	-0.75%	0.24%	1.67%	-0.04%	0.63%
Reedsburg	0.56%	1.04%	3.93%	2.81%	-0.71%	2.01%	2.40%	1.72%
Portage	0.99%	0.75%	1.78%	0.36%	0.65%	0.73%	0.82%	0.87%
Prairie Du Sac	1.77%	0.83%	2.08%	0.82%	1.17%	1.48%	1.04%	1.31%
Sauk City	0.64%	1.55%	1.53%	0.65%	0.49%	1.48%	2.70%	1.29%

Source: WI Department of Revenue

2. Community Profile

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CHAPTER 3 HOUSING

3. Housing



3.1. INTRODUCTION

Housing is an essential component of a healthy and vibrant community. Providing safe and affordable housing, as well as a variety of housing types, is a common community goal. An analysis of housing conditions will help the City gain a better understanding of the changes which have occurred over the past decade. It will also provide insight into future changes that may be anticipated.

This information will create a foundation from which decisions regarding future housing development can be based. Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities provides additional demographic information.

Below is a summary of the existing housing conditions in the City of Baraboo and Sauk County.

3.2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Baraboo will gradually grow in population due to its proximity to Madison and its small-town character and natural beauty. As change and development continues, it will be important for the City to manage growth while maintaining the character of the community. Many individuals and families who choose to live in Baraboo do so because of its community character, location, quality of life, and proximity to jobs.

In 2020, the U.S. Census showed that Baraboo had 5,776 total housing units, which is a 2.8% increase in housing units compared to the 2010 Census. Approximately 5.8% of Baraboo housing units are vacant. Generally, a healthy rental vacancy rate is typically in the 6-8% range and a healthy homeowner vacancy rate is generally around 2%. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, 59.8% of all housing units were owner-occupied and 40.2% were renter-occupied. The average household size was 2.37 for owner-occupied units and 1.93 for renter-occupied units. The median value of owner-occupied homes in 2021 was \$163,000. According to the Baraboo Housing Study (2022), the average sale price for a single-family home in Baraboo was \$251,900.

Housing in Baraboo:



Many of Baraboo's downtown buildings offer housing in the upper floors



Newer high-density apartment complex overlooking the Baraboo River



Neighborhood with mixed-density, including single family homes and duplexes



Single family homes in the City's older neighborhoods



Single family homes in the City's newer residential neighborhoods



There are a variety of different multiplex home options, such as townhomes



3. Housing



Construction of new single family homes

Housing Stock Age Characteristics

The age of the local housing stock is an important component to be considered when preparing for the future. If there is a significant amount of older housing units among the housing supply, they will most likely need to be replaced, rehabilitated, or redeveloped for new development within the planning period. Planning for new housing supply requires the consideration of a number of factors including infrastructure, land availability, community utilities, and transportation routes. A variety of other public services also need to be considered in order to address community needs that are affected by new development.

Generally, homes in Baraboo show a wide distribution by age of the home, but a majority of homes were constructed in 1970 or later. Please note: the American Community Survey data shows that there were zero new housing units built in 2020 or later. However, city permit records show that approximately 337 housing units have been constructed between 2020 and 2023. For the sake of consistency, the rest of this chapter’s data will include the ACS’s data or the US Census data.

Table 3-1. Year Occupied Structure Built

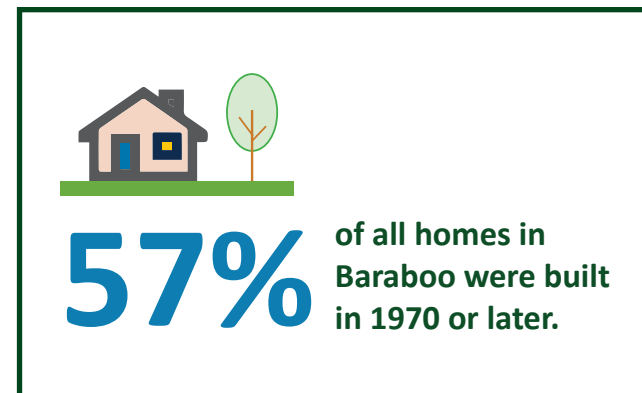
Year Structure Built	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	%
Built 2020 to 2023	337 ^A	5.4%	132 ^B	0.4%
Built 2010 to 2019	383	6.1%	2,124	6.8%
Built 2000 to 2009	830	13.2%	5,665	18.3%
Built 1990 to 1999	694	11.0%	4,435	14.3%
Built 1980 to 1989	471	7.5%	2,905	9.4%
Built 1970 to 1979	697	11.1%	3,326	10.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	296	4.7%	1,529	4.9%
Built 1950 to 1959	549	8.7%	1,722	5.5%
Built 1940 to 1949	319	5.1%	1,642	5.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	1717	27.3%	7,550	24.3%

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A: Number of homes built in Baraboo, between 2020 to 2023, was provided by the Inspection and Zoning Department

B: Number of housing units built in Sauk County only reflects available data between 2020 to 2021 based on the 2021 ACS Estimates



Occupancy and Structural Characteristics

Housing occupancy can be used as a measure of whether housing supply is adequate to meet demand. A stable housing market is one where the availability of new and existing housing units roughly matches the needs of the population. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an overall vacancy rate of 3% is considered optimal. Vacancy rates under the 3% standard may imply a tight housing market where demand exceeds supply, causing housing prices to rise. Conversely, a vacancy rate greater than 3% may indicate an over-supply of housing units, causing stagnation in housing prices.



Table 3-2. Housing Occupancy/Vacancy

2010					
	Occupied Housing Units	%	Vacant Housing Units	%	Total Number of Housing Units
City of Baraboo	5,161	91.8%	458	8.2%	5,619
Sauk County	25,192	84.8%	4,516	15.2%	29,708
2020					
	Occupied Housing Units	%	Vacant Housing Units	%	Total Number of Housing Units
City of Baraboo	5,442	94.2%	334	5.8%	5,776
Sauk County	27,094	88.0%	3,690	12.0%	30,784

Source: 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census Data

3. Housing

Table 3-3 shows that between 2010 and 2020 the percentage of owner-occupied homes in Baraboo has slightly increased, based on the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census data. The percentage of renter-occupied homes has slightly decreased from 41.1% to 40.2%. Overall, the number of occupied housing units in Baraboo has increased by 281 units.

Table 3-3. Housing Units by Tenure (2010-2020)

2010					
	Owner Occupied	%	Renter Occupied	%	Total Number of Occupied Housing Units
City of Baraboo	3,039	58.9%	2,122	41.1%	5,161
Sauk County	17,690	70.2%	7,502	29.8%	25,192
2020					
	Owner Occupied	%	Renter Occupied	%	Total Number of Occupied Housing Units
City of Baraboo	3,255	59.8%	2,187	40.2%	5,442
Sauk County	19,043	70.3%	8,051	29.7%	27,094

Source: 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census Data



Table 3-4 displays the number of units per structure in the City of Baraboo and Sauk County in 2021. The most common type of housing units in Baraboo are one-unit detached structures (54.9%), commonly referred to as single-family homes. Detached housing units are one-unit structures that are detached from any other house, with open space on all four sides. Structures are considered detached even if they have an attached garage or contain a business unit. An attached home has an exterior wall touching the home next to it and has its own private entrance, such as a townhome. The second most common type of housing units in Baraboo are multi-family buildings with 5 to 9 units (9.5%).

Table 3-4. Units in Structure (2021)

	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	%
1-unit, detached	3,272	54.9%	20,832	67.9%
1-unit, attached	377	6.3%	968	3.2%
2 units	461	7.7%	1,718	5.6%
3 or 4 units	352	5.9%	1,261	4.1%
5 to 9 units	567	9.5%	1,568	5.1%
10 to 19 units	197	3.3%	1,143	3.7%
20 or more units	386	6.5%	1,246	4.1%
Mobile home	344	5.8%	1,925	6.3%
Boat, RV, Van etc.	0	0.0%	19	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Martiny Court Apartments



Homes along 8th St (Hwy 33)

3. Housing

Housing Value Characteristics

Providing affordable housing which meets the needs of current and future City residents is an important element in planning for the future. A lack of quality affordable housing has impacts on population migration patterns, economic development, and the tax base.

An owner-occupied housing unit is a unit where the owner or co-owner lives, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. The U.S. Bureau of the Census determines value by the respondent’s estimates of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. The figures presented may differ from assessed housing values as calculated by an assessor.

In 2021, the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$163,000 in the City of Baraboo and \$195,700 in Sauk County. Over 93% of all owner-occupied units in the City were valued below \$300,000 and there were zero houses valued over \$500,000, according to the American Community Survey. The majority (55.2%) of owner-occupied units were valued between \$150,000 and \$299,999 in Baraboo. The breakout of housing values is shown in Table 3-5.



Table 3-5. Housing Value of Owner-Occupied Units (2021)

	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	2017
Less than \$50,000	304	8.7%	1,202	6.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	226	6.5%	1,560	8.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	799	22.9%	3,072	15.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1191	34.2%	4,153	21.5%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	732	21.0%	5,078	26.2%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	230	6.6%	3,281	17.0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.0%	825	4.3%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%	178	0.9%
Median (dollars)	\$163,000	-	\$195,700	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Affordability

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing which does not cost a household more than 30% of its monthly or annual income. This affordability benchmark is not an underwriting standard, and it does not address one’s ability to pay for housing. A household may choose to pay more to get the housing it needs or wants. However, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for not more than 30% of their household income.

Most City residents in owner-occupied housing with a mortgage (80.4%) pay less than 30% of their monthly household income on housing costs and 57.7% spend less than 20% of their household income on housing costs. Monthly costs by household income category are shown in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6. Owner-Occupied Housing Units WITH a Mortgage - Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (2021)

	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	2017
Less than 20.0%	1,377	57.7%	6,301	52.0%
20.0 to 24.9%	370	15.5%	1,898	15.7%
25.0 to 29.9%	173	7.2%	1,209	10.0%
30.0 to 34.9 %	68	2.8%	579	4.8%
35.0% or more	400	16.8%	2,137	17.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



DID YOU KNOW?

What is defined as affordable housing?

HUD defines affordable housing as being less than 30% of monthly or annual income.

3. Housing

Approximately 31.4% of all owner-occupied units in Baraboo do not have a mortgage. 74% of City residents living in owner-occupied housing without a mortgage pay less than 20% of their monthly household income on housing costs while 15.3% of City residents are paying more than 30% on housing costs (without a mortgage). Table 3-7 includes a full breakout of costs.

Table 3-7. Owner-Occupied Housing Units WITHOUT a Mortgage - Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (2021)

	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	2017
Less than 10.0%	456	41.7%	3,058	42.7%
10.0 to 14.9%	197	18.0%	1,270	17.7%
15.0 to 19.9%	156	14.3%	1,007	14.1%
20.0 to 24.9%	68	6.2%	527	7.4%
25.0 to 29.9%	50	4.6%	421	5.9%
30.0 to 34.9 %	4	0.4%	173	2.4%
35.0% or more	163	14.9%	705	9.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The majority of Baraboo residents in rental occupied housing (59.2%) pay less than 30% of their monthly household income on rent. 40.8% of Baraboo renters are paying 30% or more of their monthly household income on rent whereas 38.2% of Sauk County’s renters are paying 30% or more of their median household income for rent (Table 3-8).

Table 3-8. Renter-Occupied Housing - Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (2021)

	City of Baraboo		Sauk County	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	2017
Less than 15.0%	448	20.9%	1,414	20.0%
15.0 to 19.9%	249	11.6%	985	13.9%
20.0 to 24.9%	224	10.4%	949	13.4%
25.0 to 29.9%	347	16.2%	946	13.4%
30.0 to 34.9 %	211	9.8%	580	8.2%
35.0% or more	666	31.0%	2,122	30.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3.3. HOUSING DEMAND

According to the Baraboo Housing Study (2022), overall housing demand in Sauk County is expected to remain modest over the next five years but the anticipated total housing demand in Baraboo is an average of 410 units per year between 2022 and 2026. These numbers include all known, proposed, and planned (over 1,000) units that the City is aware of. This five-year estimate is based on current demand and may change with economic challenges and timing of approvals, supply chain, and financing challenges. The housing study also mentions that the majority of the for-sale housing demand will be in the \$250,000 thru \$350,000 price range.

Table 3-9. Future Demand for Housing

Organic Demand for Housing 2022-2026				
Year	Total Demand	Multi-family		
		For Rent	For Sale	Single-Family
2022	375	160	20	230
2023	400	175	25	250
2024-2026 (Avg)	425	189	30	265
Total	2,050	902	135	1,275
Average	410	180	27	255

Source: The Windward Group, Inc., Redevelopment Resources



Riverview Tower Apartments

3. Housing



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The following highlights key themes from public input regarding availability and affordability of housing in Baraboo, as well as the City's future needs.

Most survey participants (86%) own their home. And a majority of respondents (83%) live in single-family homes.

Survey responses indicated that there is need for more housing in Baraboo.

Housing needs in Baraboo:



Expand rental housing options



More single-family homes



More affordable options



77%

of respondents

Agreed that there is a need for **more homes**.



68%

of respondents

Mentioned that their **neighborhood is attractive** and reflects pride of ownership.

"We need unique and innovative housing options - small lots, porch communities that promote wellness."

"Prioritize offering truly affordable housing units that are within fair market rental values. Offering apartment complexes that provide housing for multi-levels of income vs. creating low income only buildings."

"I'd like to see City density increase, more development closer to downtown rather than urban sprawl."

"There is a lack of affordable housing for seniors."

Please reference Appendix C to see all public comments received.



3.4. FUTURE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Age and family status are closely related to housing. Typically, people live with their parents as children and then move out to rental housing as they enter young adulthood. A first-time home purchase will typically occur as they begin to form households. According to Zillow, a popular online real estate marketplace, the average age of a first-time home buyer in the United States is 36 years, which follows an average period during which Americans typically rent. The first home purchase is often followed by a move to “upgrade” housing during prime earning years. Retirement often brings yet another move. This may be to a new home, or for some older retirees, to retirement housing or nursing care.

This cycle is important to the housing market in that it creates turnover in the housing stock, freeing up properties for other buyers. Most of the homes purchased are existing homes. However, generational preferences for housing vary. The future desirability of neighborhoods and communities will be influenced by the degree to which the existing housing stock meets the desires of future home buyers. According to Zillow, the single most important characteristic for home buyers is safety, followed by living in a walkable neighborhood. As Millennials and Gen Z buyers continue to enter the housing market, housing and neighborhood preferences will continue to shift. Housing projections are useful when estimating how much land will be consumed by future development.

As housing units and residential development increases, the demand for public facilities and services will also increase. According to the housing demand projections in the Baraboo Housing Study, Baraboo will experience an increase of 2,050 housing units by 2040, a 24% increase (See Table 3-9). The heads of future households will vary by age as the population of Baraboo is relatively evenly dispersed across age groups. In the next 20 years, there

will be a demand for a variety of housing types from a wide diversity of age groups. In the future, home buyers in Baraboo may seek a range of housing types including, affordable “starter” homes, various densities of detached single-family homes, a variety of rental housing options, and senior and assisted living for Baraboo’s aging population.

Based on national trends in residential development, the lasting impacts of the 2008 housing market crash, and decreased ownership turnover, private-sector housing development has been unable to satisfy demand for mixed housing types. It is anticipated that housing supply, especially “affordable housing” supply, will continue to struggle to meet housing demand in the future. Municipalities may support development of adequate housing supply by reducing limitations set in local zoning and subdivision ordinances to all for higher density development and a greater mix of housing options.

3. Housing



DID YOU KNOW?

What is the Missing Middle Housing movement?

It is a movement to highlight the need for a variety of housing options outside of just single-family homes and large multi-family complexes. Missing middle housing can include multiplexes, cottage homes, townhomes, and more.

EXPAND HOUSING OPTIONS

The City plays an important role in making sure there is an adequate variety of housing options being built. New housing developments should accommodate different resident needs including costs, size, and type. As housing expands, residential neighborhoods should include a mix of densities and should not be dominated by low density, single-family subdivisions or by large apartment buildings. Due to zoning restrictions, many new apartment complexes are separated from surrounding neighborhoods, which isolates those residents from the broader community.

Additional housing options, both affordable and market rate, can include duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, courtyard buildings, small-scale (8-12 units) apartment buildings, and moderately priced single-family homes. Expanding these options will address the existing demand for more well-maintained housing that fits a wider range of household budgets and fulfills the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Missing Middle housing

Introducing new types of housing to the City can help address a variety of issues, including availability of housing, affordability, and ease of entry into ownership. Some of these housing types include:

- Townhomes: Also known as patio housing, these are compact, attached housing units, often sited in walkable locations and offering “no maintenance” ownership.
- “Missing Middle” Housing: Additional duplex, triplex and small-building apartment options are a way of increasing the number of living units within established neighborhoods while respecting the scale of surrounding housing.
- Courtyard homes: Small to medium sized homes surrounding a shared courtyard, as depicted above.
- Modular housing: Factory-built components assembled on a conventional single-family lot (permanent construction indistinguishable from site-built housing, and different from manufactured or mobile housing).

Expanding the variety of housing types and options in the City of Baraboo will help address current demand for housing and may attract new residents.

The following are examples of housing types to meet different needs and budgets:



Medium-density townhomes



Small lot single-family homes



Pocket neighborhoods with cottage homes



Low-density duplexes



Medium-density condominiums



High-density mixed use building

3. Housing



Downtown Housing

One of the key objectives of the Plan is to promote smart growth by encouraging development where utilities and services are already provided. Promoting and encouraging the development of downtown housing and mixed-use buildings in the downtown area is one option in accomplishing this objective. Adding housing options in the downtown area can provide several benefits, such as:

- Increased economic activity due to new residents living near local businesses and services.
- Preservation and enhancement of historic buildings.
- Increase property values and tax revenue in the downtown area.

- Provides an option for residents to live closer to their workplace or entertainment areas, which may result in reduced commute times and decreasing the environmental impact of transportation.
- Provides an increased sense of community by bringing residents closer and fostering social interaction.

Infill Development

Infill development is a planning approach that creates or expands housing options by reactivating underutilized buildings and vacant lots to better align with community needs. Infill development can serve community goals for reducing traffic congestion, maximizing use of existing infrastructure while limiting sprawl, increasing property values and tax revenue, supporting alternate transit options, encouraging sustainable development/energy conservation, and creating opportunities for housing diversity. The City should encourage new residential development on existing platted and fully serviced lots before extending urban services to new areas for residential development. The City should also support redevelopment or revitalization of older residential properties.

The City should consider creating an inventory of all vacant, developable parcels and lots; identify factors that have resulted in them remaining vacant; and develop new approaches to encourage infill development. Some communities encourage developers and property owners to consider infill development projects by offering development guides, infill development opportunity maps, courses and workshops, and other technical assistance options in order to assist local developers with infill development projects. Oftentimes economic development departments focus on attracting large scale projects in pursuit of job attractions, but focusing on promoting infill development and providing assistance to local builders, developers, or property owners should be a priority as well. This opportunity allows for building and retaining local wealth.



Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”), also known as a “carriage house” or a “granny flat,” is an additional unit of housing - with its own cooking, sleeping, and sanitation facilities - located on the same lot as a single- or two-family home. An ADU can be housed within a separate structure (typical for a carriage house, or an upper living unit of an accessory structure), or within the primary structure on the lot (as in a duplex).

Allowing the construction of ADUs on owner-occupied lots, with an appropriate sized lot, location, and building design, can accomplish several goals:

- Increase rental housing opportunities by providing an increased number of apartments available for rent.
- Increase homeownership opportunities by providing potential homeowners with an additional source of income that lowers their effective mortgage payments.
- Provide housing options for residents who no longer need a full-sized home but would like to continue to live in their neighborhood.
- Provide a housing option for extended family members.
- Offer smaller, relatively affordable homes in established neighborhoods with minimal visual impact and without adding to an area’s sprawl.

3. Housing



3.5. STRATEGIES TO REDUCE DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Given the continuing increase in borrowing, land acquisition, and construction prices, it is important to consider and employ strategies to reduce development costs while providing quality housing options for residents. The following strategies can help reduce costs with a minimum amount of public and private subsidy:

- **Selecting sites served by existing infrastructure:** Identify reasonably priced sites that already have access to public utilities and streets.
- **Planning modest-sized lots and compact neighborhoods:** Plan smaller single family lot sizes to reduce land costs and the scale of infrastructure.
- **Planning efficient streets:** Lay out streets efficiently to reduce total length of streets and associated infrastructure and build streets of appropriate widths to accommodate all anticipated uses and traffic volumes.
- **Using cost-effective home designs:** Select home plans that are more economical to build, without harming the housing’s livability and appeal. Home plans can include sizes that fit in modest-sized lots, unfinished expansion spaces, and efficient construction plans. Housing developments should consider building in volume to get a “quantity discount” to lower the cost per home.



Mixing a variety of home types on smaller lots supports affordability and provides homes that meet a range of incomes.

3.6. HOUSING PROGRAMS

Programs may be available to help provide an adequate supply of housing that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in Baraboo. Below is a partial listing of programs that are available.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities Housing Program

The Wisconsin CDBG program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, provides grants of federal funds to local governments (with a population under 50,000) for housing programs which principally benefit low to moderate income (LMI) households. These funds are primarily used for rehabilitation of housing units, homebuyer assistance, and small neighborhood public facility projects. CDBG dollars are flexible and responsive to local needs.

Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)

The Section 8 federal housing choice voucher program provides rent assistance to eligible low-income households so that family payment does not exceed 20% of annual income. Housing can include single-family homes, townhouses and apartments and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by Public Housing Agencies (PHA). A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

The LIHTC Program is the most important resource for creating affordable housing in the United States. This program was created in 1986 by the Tax Reform Act. Federal housing tax credits are awarded to developers of qualified projects. Developers then sell these credits to investors to raise capital for their projects, which reduces the debt the developer would otherwise have to borrow. A tax credit property can then offer more affordable units because the debt is lower.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

WHEDA serves Wisconsin residents and communities by working with others to provide creative financing resources and information to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness. In 2023, the State of Wisconsin approved a bipartisan housing legislation packet intended to help expand access to safe, affordable housing for working families. Except for the Home Repair and Home Rehab Loan, the City must have made changes to applicable zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, or other land development regulations to increase development density, expedite approvals, reduce impact fees, or reduce parking, building, or other development costs on or after January 1, 2023 in order for the applicant to be considered for the loan. Additionally, the City must also update the housing element of its Comprehensive Plan within the last five (5) years of the application submittal date. WHEDA is now in charge of administering the following programs:

Restore Main Street Loan – A competitive loan program that allows an owner of rental housing to apply for a loan to cover the costs to improve housing located on the second or third floors of an existing building with commercial space on the ground level.

For property owners to apply:

- All other development funding must be secured, and all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained for the main street rehabilitation and the residential housing supported by such rehabilitation.
- The development must provide affordable rents, which must remain affordable for at least 10 years following occupancy.
- The housing must be located in a building at least 40 years old that is vacant or underutilized with no significant improvements to the second or third floors within the past 20 years.
- The loan amount may not exceed \$20,000 per dwelling unit or 25% of the total housing rehabilitation project costs, whichever is less.

3. Housing

Vacancy-to-Vitality Loan Program – A competitive loan program that allows a developer to apply for a loan to help cover the cost of converting a vacant commercial building for workforce housing or senior housing. For a developer to apply:

- All other development funding must be secured, and all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained for converting vacant commercial property to housing and the commercial-to-housing conversion and the residential housing supported by such conversion.
- The development must provide affordable rents, which must remain affordable for at least 10 years following occupancy, or affordable purchase prices for the resulting housing, with affordability requirements to remain in place for 10 years after initial sale.
- The loan is to go towards the cost of converting a vacant and underutilized commercial space to residential housing.
- The housing created in the conversion must be new residential housing for rent or for sale and must consist of 16 or more dwelling units.
- Loans may be used for demolition and construction costs, up to \$1 million or 20% of the total project cost, whichever is less.

Infrastructure Access Loan – A competitive loan program that allows a residential housing developer to apply for a loan to cover the costs of installing, replacing, upgrading, or improving public infrastructure related to workforce housing or senior housing. These costs are typically covered by the developer. For a developer to apply:

- All other development funding must be secured, and all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained for the housing infrastructure and the residential housing supported by such infrastructure.
- The development must provide affordable rents, which must remain affordable for at least 10 years following occupancy, or affordable purchase prices for the resulting housing, with affordability requirements to remain in place for 10 years after initial sale.

- This program may also provide loans for additional infrastructure costs to the relevant eligible governmental unit involved in the project.
- Loan amount may not exceed 10% of the total cost of development of the residential housing and related infrastructure for a loan to a governmental unit.
- Loan amount may not exceed 20% of the total cost of development of the residential housing and related infrastructure for a loan to a developer.

Home Repair and Rehab Loan (Home R&R Loan) – A loan program that will modify the Workforce Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program administered by WHEDA. Qualified homeowners may apply for the Home R&R Loan through WHEDA’s network of participating lenders. For homeowners to apply:

- Rehabilitation must be made to a single-family residence.
- Loan applicant must occupy the home as their primary residence.
- The home must have been constructed at least 40 years prior to the date of the loan application.
- Rehabilitation can include the removal of lead paint, asbestos, mold, or other environmental contamination.
- Rehabilitation can include repairing or replacing flooring, interior walls, ceiling, or an internal plumbing system.
- The homeowner’s household annual income may not exceed 120% of the area median family income for the county in which the housing is located, adjusted for family size.
- The amount of the loan may not exceed \$50,000 or 100% of the appraised value of the residence after completion of the eligible rehabilitation, whichever is less.

Wisconsin Property Tax Deferral Loan Program (PTDL)

This state program offers loans to Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) elderly homeowners (65 years old with a spouse at least 60 years old, unless one is disabled) to help pay local property taxes so the elderly can afford to stay in their homes. The program is administered through WHEDA.

Family Care Partnership

The Family Care Partnership (Partnership) program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The Partnership is a comprehensive program of services for frail elders and adults with developmental or physical disabilities in Wisconsin. The program integrates health and long-term support services and includes home and community-based services, physician services, and all medical care. Services are delivered in the member's home or a setting of his or her choice.

USDA-Rural Development

Rural Development administers federal funds to help secure loan options to assist low-and moderate-income (LMI) families with home purchases and rehabilitation. Rural Development generally funds individuals who cannot obtain conventional financing.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF districting is a mechanism used by local government to subsidize development using the increased tax increment generated by new development within a TIF district. The increased tax increment from the new development that would traditionally be spread around to fund general improvements City wide, is instead used only to fund focused improvements within or near the TIF district for a duration of time. Improvements may include construction of roads, sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, and utilities which are usually significant costs to a developer and municipality. Such improvements further increase the assessed values of properties within and near a TIF district. TIF should be established only to support developments which would not have occurred if not for the assistance of TIF funding. If used responsibly, TIF is an excellent tool that may be used to promote economic development, redevelop blighted areas, and support affordable housing.

3. Housing



GOALS AND POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and recommended strategies for implementation of Housing in Baraboo were developed through public input and consideration of current and future trends.

Goal 1. Residential development will strengthen the City of Baraboo's economic competitiveness.

Policy 1.A. Attract developers to build the types of housing projects the City is seeking and addresses community needs. Create marketing information that communicates the City's vision for new housing areas.

Policy 1.B. Promote the development of a variety of housing types, including elder facilities, workforce housing options, multi-family, life cycle, cooperative, townhouse and accessory housing options.

Policy 1.C. Review and update the City's zoning and subdivision ordinance to eliminate unnecessary barriers for housing development.

Policy 1.D. Hold annual outreach meetings with regional developers to discuss current barriers to development & identify project opportunities in Baraboo.

Policy 1.E. Consider establishing funding strategies (i.e., TIF, local grant program) to support new and infill development.

Policy 1.F. Identify opportunities for the development of workforce housing that can easily access industrial and commercial employment areas.

Policy 1.G. New housing development should be built in locations with convenient access to community amenities, such as employment centers, commercial areas, transportation systems, schools, parks and open spaces, and public services.

Policy 1.H. New housing development should follow smart growth and infill development principles. Prioritize development in locations with existing infrastructure to reduce urban sprawl and impact on natural amenities.

Policy 1.I. Update the City's Housing Study every five years to evaluate housing needs and identify opportunities to address those needs.

Policy 1.J. Promote the downtown area as an attractive and convenient place to live. Support funding programs that aim to modernize downtown building upper floors for housing purposes.

Goal 2. Strengthen the character of Baraboo neighborhoods.

Policy 2.A. Strongly enforce property maintenance codes in Baraboo's neighborhoods.

Policy 2.B. Support housing programs that provide funding for housing maintenance and rehabilitation, reduce blight, and improve neighborhood conditions.

Policy 2.C. Continue to enforce site design controls (i.e., buffering, landscaping standards) through the City's development review process.

Policy 2.D. Establish standards guiding new housing to reflect the character of the existing neighborhood.

Policy 2.E. Protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses through effective zoning and building codes.

Policy 2.F. Update land development codes to require interconnected street systems and limit the use of cul-de-sacs.

Policy 2.G. Preserve historically significant properties within the City.

Policy 2.H. Ensure that all residential neighborhoods have convenient access to Baraboo's parks, trails, open spaces, and natural amenities.

Policy 2.I. Design new neighborhoods and improve existing ones to be well-served by sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other active transportation facilities.

Policy 2.J. Require sidewalks on both sides of newly constructed residential streets. Add sidewalks when reconstructing roadways in existing ones that do not have them currently.

Policy 2.K. Identify opportunities and funding to increase greenspaces and vegetation within existing and new neighborhoods.

Policy 2.L. Identify opportunities to acquire and rehabilitate or demolish dilapidated buildings.

Policy 2.M. Adopt standards to ensure that new housing developments are constructed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Goal 3. Increase the quantity and diversity of housing types to meet Baraboo's current and future needs.

Policy 3.A. Align City zoning and policies to support and advance a mix of housing types within each residential district. Provide a range of living options by size, type, and price within each neighborhood.

Policy 3.B. The City's prospects are heavily dependent on Baraboo's appeal as a residential location. The condition of the existing housing stock is a major factor in determining the City's long-term viability. Establish initiatives and programs that preserve the existing housing stock, promote creative reuse of vacant and under-utilized buildings, and encourage infill development.

Policy 3.C. Identify and promote sites that could attract development of new market rate rental housing.

Policy 3.D. Build medium-to-high density development at appropriate locations that are compatible with adjacent land uses and transportation network.

Policy 3.E. Reduce minimum lot area requirements for all residential areas.

3. Housing

Goal 4. Support the planning and construction of affordable housing options.

Policy 4.A. Proactively encourage the reuse and renovation of unused institutional and vacant buildings, upper floors, and underutilized properties that are compatible with residential uses.

Policy 4.B. Maintain an ordinance that limits the number of short-term rentals in neighborhoods throughout Baraboo.

Policy 4.C. Identify and promote methods for reducing upfront housing costs, such as smaller lot sizes, participation in county and state housing programs, appropriate street widths, and building in locations served by existing infrastructure.

Policy 4.D. Partner with local organizations and support affordable housing initiatives to reduce housing insecurity.

Policy 4.E. Focus on expanding the amount of local resources available to address homelessness and support permanent affordable housing. Inform residents about rental programs that can assist households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs, including the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Policy 4.F. Support and use programming (i.e., USDA Rural Development and HUD programs) to assist first time homebuyers and to attract potential residents.

Policy 4.G. Allow additional tools including community land trusts to preserve existing affordable housing.

Policy 4.H. Consider allowing accessory dwelling units as residential housing in appropriate locations.



CHAPTER 4 TRANSPORTATION

4. Transportation



4.1. INTRODUCTION

How people and goods travel within, to, and from Baraboo, is a major component of residents' daily experience, the City's economic prospects, and its economic success. Safe, efficient, cost effective, healthy, and sustainable transportation is a key goal of the Plan.

4.2. VISION

Baraboo's transportation system provides safe and efficient movement for all kinds of users - from residents and visitors who walk, bike or drive, to agriculture and industry operators who rely on the efficient movement of freight and commodities. The City supports active living and active transportation, adapts its infrastructure to an aging population, proactively maintains its existing transportation assets, and is fully integrated with road, rail, and trail networks to expand its reach and connection with people and markets.

4.3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Pedestrian Network

Walking is the most basic form of transportation. Walking is free and accessible for people through the widest range of ages, incomes, and physical abilities. It is also a foundation for individual health and well-being. Baraboo has an extensive sidewalk network, particularly near the downtown area, but some newer neighborhoods do not have sidewalks or lack sidewalk connections.

Generally, Baraboo's pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and trails) are connected or located near primary community facilities such as schools, parks, and the downtown area. In recent decades, the City installed a three mile paved trail, referred to as the Riverwalk, that follows the Baraboo River and connects nearby parks, attractions, and commercial districts to the river. The Riverwalk is a popular place for residents and visitors to walk, run, bicycle, and enjoy nature. The Riverwalk is a part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail which connects to communities across Wisconsin and other state parks and natural areas. The [Riverwalk](#) begins just west of Ochsner Park at 8th Avenue and ends at the Maxwell-Potter Conservancy on Hill Street (Figure 4-1).



Bicycle Network

Bicycling is a useful, healthful, and affordable transportation option offering mobility and connectivity for residents of all ages. In a city the size of Baraboo, it can provide a practical connection to everyday needs. Sauk County has a number of trails popular among cyclists, including Great Sauk State Trail, Mirror Lake State Park bike trails, the 400 State Trail, and Baraboo's three-mile Riverwalk. However, besides the Riverwalk, Baraboo has a limited bicycle network with few bike lanes and trails within city limits.



DID YOU KNOW?



Baraboo is a Bikeable Community

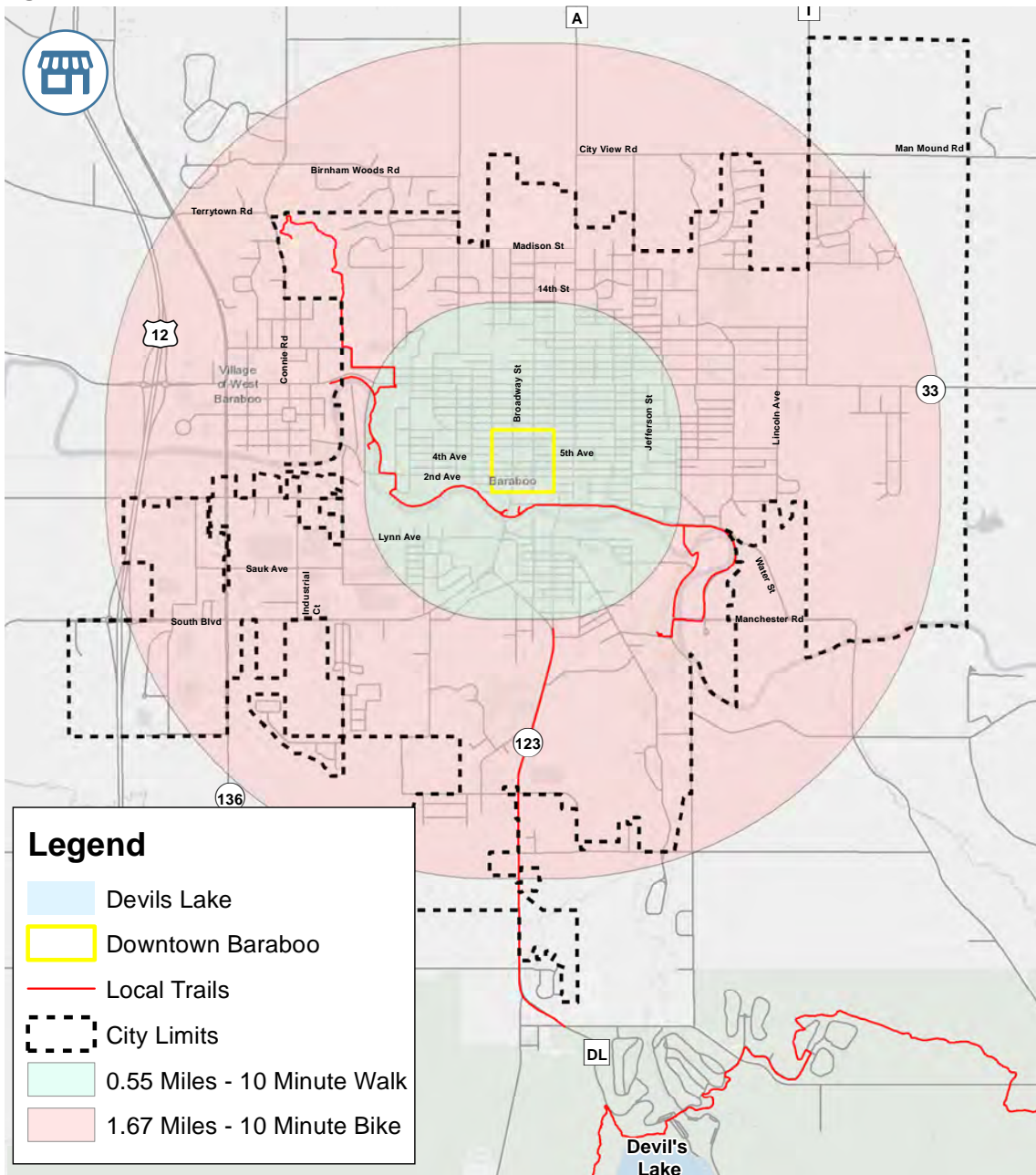
The League of American Bicyclists issued a report card for the City of Baraboo in 2018. Baraboo excelled in several areas compared to average bronze-level communities, including fewer crashes and fatalities, higher ridership, frequency of bike committee meetings, and currently having bike-friendly laws and ordinances. Key areas where Baraboo fell behind the bronze-level average were dedicated staff and funds, lack of a bike plan, and lack of events and advocacy groups.

4. Transportation



Figure 4-1. Riverwalk Trail. The three-mile paved Riverwalk follows the Baraboo River as it winds through the City. The trail offers many scenic overlooks of the river and remains a popular place for residents and visitors to walk, jog, ride bikes, and enjoy nature.

Figure 4-2. 10-Minute Walk and Bike Radius from Baraboo's Downtown



DID YOU KNOW?

A Walkable and Bikeable Community

Baraboo's compact size makes it ideally suited for growing trips by foot or bike. A 10-minute walk or bike trip is an ideal distance to access nearby services, attractions, and other destinations.

The City should continue to create pedestrian and bicycle connections to increase access to key destinations that could be within the 10-minute walk and bike radius. Improvements should be prioritized near popular destinations and community facilities, such as schools, library, and Downtown. Figure 4-2 to 4-4 show a 10-minute walk and bike radius to Baraboo's Downtown, schools, and parks.

4. Transportation

Figure 4-3. 10-Minute Walk and Bike Radius from Baraboo's Schools

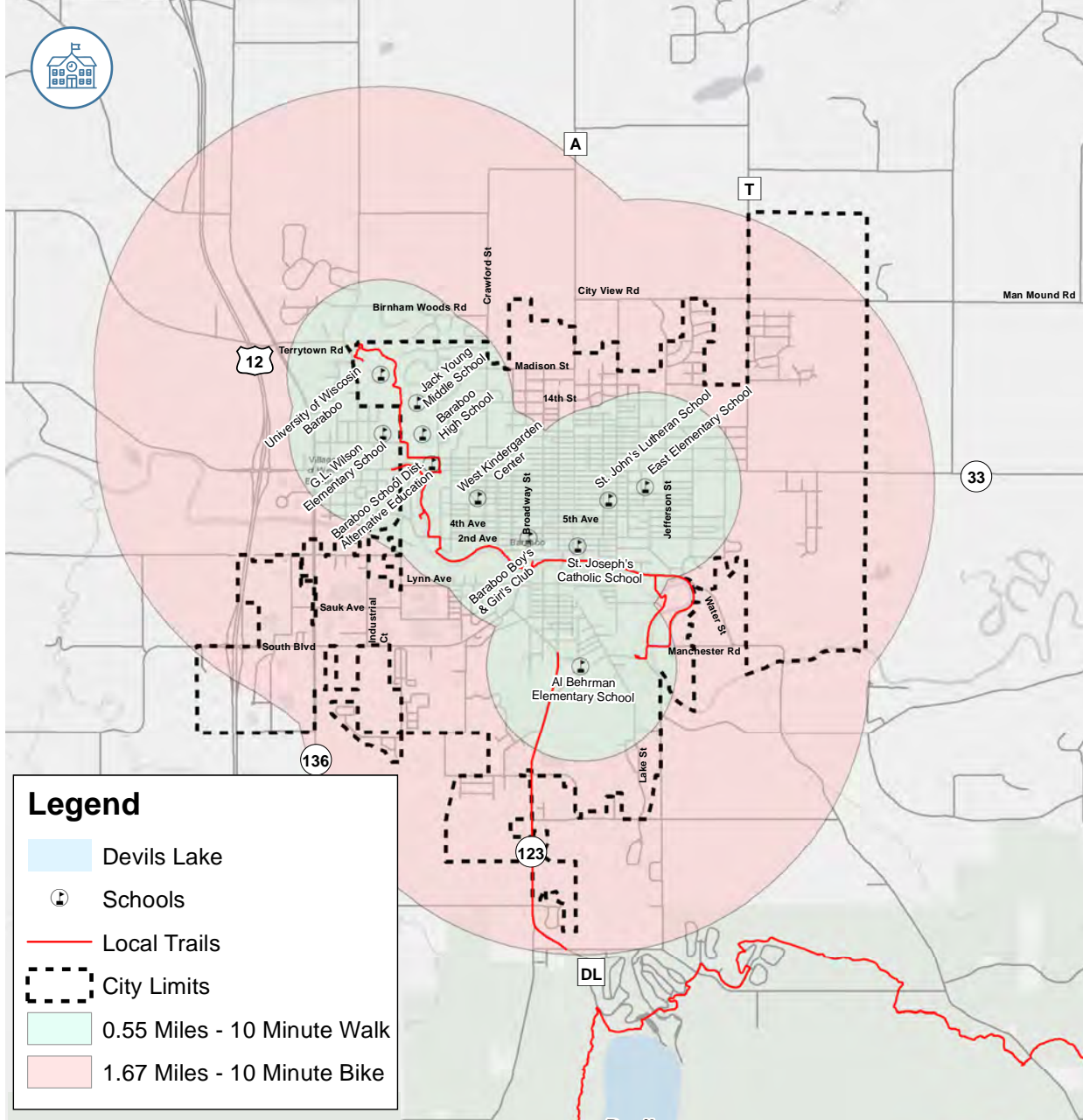
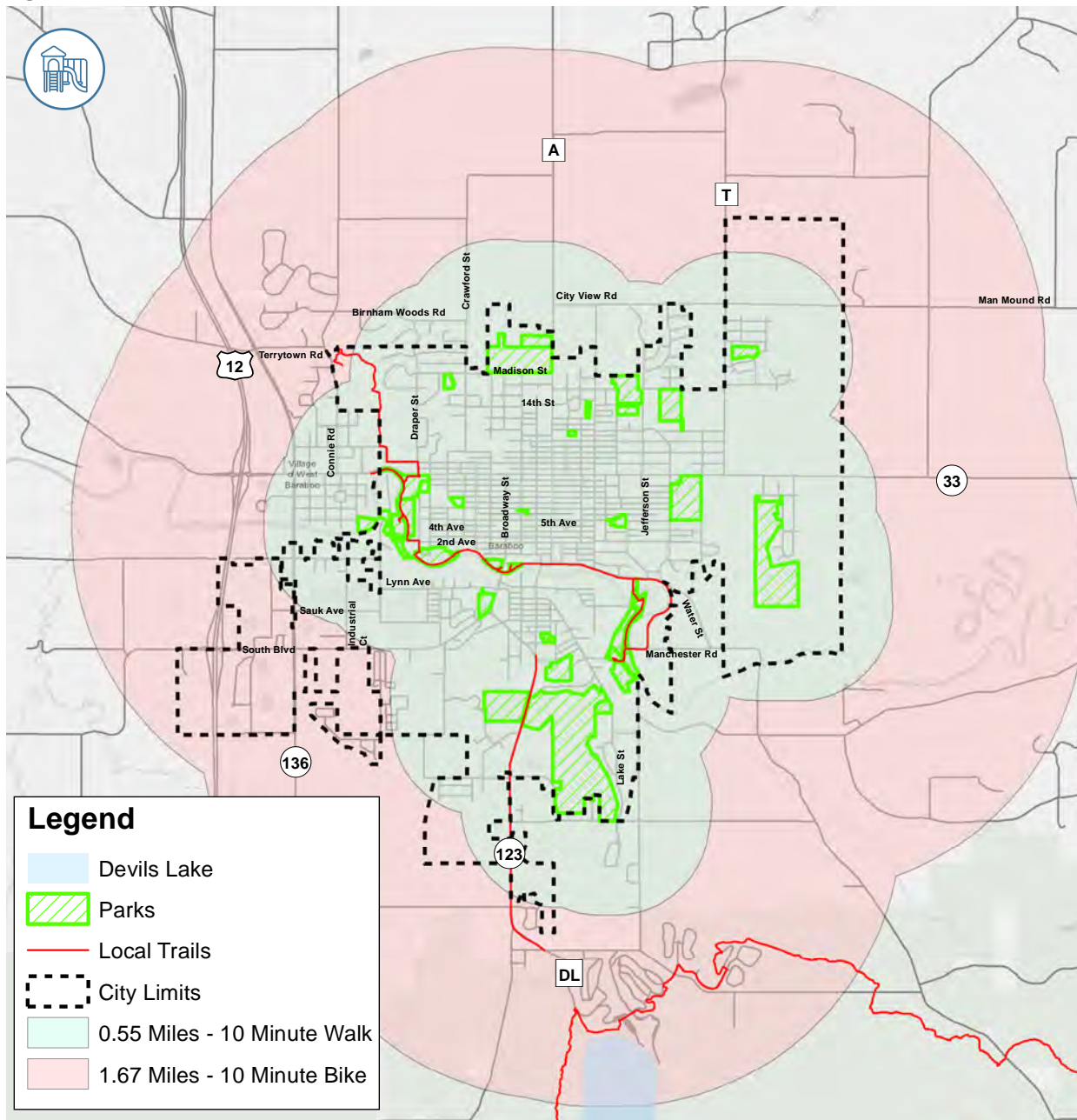
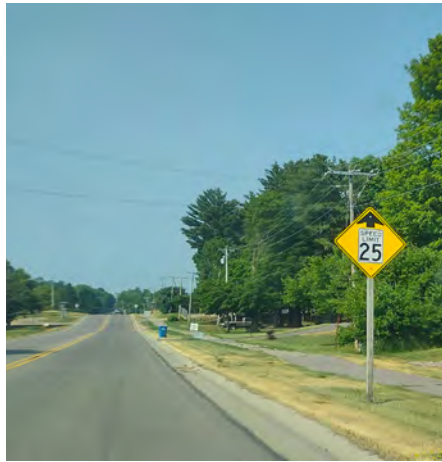


Figure 4-4. 10-Minute Walk and Bike Radius from Baraboo's Parks



4. Transportation



Roadway Network

Baraboo is well-connected to cities within the region and county which helps provide access for people and goods to and from Baraboo. Although located several miles outside of city limits, Interstate 90/94 serves as a key highway connection serving Baraboo residents, visitors, and businesses. The stretch of I-90-94 to the north of Cascade Mountain experiences nearly 44,000 vehicles each day and provides access to the Twin Cities, Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and other regional destinations.

USH 12 (within Wisconsin) extends from Genoa City, along the Illinois border near Lake Geneva, through Madison, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Eau Claire, to Hudson near the Minnesota border. USH 12 is located on the west side of Baraboo and extends north and south. Locals and visitors typically use this highway to travel to Wisconsin Dells to the north or to Madison to the south. The annual average daily traffic (AADT) for USH 12 near Baraboo is approximately 15,500 vehicles per day.

Wisconsin State Highway (WIS) 33 connects La Crosse to Port Washington and is one of the main east and west routes within Sauk County, connecting the cities of Reedsburg and Baraboo to Portage in Columbia County. This is also the main east and west connection within the city limits and experiences daily traffic counts over 12,000 in some portions of the city.

WIS 113 connects Baraboo to Madison, following the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Travelers along this route use the Merrimac Ferry to cross the Wisconsin River between Columbia and Sauk Counties. The Merrimac Ferry is both a functional regional crossing and tourist attraction. Within city limits, the route runs south from WIS 33, through downtown and along the Baraboo River to the east.

County Trunk Highways (CTH) A, T, and W connect Baraboo to surrounding towns to the north, east, and west. These County highways experience daily traffic counts of 1,500-3,500.

Baraboo’s local road network provides access to county and regional roads, while also serving as the primary access to homes, businesses, and commercial facilities. There are several key connector roads in Baraboo, including:

North/South Connectors

- Broadway Street
- Ash Street
- Walnut Street
- East Street
- Elizabeth Street
- Lake Street
- Draper Street
- Jefferson Street
- Waldo Street

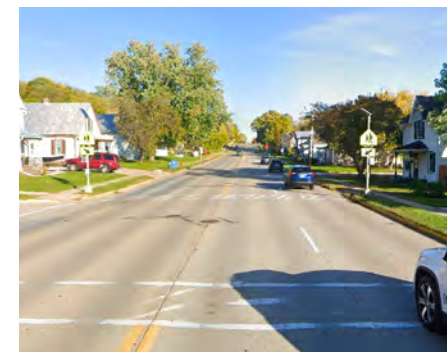
East/West Connectors

- 8th Avenue
- 2nd Street/Avenue
- Water Street
- South Boulevard
- Madison Street/Avenue
- Lynn Avenue

Traffic volumes in the City’s roadways are moderate to high for Baraboo’s population, with some roadways exceeding 12,000 motor vehicles per day. Generally, a two-lane roadway (one lane each way) is considered adequate for carrying up to 10,000 motor vehicles per day.



Broadway



8th Street/Avenue

Table 4-1. Traffic Volumes

Location	2008	2011	2014	2017	2021
USH 12 between CTH W and STH 33					15,400
CTH W between USH 12 and Industrial Ct	11,700	10,000		11,800	13,600
WIS 33 east of Hill Street	13,100	12,100	14,800	11,700	12,600
WIS 33 between Washington Ave and Lincoln Ave	14,500	7,300	7,500	8,000	9,700
WIS 33 between East St and Warren St	15,300	18,100	11,900	12,600	12,200
WIS 113 Broadway between 5th Ave and 4th Ave	11,200	8,300		7,500	6,800
Ash St between 3rd and 4th St	4,200	3,100	3,300		2,400
South Blvd between Lynn Ave and Parkway St	12,900			10,800	10,000

Source: 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

4. Transportation

Figure 4-5. Traffic Counts

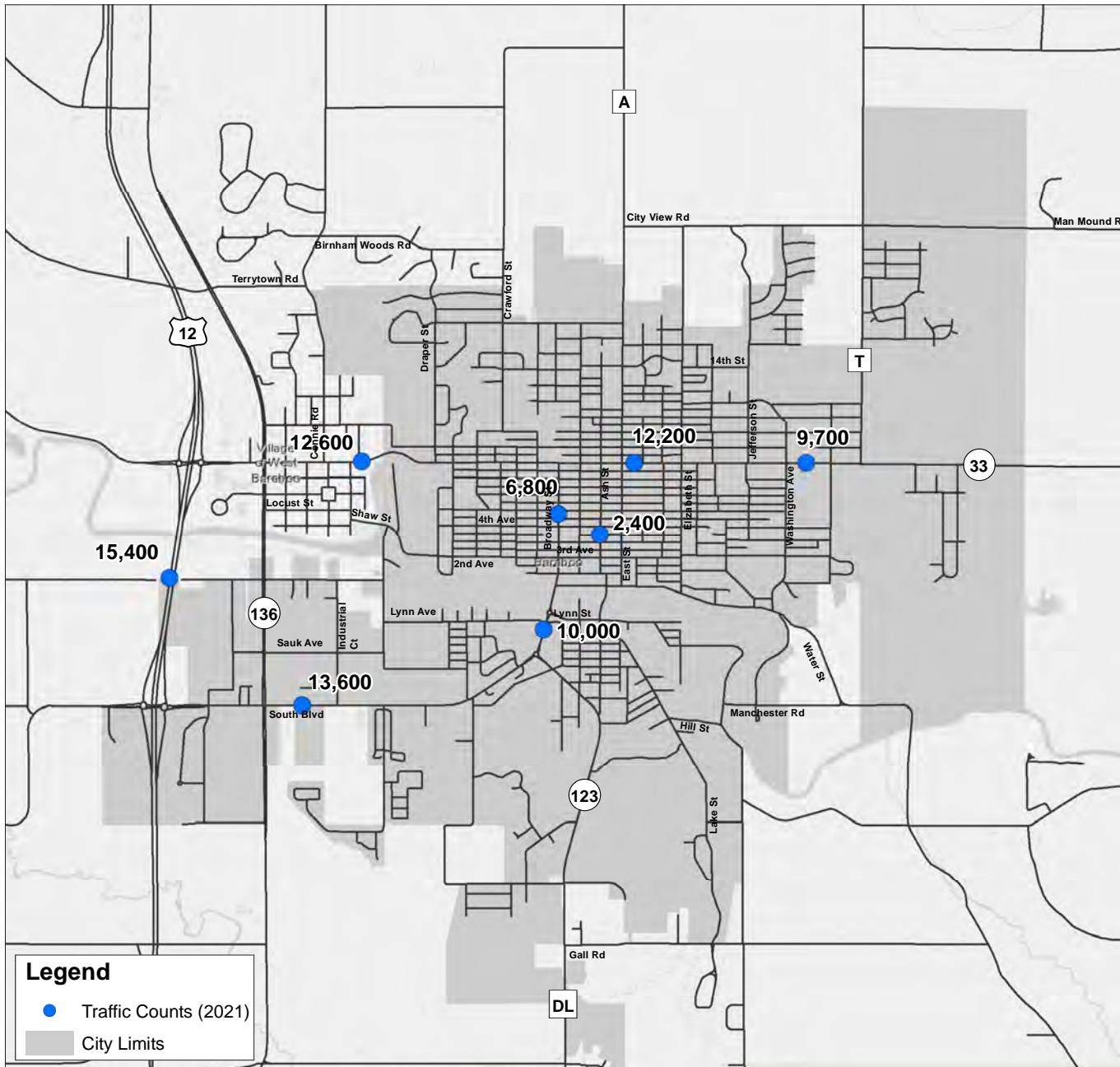
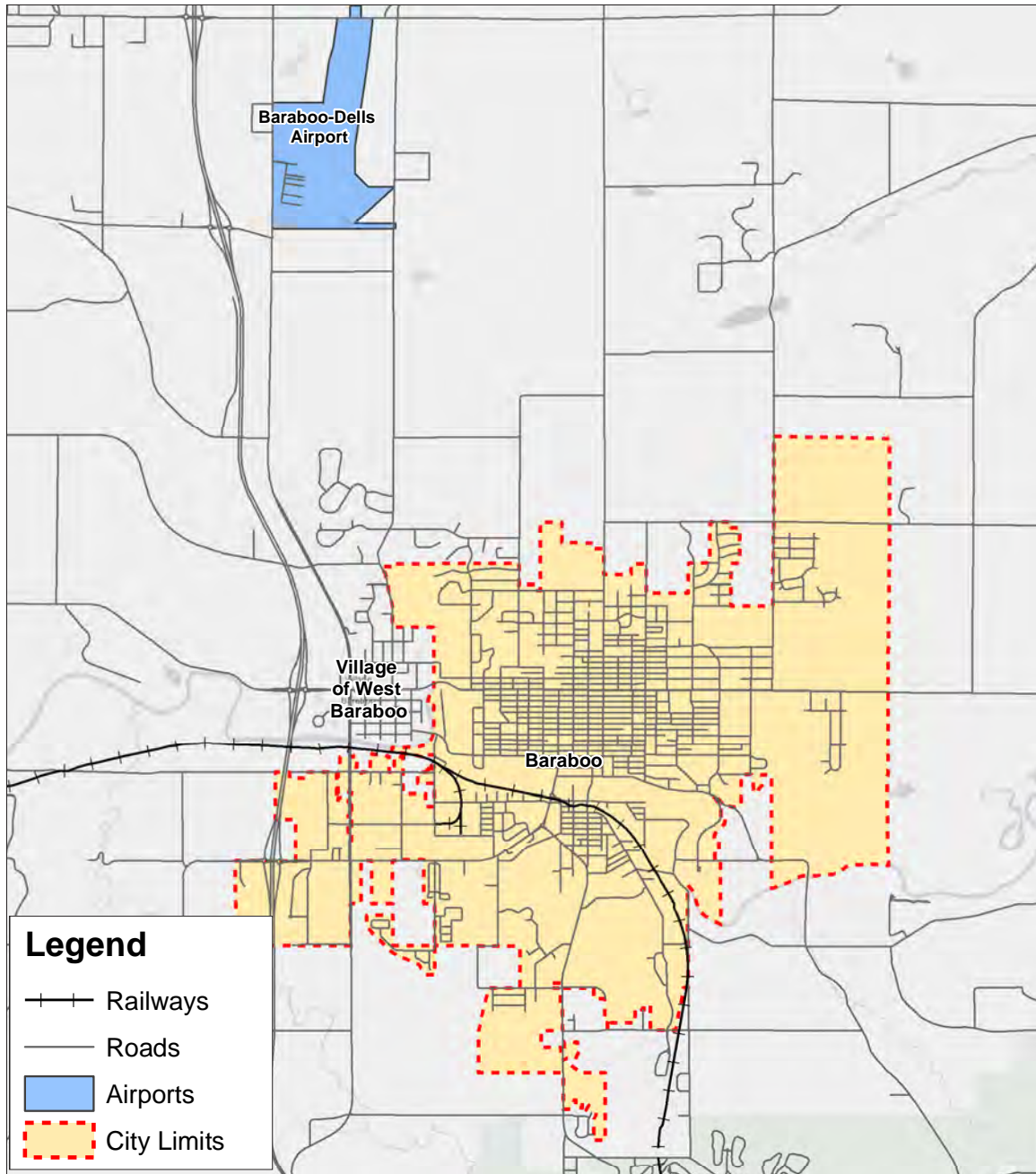
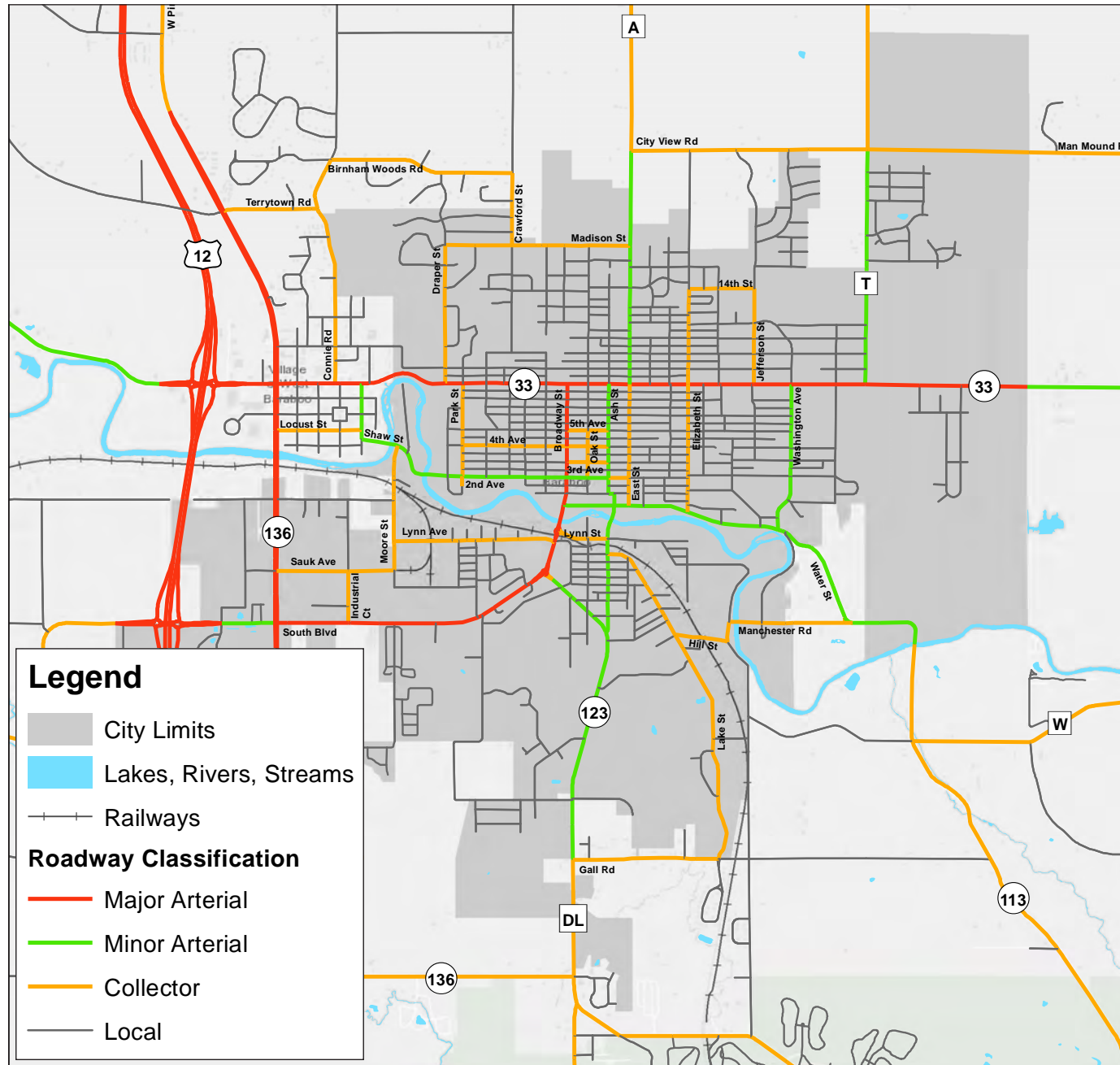


Figure 4-6. City of Baraboo Motorized Transportation Network



4. Transportation

Figure 4-7. City of Baraboo Road Types

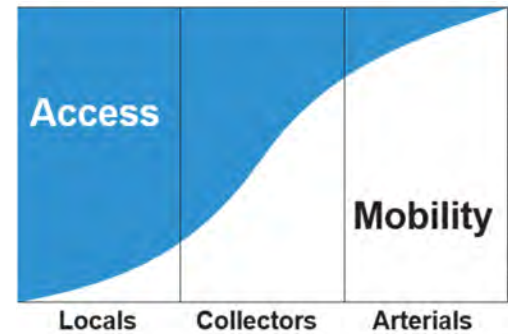


DID YOU KNOW?

Road Classifications

Functional classification is the grouping of streets and highways into categories according to the character of service they are intended to provide.

Type	Definition
Arterial	Provide mobility so people can move from one place to another quickly and safely.
Collector	Provide links between Arterial and Local Roads and balance of mobility and access safely.
Local	Provide access to homes, businesses, and other property.



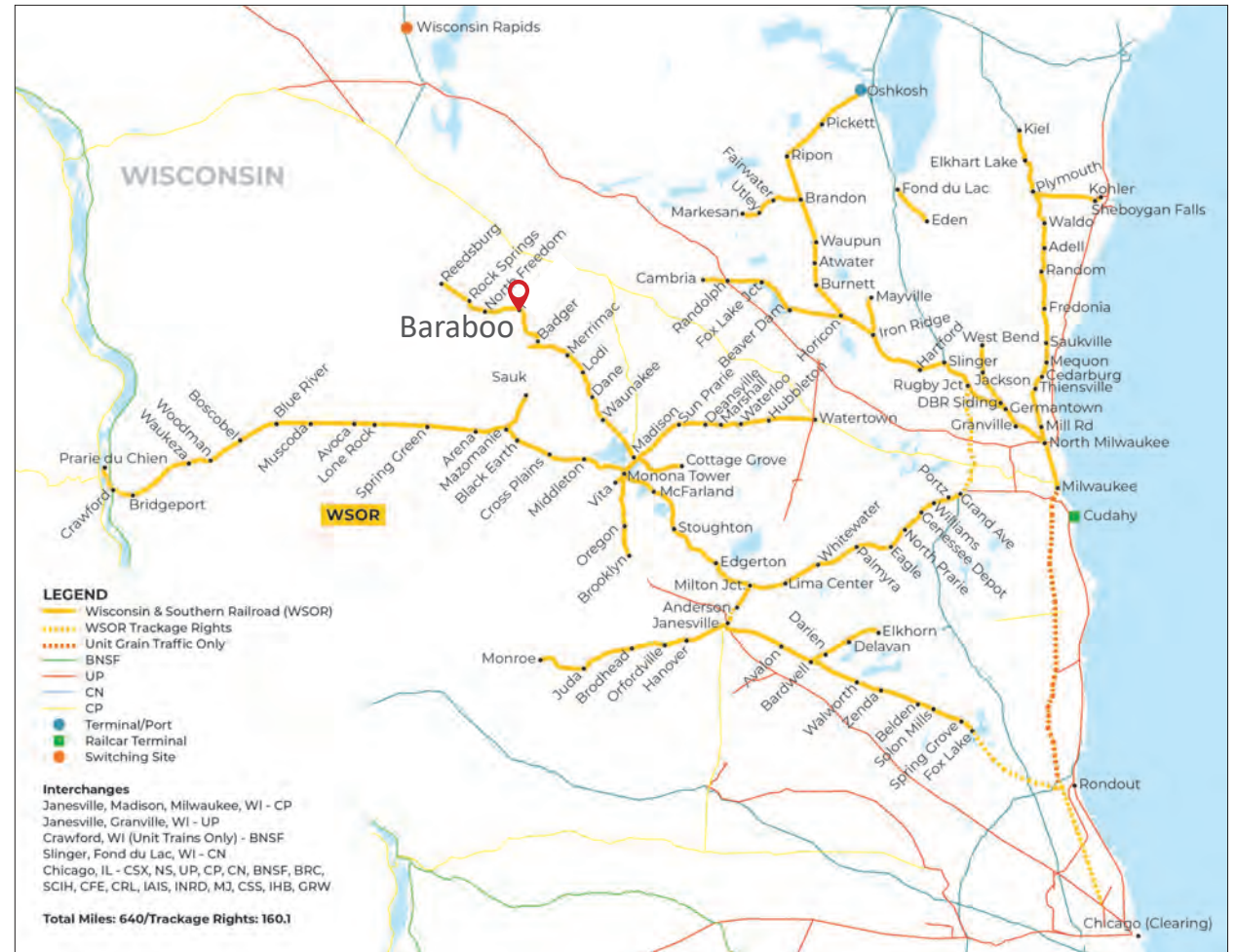
Railway Network

The Wisconsin and Southern Railway (WSOR) operates freight lines between Madison, Baraboo, and Reedsburg (Figure 4-8.). The Wisconsin and Southern Railway is a Class II regional railroad located in Southern Wisconsin and Northeastern Illinois. Other segments of the WSOR connect to four Class I railroads including BNSF, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Union Pacific. Wisconsin Dells and Portage each have an Amtrak station, along the Empire Builder line, which allows for Baraboo residents and visitors to access Amtrak passenger trains traveling daily connecting to Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago. The Wisconsin Dells station is served by the daily Empire Builder round trip and the new Great River route. The Wisconsin Dells Station ridership numbers have fluctuated in recent years with a high of 14,722 in 2019 and a low of 8,304 in 2021.

Bridges

There is one state-maintained bridge within city limits and five bridges maintained by the City of Baraboo.

Figure 4-8. Wisconsin and Southern Railway (WSOR) Network



4. Transportation

Waterway System

The Baraboo River and other waterways within the region are too shallow for water freight services. The majority of freight services provided in Baraboo are via trucks with some by rail. The nearest port is Port Milwaukee (120 miles southeast).

Transit System

The closest commercial bus transportation is available by Greyhound bus lines in the Wisconsin Dells. This bus line connects to Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Twin Cities, which can connect to a larger network of stations nationwide. There are no public passenger bus services provided in Baraboo or Sauk County. AbbyVans Inc., offers taxi services within the Baraboo and West Baraboo area.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides transportation for elderly and disabled residents. Volunteer escorts provide rides for medical services, nutritional needs, and personal business where no taxi service is available. Medical transportation is provided by county staff in a handicap accessible van. The Commission on Aging also organizes senior van trips to shopping and tourism destinations in the local area and Madison area.

Air Transportation

Located three miles north of city limits, the Baraboo-Dells Airport (KDLL) serves as the local airport. The airport is owned and managed by the Village of Lake Delton. The Dane County Regional Airport, located approximately 30 miles to the southeast of Baraboo, provides commercial passenger service to over a dozen destinations, with key connections to Chicago and the Twin Cities. Many residents in the area travel to the Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport (MKE) in Milwaukee or O'Hare Airport (ORD) in Chicago, especially for international flights.



4.5. EXISTING PLAN REVIEW

Reviewing existing plans is useful in establishing the scope of the Comprehensive plan and ensuring consistency with other local and regional planning efforts. This section summarizes the plans that were reviewed while updating the Comprehensive Plan and identifies key elements of those plans that relate to the City.

Connect 2050: Wisconsin’s Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan

Connect 2050 is a vision plan, setting an overall direction for Wisconsin’s transportation system and establishing goals and objectives that apply to all modes of transportation including roads, transit, biking, walking, rail, aviation, and water transport. The Plan creates a direction for WisDOT for implementing the development of an integrated, efficient, and safe multimodal transportation system.

WisDOT Six-Year Highway Improvement Program

The state maintains a Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan which identifies state and federal highway projects for the next six years. The projects change frequently and updates are made monthly. The 2023-2028 program listing indicates the following project in or near Baraboo city limits:

Year	Highway	Project Title	Project Limit	Project Description
2024	WIS 33	C Baraboo, Eighth Street	West City Limit to Lincoln Avenue	Construction/ Pavement Replacement
	WIS 33	C Baraboo, Eighth Street	West City Limit to Lincoln Avenue	Construction/ Sanitary Sewer and Water Main
2026	WIS 113	Lodi – Baraboo	STH 78 to Mound Street	Construction/ Mill and Overlay
2027	WIS 136	Reedsburg – Baraboo	Baraboo River Retaining Wall	Construction/Misc.
2028	USH 12	Baraboo – Sauk City	Bridges B-56-207, 208, 211, 212	Construction/ Bridge Preventive
	WIS 136	Reedsburg – Baraboo	Skillet Creek Road to North Junction CTH DL	Construction/ Pavement Replacement

Highway 12 Corridor Growth Management Plan (2003)

The US Highway 12 Corridor Growth Management Plan provides an overall vision and detailed recommendations for the 24-mile USH 12 corridor in Sauk County. The Plan identifies areas for growth and seeks to preserve natural areas and farms, protect community appearance and views, promote appropriate economic development, and make the most of transportation improvements. The Plan recommended the USH 12 realignment in Baraboo.

WISLR

WISLR is a program that assists local governments with maintaining inventory on the conditions of the roads and compliance with the Statutes to submit a pavement condition every two years. This program helps the City plan for roadway improvements.

4. Transportation



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

The community was asked about the way they travel, barriers to transportation they experience, and improvements they would like to see.

Responses indicated a support for adding more on-street and off-street bicycle facilities, including bike lanes and trails. Community input also showed support (90% said yes) for building sidewalks along new developments in the City.



70%
of respondents

mentioned they **feel safe using existing sidewalks and trails** in the City.



ONLY 30%
of respondents

mentioned they **feel safe using existing bicycle facilities** in the City.

Public input highlighted a desire to allow ATV and UTV access on local roads throughout the City.

Input also highlighted a need for public transportation or rideshare service that travels within the City of Baraboo and to nearby communities.

Baraboo's top transportation goals for the next five years



Add more bike lanes/trails



Maintain existing roads and infrastructure

"A top priority should be to maintain our existing roads."

"Any new development of roads, houses, businesses should include sidewalks and bike lanes on the road, or off road bike pathways that respect both pedestrian and bicycle users."

"The City should explore the viability of a small bus service connecting neighborhoods and popular destinations (hospital, downtown, university, grocery, etc.)."

4.6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSIDERATION



Expand Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

There is currently an opportunity within the City to address community desires to improve bicycle facilities, provide access to downtown and area schools, connect to existing trails, and use these assets as a backbone for a high-quality network of transportation routes. A functional and connected multimodal transportation network will connect residents to schools, parks, businesses, and other destinations, while also attracting bicycle tourists, and enhancing quality of life year-round.

Good design and a commitment from adjacent municipalities are essential ingredients to creating a robust network. Studies show that the younger generations are content to not own a personal vehicle and prefer to live in a location where they are able to walk, bike, and utilize public transportation for many of their daily needs. Increased use of multimodal transportation provides many community-wide benefits. Walking and biking play a large role in improving overall public health. Increased use among alternative modes of transportation decreases use of vehicular infrastructure, improving its lifespan and reducing potential need for expanded facilities in the future.

Increased accommodations have been made for pedestrians and bicyclists in recent years. The City should continue to identify network gaps and barriers to improve access and safety to key destinations. Improvements to the active transportation network can include:

- High visibility crossings with signage
- Street amenities (e.g., wayfinding, lighting, benches, landscaping, etc.)
- Bicycle parking and repair stations
- Off-street and on-street bicycle lanes
- Trails and shared-use paths
- Sidewalks in neighborhoods and popular destinations



The Riverwalk Trail provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, as well as walking and biking access to local businesses and neighborhoods.



Marked crosswalks increase visibility for pedestrians.

4. Transportation



Make Streets for all Users

When reviewing new plats or site plans for new or redevelopment projects, the City should consider the [Congress for the New Urbanism Sustainable Street Network principles](#) when designing new street networks to create a safe, sustainable transportation system for all users. The principles reflect the belief that the street network provides the setting for commerce and social interaction, and that construction, operation, and maintenance of the street network is primarily to serve people and society. Those principles include:

1. **Create a street network that supports communities and places. Street networks are not just about transportation and infrastructure, but also about the movement of people, goods, ideas, and wealth.**
2. **Create a street network that attracts and sustains economic activity. Sustainable street networks are magnets for business, light industry, jobs, and economic opportunities. They support a robust mix of culture and commerce.**
3. **Maximize transportation choice. All people should be able to travel within their community in a safe, dignified, and efficient manner.**
4. **Integrate the street network with natural systems at all scales. A sustainable street network respects, protects and enhances the natural features and ecological systems of its urban environment.**
5. **Respect the existing natural and built environment. The scale and orientation of streets in the network celebrate the unique local and regional characteristics of the natural and built environment.**
6. **Emphasize walking as the fundamental unit of the street network. Our most valued urban places are principally designed for the use and enjoyment of people on foot.**
7. **Create harmony with other transportation networks. The street network is a foundation for the design and evolution of other transportation systems, including highways, rail, freight, and air travel.**

Applying Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is a planning and design approach to provide safe facilities for a variety of transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. Complete streets consider the needs of people of all ages and abilities. This approach also provides a variety of economic benefits for businesses and local economies; places with higher levels of walking and biking are also more desirable places to live.

The City should apply a Complete Streets approach to roadways that connect to major community destinations. New developments and improvements to existing neighborhoods should include accessible, safe, and attractive pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure. These efforts should support Safe Routes to School Programs and investments to provide safe facilities for youth.





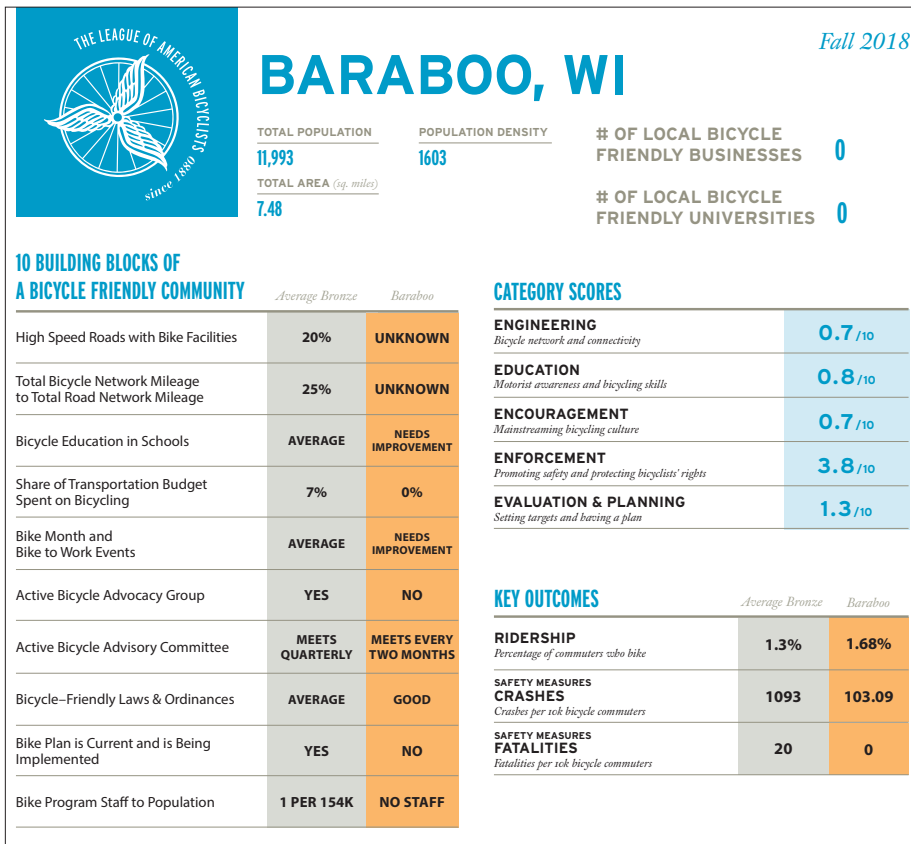
WHAT WE HEARD

Keeping Baraboo Pedestrian-friendly

Over 90% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all new subdivisions shall require sidewalks or a similar pedestrian facility to increase and enhance walkability in Baraboo.

In addition to adding pedestrian facilities, providing more bicycle facilities is also seen as a key opportunity. The Driftless Region is a popular tourist destination among experienced riders. Providing a few connections to the downtown area could benefit local businesses. Safe options for bicycle traffic should be evaluated and on-street improvements such as lane marking should be considered. Many Wisconsin communities have adopted bicycle and pedestrian plans to further explore opportunities for enhancing pedestrian and bicycle networks. Baraboo should consider adopting a plan that identifies future projects to add off-street bike trails, bike lanes, and shared bike lanes.

A map (Figure 4-9.) identifying areas with Potential Future Transportation Opportunities for planning and future investment was developed from public and project Steering Committee feedback.

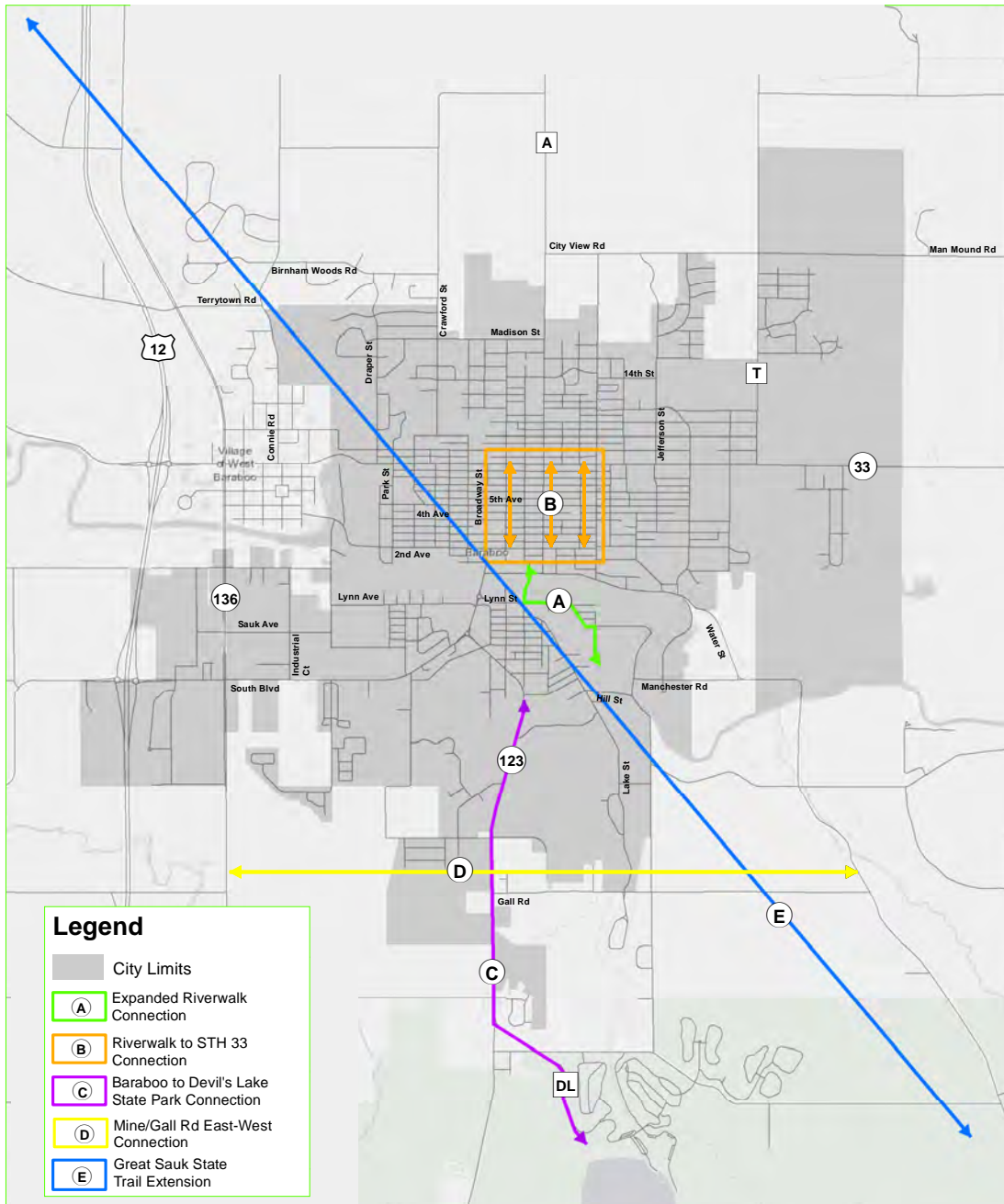


Roundabouts in Baraboo provide access for multiple modes of transportation.

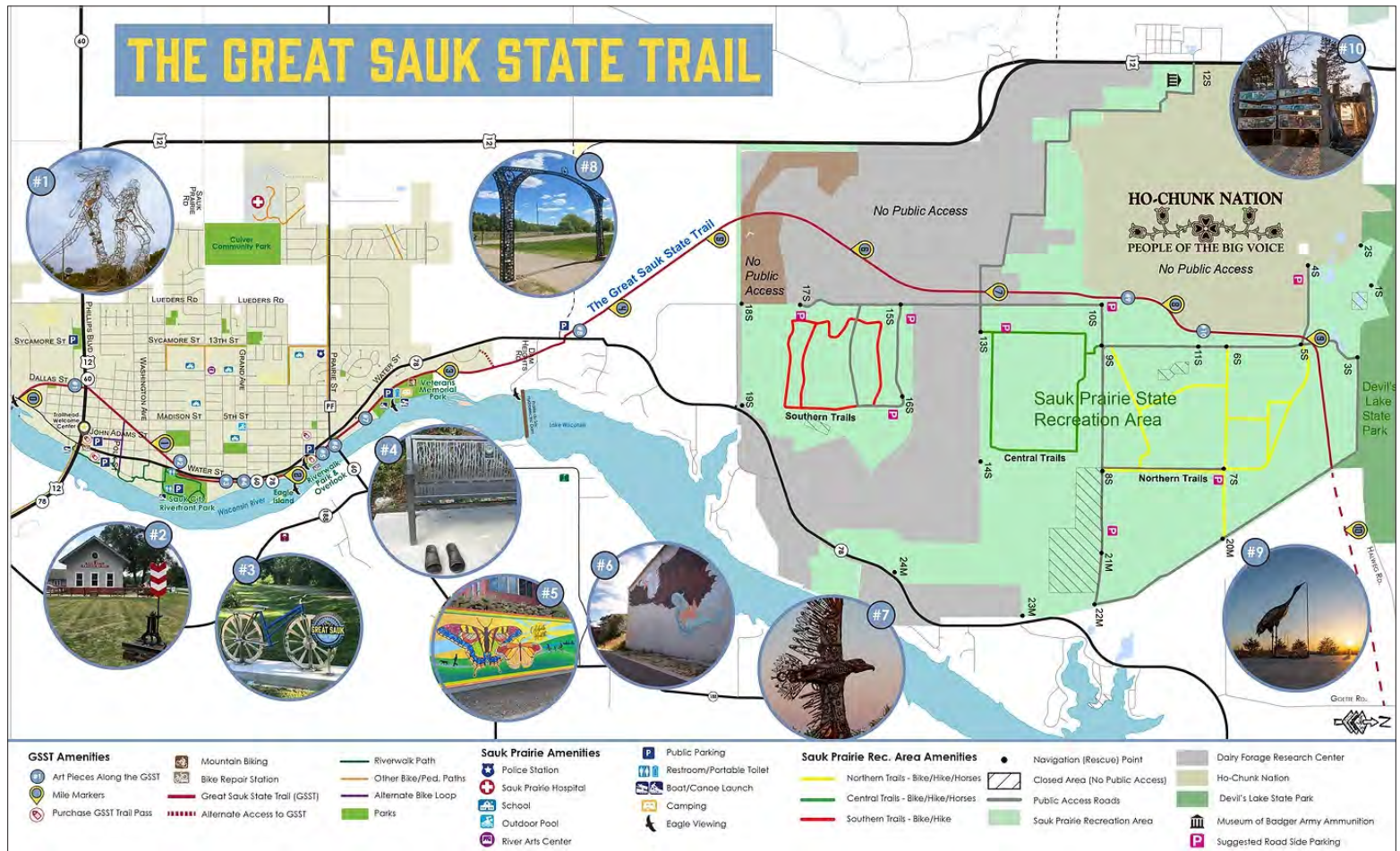
Baraboo's Bicycle Report Card (2018) from the League of American Bicyclists

4. Transportation

Figure 4-9. Potential Future Transportation Opportunities



- A** Expand the Riverwalk Trail to south of the Baraboo River to create a mini-loop.
- B** Consider pedestrian and/or bicycle facility enhancements to improve connectivity and accessibility to the Riverwalk from STH 33. Some potential corridors to consider include: Broadway Street, Ash Street, and Birch Street.
- C** Enhance and maintain the trail connection to Devil's Lake State Park. The trail can be expanded and consider including wayfinding signage, benches, and other elements to enhance the trail.
- D** Explore future east and west connection in between WIS 136, Walnut Street, and WIS 113 as the city's boundary expands south. Consider extending and enhancing Mine Road and/or Gall Road.
- E** Seek funding to build a connection to the The Great Sauk State Trail. The existing trail is currently located to the south of Devil's Lake State Park and is expected to connect to the 400 State Trail in Reedsburg.



Great Sauk State Trail

The [Great Sauk State Trail](#) was established in 2017 and parallels the Wisconsin River through Prairie du Sac, Sauk City, and through the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. This trail was built on a former Union Pacific rail corridor. The existing trail is approximately 10.5 miles long and is paved with asphalt. Planning efforts are currently underway to eventually expand the trail to connect to Devil's Lake State Park, local communities, and connect to the 400 State Trail in Reedsburg and the Elroy-Sparta Trail in La Valle. The trail is planned to extend to the south to connect to the future Walking Iron Trail and other Dane County trail systems via a bridge over the Wisconsin River.

Sauk County is currently partnering with a planning consultation firm that is in charge of the planning and routing process of the trail. Sauk County and the consulting firm worked with local residents and governments to continue this trail development in 2023 and 2024. The City of Baraboo should continue to advocate for the trail development and identify potential route options that provide a connection into Baraboo and to existing trails and key destinations.

4. Transportation

Wayfinding

A comprehensive and user-friendly wayfinding system is a key component of successful pedestrian and bicycle networks. The City is well positioned to implement a working wayfinding system quickly and inexpensively.

Wayfinding elements include signs, markings, maps, and informational kiosks. These elements help make bicycle networks easier to understand and encourage residents and visitors to use the walking and biking facilities when traveling to local destinations. A cohesive wayfinding system will help establish trails and bikeways as a key part of the community's identity. This system will also work toward creating a brand for the City that can be used to attract visitors to the community.



ATV / UTV

An all-terrain vehicle (ATV) is a four-wheeled off-road vehicle with straddle / motorcycle-style seating and handlebar steering. A Utility-task vehicle (UTV), also called a Side-by-Side (SxS), boasts four to six wheels and bench or bucket seating with seatbelts for up to six passengers.

Many survey respondents urged the City to consider allowing ATV's and UTV's within city limits. The City now allows the use under specific conditions.

This is a trend that is becoming increasingly popular in smaller Wisconsin cities and counties. Wisconsin cities and counties may enact an ordinance to designate a state highway or connecting highway as an ATV route. ATV operation is only allowed if the WisDOT approves the route. Cities may also authorize the operation of ATV's on a state highway that has a speed limit of 35 mph or less and is located within city limits, regardless of highway jurisdiction. In this case, ATV operation on a state highway is not subject to WisDOT approval.

Sauk County has ATV and UTV Trail Crossings and Routes on Highways ordinance (Chapter 15 of Sauk County Code of Ordinances). All Sauk County Highways are open for ATV / UTV use and any individual, municipality, ATV or UTV Club or organization may apply for an ATV / UTV route designation along a county trunk highway if they agree to sponsor the ATV / UTV route.



Increase East and West Connections

The lack of quality east and west connections has been identified as a concern for residents and businesses. 8th Street (WIS 33) serves as the main east and west connections and serves over 10,000 vehicles per day.

The City should consider creating a street plan to identify future connections as the City grows and focuses on providing quality east and west connections. One potential future east and west connection to consider is Mine Road or Gall Road, which has the potential to connect Walnut Street to WIS 136 to the west. Portions of these roads are not currently located within city limits, but if growth continues to the south, this connection will provide better access to commercial areas, jobs, and to USH 12.



Increase east and west connections.



4.7. POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION

Several loan and grant funding programs may be available to help the City fund municipal infrastructure projects, including the following:

Federal or State Programs

- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – Program to fund low-cost safety improvements that can be implemented quickly. The overall objective of HSIP is to develop and implement, on a continuing basis, stand-alone safety projects designed to reduce the number and severity of crashes on all streets and highways (state and local). The federal funding ratio for HSIP funds is usually 90%, requiring a 10% match of state and/or local funds.
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program – Program to assist with funding bridges not on state trunk highways or connecting highways with sufficiency ratings of 80 or less.
- Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) – Program for deteriorating highways, town roads, and city/town streets. LRIP is a reimbursement program which pays up to 50% of total eligible costs, with local governments providing the balance. LRIP projects are awarded every two years.
- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STP-R) – The STP-R allocates federal funds to complete a variety of improvements to rural highways (primarily county highways). The objective of STP-R, is to improve federal aid eligible highways outside of urban areas and communities are eligible for funding on roads classified as major collectors or higher.
- Surface Transportation Program – Local (STP-L) – Beginning in 2024, the STP-L allocated federal funds to complete a variety of improvements to off-system roadways functionally classified as a rural minor collector or local road. The objective of STP-L is to improve non-federal aid roadways outside of urbanized area.

4. Transportation

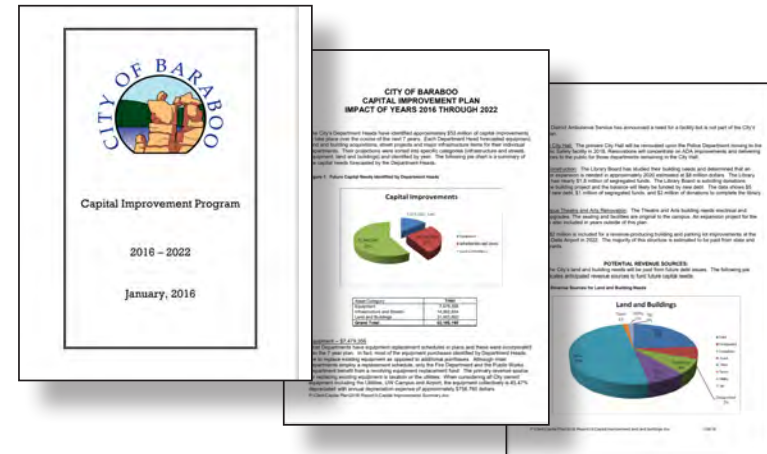
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – Program to develop non-motorized improvements. Some examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to the following:
 - » Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
 - » Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
 - » Community improvement activities, which include but are not limited to: inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising; historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and archaeological activities related to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.
 - » Safe Routes to School Program eligible projects and activities section 1404(f) of the SAFETEA-LU.
 - » Eligible projects in the Recreational Trails Program under Section 206 of Title 23.
 - » Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to: address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff; or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) – The TEA program provides matching state grants to governing bodies for road, rail, harbor, and airport projects that help attract employers to Wisconsin, or encourage business and industry to remain and expand in the state. As of December 31, 2023, grants of up to \$1 million are available for transportation improvements that are essential for an economic development project.
- General Transportation Aids (GTA) – The GTA is a state funding source that enables local governments to receive state aid payments to offset the cost of county and municipal road construction, maintenance, and traffic operations.
- Recreational Trails Aids Program (RTP) – Municipal governments are eligible to receive reimbursement for the development, rehabilitation, and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to 80% of eligible project costs. Funds from this program may be used in conjunction with funds from other state grant programs that also fund trail projects. Eligible projects in order of priority include:
 - » Maintenance and restoration of existing trails;
 - » Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages;
 - » Construction of new trails (with certain restrictions on federal lands); and
 - » Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors (must comply with the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended).

- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) – Grant funding with the primary goal of preventing roadway deaths and serious injuries on roadways. This program supports the development of a comprehensive safety action plan that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues. SS4A requires an eligible Action Plan be in place before applying to implement projects and strategies. The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants:

- » Planning and Demonstration Grants provide Federal funds to develop, complete, or supplement a comprehensive safety action plan. The goal of an Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribe, or region. Planning and Demonstration Grants also fund supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities that inform the development of a new or existing Action Plan. The Department encourages including demonstration activities in an application.
- » Implementation Grants provide Federal funds to implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. Projects and strategies can be infrastructure, behavioral, and/or operational activities. Implementation Grants may also include demonstration activities, supplemental planning, and project-level planning, design, and development. Applicants must have an eligible Action Plan to apply for Implementation Grants. The Department encourages including demonstration activities in an application.

Local Funding

- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Grant funding is an option only when they are available. These funds are not guaranteed and often require a match (commonly 80-20 or 50-50). Therefore, it is important that the City prioritizes transportation projects in the CIP each year to ensure a more sustainable funding method.



4. Transportation



4.9. ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE NEEDS

As we look at future needs, the following have been identified through the planning process:

- An expanded network of connected sidewalks, especially around schools and parks.
- Expand and connect local and regional trails.
- Enhance east and west connections.
- Continue to prioritize maintaining roadways and fixing potholes.



4.10. ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING STATIONS

As electric vehicles become more popular, it is important for the City of Baraboo to identify more locations where charging stations can be added, such as the downtown, schools, civic buildings, or other commercial areas. EV charging stations can help boost local businesses by bringing visitors to local shopping destinations. Travelers can access the EV charging stations and visit surrounding businesses while their vehicle charges.

The City can seek a variety of grants or work with a private company to install additional charging stations. EV charging stations in the downtown can be a great amenity to attract additional visitors.



GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and strategies are aimed at creating a more safe, accessible, and attractive transportation network. These are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1. Create well-connected, livable neighborhoods by providing a multi-modal transportation system that serves all residents in every neighborhood.

Policy 1.A. Create and adopt an Active Transportation Plan that guides future expansion of the City's pedestrian and bicycle system, including both the off-street trail system and on-street network. Consider the following:

- » Receive public input and invite local cycling organizations to identify specific locations that need improvements and provide ideas.
- » Establish a Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee to assist the development of the Plan.
- » Emphasize safety at crosswalks and other pedestrian/vehicle potential points of conflict.
- » Recommend incorporating traffic calming techniques where vehicular traffic poses a safety risk.
- » Ensure trails and sidewalks link parks, schools, commercial areas, downtown, and residential areas.
- » Prioritize connectivity for all new and existing sidewalks and trail networks.
- » Identify and plan future trails to provide accommodations for recreational and commuter purposes.
- » Include a Safe Routes to School analysis and a trail/sidewalk inventory that identifies a plan to fill in any sidewalk or trail gaps, and prioritize connections to schools, parks, and key destinations.

Policy 1.B. Promote walkable neighborhoods with connected streets that provide a range of transportation choices and convenient access to daily activities throughout the City.

Policy 1.C. Perform an analysis of sidewalk and trail gaps and barriers to improve access and safety, prioritizing connections to schools, parks, and key destinations.

Policy 1.D. Continue to expand the off-street trail network throughout the city and connect Baraboo to adjacent communities by regional bicycle and pedestrian trailways.

Policy 1.E. Identify locations where wayfinding signage for trails can be added and/or improved.

Policy 1.F. Adopt a Complete Streets policy. This policy is recommended to address areas where traffic calming is needed, decreasing intersection crossing distances, and expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Policy 1.G. Encourage interconnected streets and gridded development patterns to create more convenient multi-modal travel options for residents that will also foster a sense of neighborhood.

Policy 1.H. Include sidewalks when constructing new neighborhoods and if feasible when reconstructing existing roadways.

Policy 1.I. Where feasible, include tree boulevards on existing and future roadways with sufficient width (minimum of 6 ft) to accommodate healthy tree growth.

4. Transportation

Policy 1.J. Limit the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets in favor of connected streets that offer more transportation flexibility, connectivity, and increased safety in case of an obstructed street.

Policy 1.K. Encourage additional amenities such as bike racks, bike repair stands, and hydration stations in popular public spaces such as parks, plazas, along trails, and other public facilities.

Policy 1.L. Adopt a sidewalk and multi-use path policy. This policy should include design specifications and construction standards for new sidewalks and multi-use paths and should provide guidance on when these facilities are required.

Policy 1.M. Work with Sauk County and private providers to continue and expand multimodal transportation projects that connect the greater region.

Policy 1.N. Design and construct streets and sidewalks that allow for the efficient removal of snow and other maintenance activities.

Policy 1.O. Where not present, add beautification elements (such as flowers and landscaping, trees, community art) on major thoroughfares throughout Baraboo to maintain an attractive, clean, and inviting community image.

Goal 2: Plan, develop, and maintain a safe, efficient, and accessible multimodal transportation system.

Policy 2.A. Coordinate with WisDOT to facilitate efficient and cooperative planning, design, operation, and maintenance of transportation facilities.

Policy 2.B. Collaborate with Sauk County, WisDOT, and surrounding communities to identify funding sources for a public transit service that connects key destinations throughout the region.

Policy 2.C. Work with WisDOT to update the City's functional classification map which can increase the possibility that state and federal funding assistance may be applied to road construction projects.

Policy 2.D. Design streets to minimize potential safety issues, such as narrowing roadway widths, prioritizing passive control features as needed and appropriate.

Policy 2.E. Minimize the amount of driveway and trail conflict points for new off-road trails.

Policy 2.F. Ensure safety features are incorporated into the design of all local transportation facilities.

Policy 2.G. Perform a detailed analysis to identify roadway segments and intersections that need safety enhancements.

Policy 2.H. Plan maintenance projects to improve safety, traffic flow, and ADA compliance of all roadways, trail, and sidewalks for maximum cost-effectiveness.

Policy 2.I. Collect crash data to review and map on an annual basis and consider this information in determining any trends in unsafe intersections and street segments for implementing future safety measures.

Policy 2.J. Control access to arterial highways to enhance their capacity and increase safety, such as requiring adjoining businesses to share driveway entrances or provide access from intersecting local roads rather than the arterial road.

Policy 2.K. As the community grows, encourage the expansion of public transit services and facilities in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.

Policy 2.L. Seek funding and encourage initiatives to develop a Safe Routes to School Plan and improve mobility for youth.

Policy 2.M. Develop a city-wide ordinance that allows the safe and controlled use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and utility-terrain vehicles (UTVs) on City roadways. Use of ATVs and UTVs on state highways must follow WISDOT statutes.

Policy 2.N. Accommodate alternative fuel vehicles (e.g. electric vehicle charging stations) in public parking infrastructure and encourage their inclusion in privately-owned parking facilities located in key community destinations, especially the downtown area. Use charging stations as a way to increase patrons for local businesses.

Goal 3: Prepare, plan, and budget appropriately for future transportation needs.

Policy 3.A. Annually update a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to include short- and long-range transportation projects, including for streets, bridges, pedestrian, and bicycle systems.

Policy 3.B. Continue to budget a sustainable funding program for infrastructure maintenance and reconstruction.

Policy 3.C. Include funding for sidewalk and trail connections in the Capital Improvements Plan.

Policy 3.D. Identify opportunities to right-size street pavement widths to meet the needs of the users without providing unnecessary construction and maintenance costs.

Policy 3.E. Establish and update a “Street Plan” every five years to identify potential transportation corridors in areas where future growth is likely to occur. The Plan should be reviewed, at a minimum, by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Common Council.

Policy 3.F. Review and update the Official Map based on the recommendations in the Street Plan and work with adjacent municipalities or Sauk County when considered areas located outside of city limits.

Policy 3.G. Target investments in active transportation (interconnected sidewalks and trails) in neighborhoods with transportation challenges and near employment centers.

4. Transportation

Goal 4: Improve the downtown streetscape and “right-size” roads in the downtown area.

Policy 4.A. Enhance the downtown streetscape to promote a sense of place, improve safety for all travelers, and support downtown businesses.

Policy 4.B. Support efforts to make the downtown area more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Policy 4.C. Develop a downtown parking and traffic assessment plan to identify and address issues related to parking needs, vehicular speeds, truck traffic, and congestion in the downtown area.

Policy 4.D. Support the creation of a downtown master plan and focus on enhancing the streetscape and roadways to benefit all users. The downtown master plan should also consider “right-sizing” street widths and street layouts in order to reduce traffic congestion, increase safety, and may reduce future road maintenance and constructions costs. Reducing traffic lanes can help reduce vehicle speeds, improve street limit compliance, and decrease the severity of crashes, and can provide more space for green infrastructure, such as bike lanes and pedestrian crossings, which can help improve safety for non-motorized street users.

Policy 4.E. Consider expanding the sidewalk width in the downtown area during a future road reconstruction project. Expanding the sidewalk will provide more room for pedestrians, streetscaping elements, and allow for downtown businesses to utilize this public space for outdoor dining, shopping, or entertainment opportunities.

Goal 5: Ensure adequate parking is provided for existing and future development.

Policy 5.A. Review parking requirements in the zoning code and conduct an analysis of parking needs for each use. Consider a code amendment to modernize the parking requirements that include bicycle/multimodal accommodations.

Policy 5.B. Monitor the downtown parking situation and develop a strategy to address legitimate parking concerns.

Policy 5.C. Exceptions to minimum parking requirements should be considered.

Policy 5.D. Consider requiring a parking maximum in certain zoning districts to discourage an overabundance of parking stalls to reduce the amount of impervious surface.



CHAPTER 5

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

5. Utilities and Community Facilities



5.1. INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin comprehensive plans are required to include a summary of current utilities and public facilities, as well as provide guidance concerning the future need for new services or the rehabilitation of existing ones.

Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation that communities are built upon. Utilities may include sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer systems, as well as electrical, natural gas, telecommunication systems, and solid waste disposal. Community facilities vary by community but tend to include schools, libraries, community recreation centers, swimming pools, ice arenas, and various health and public safety service facilities.

Utilities and community facilities can be used to guide development and encourage growth, as well as strengthen community identity.

Residents and businesses in the City of Baraboo are served by a diverse set of utilities and services, both privately and publicly owned. The City will continue to maintain a high standard of service for utilities, services, and facilities under its direct management. The City will also continue to work with partnering providers to ensure that they are supported in continuing to deliver quality service to their customers.

5.2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes an inventory of existing utilities, community facilities, and services. It also contains goals, policies, and recommendations that address existing and future challenges or needs over the next 20 years.

5.3. UTILITIES

Water Supply



The Baraboo Water Utility is overseen by the Public Safety Committee. Baraboo’s water system was constructed in 1886, consisting of one elevated tank, and one pumping station.

The existing system consists of 5 wells, 6 storage tanks, and 2 booster stations. The wells draw water from sandstone and gravel formations hundreds of feet below the surface of the ground. Due to topography, the utility system operates at three different pressure systems to maintain acceptable water pressure.

In 2023, the wells pumped over 356.5 million gallons of water, an average of 976,715 gallons per day. The 2023 Water Quality Report concluded that the drinking water provided in Baraboo is safe, reliable, and meets federal and state quality requirements.

The City is currently making annual upgrades to the water system by replacing lead-material services with copper.

Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater Treatment

The City’s Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) was built in 1982. The Baraboo WRRF handles sewage from the City of Baraboo, Village of West Baraboo, the Town of Baraboo Sanitary District #1, and Devil’s Lake State Park. The WRRF is maintained by the City’s Sanitary Sewer Utility.



Annual maintenance activities include cleaning one-third of the sanitary sewer system in accordance with City policy and updating the City’s Mercury Minimization Plan .

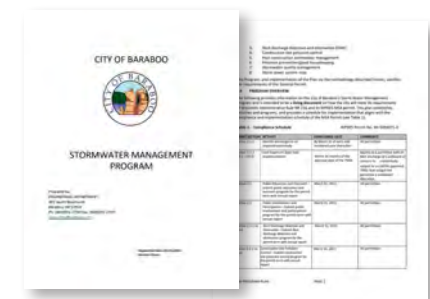
No major upgrades have been made to the system since 2016. According to the 2035 Sanitary Sewer Service Area Plan (developed in 2016), the WRRF received an average daily flow approximately 1.5 million gallons per day of sewage flows in 2014, approximately 67 percent of its rated capacity. In 2035, the average daily flow is expected to increase to 1.86 million gallons per day.

Stormwater Management

The existing stormwater management system consists of a series of stormwater management facilities (including pipes, manholes, ponding areas, ditches, and culverts) that convey stormwater to designated areas.

The City is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittee, and therefore must satisfy the requirements of the MS4 general permit. The MS4 general permit is designed to reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants entering surface waters from stormwater systems. The City of Baraboo is committed to maintaining compliance with the local, state, and federal stormwater requirements, improving water quality, and preserving its natural resources.

The City’s most current Stormwater Management Program (2021) establishes activities and programs under an implementation schedule to meet MS4 requirements. Activities include public education and outreach programs, identification and elimination of discharge to impaired bodies of water, construction site pollutant control, an annual report, and more.



5. Utilities and Community Facilities

Electricity



Alliant Energy provides electric to Baraboo residents. Electric transmission facilities are owned and operated by American Transmission Company.

Natural Gas

Natural gas service is also provided by Alliant Energy.

Broadband

Providing multiple options for broadband services is essential to retaining and attracting both businesses and residents, especially as working from home has become more common.

Multiple broadband services are available for City of Baraboo and surrounding area residents.

Fiber internet transmits data over longer distances faster than other wired connections such as DSL and cable. Fiber networks require a “fiber to the home” (FTTH) infrastructure, which can be costly and is one reason fiber internet is not as expansive as DSL or cable.

The transition from 4G (4th Generation) to 5G cellular networks requires new and updated infrastructure and coordination between municipalities and service providers. The benefits that 5G can provide to municipalities if 5G expansion is well-coordinated include:

- Arrival of smart city infrastructure, such as heated sidewalks and bike lines, solar powered streetlamps monitored by 5G wireless networks for outages, and 5G security cameras.
- Opportunities for long-term economic development, attracting more innovative communications and businesses.
- Expanded broadband service to underserved communities.
- Elimination of surface cable and TV service wiring by underground fiber networks.
- Speed up the arrival of driverless vehicles.

5G networks are expected to provide greater coverage, bandwidth, speed, and reliability.

It is important that municipalities understand their current infrastructure and have a plan to help prepare for what might need to be adjusted, updated, replaced, or expanded. Municipalities must consider their existing ordinances and processes for adapting existing, as well as constructing new, infrastructure to enable 5G signal. By proactively partnering with carriers, future projects can be aligned with carriers’ plans for transitioning to 5G.

Solid Waste and Recycling



The garbage and recycling services are now hired out to external contractors. There are several nearby companies/individuals that provide large item, appliance and debris removal services. Contact information for these providers are provided on the City’s Public Works webpage.

5.4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Baraboo Municipal Building



Baraboo's Municipal Building is located at 101 South Boulevard. It houses the City's Administrative offices, City Clerk's Office, Community Development Authority (CDA), Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Finance and Treasurer, Mayor's Office, and Police Departments. Baraboo's City Council also uses the Municipal Building for their meetings.

The City of Baraboo Municipal Building was completed in 2018 and transformed 3.5 acres of blighted property along the Baraboo River into a modernized administration facility. This building is two stories tall and 44,500 square feet in size, including 14,000 square feet for City administration, 17,500 square feet for police, and 8,500 square feet for a large police garage.

City Services Center Facility



The City Services Center (CSC) Facility is located at 450 Roundhouse Court. The Service Facility houses the Public Works Department and Water Utilities, and park maintenance.

The Public Works Department maintains the roadway system, storm drains, sanitary sewers, and alleys. The Department is coordinates the removal of garbage, recyclable materials, and other solid waste products. The Department currently includes the Public Works Superintendent who is in charge of staff and administrative assistants. Positions include a Heavy Equipment Operator, Mechanic, and other street crew positions. There is one position in the Sanitation Department, which is also under the Public Works Superintendent.

Police Department



The Baraboo Police Department includes a chief, captain, lieutenant, patrol officers, community service officers, detectives, school resource officers, administrative assistants, and chaplains. The Department is located at the City's Municipal Building at 101 South Boulevard.

5. Utilities and Community Facilities

Baraboo Fire and EMS District



Baraboo Area Fire and EMS District (BAFED) works under a joint agreement between five communities: City of Baraboo, Village of West Baraboo, and townships of Baraboo, Greenfield and Fairfield and contracts services with the Town of Excelsior. The District building is located at 135 4th Street with two new Fire/EMS stations planned in 2024.

Cemeteries

Walnut Hill and St. Joseph's are the two cemeteries in the City of Baraboo. Both are privately owned and operated.

Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library



The Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library serves as the community library and is located at 230 4th Avenue. It provides a collection of print and digital books, music, magazines, and newspapers. It offers a wide range of programs for adults and children, including internet access, 3D printing, and exam proctoring.

The Baraboo Public Library officially became the Carnegie-Schadde Memorial Public Library in 2021, and was later expanded in 2023.

The original library is a Carnegie Free Library and was constructed in the classical revival building style in the early 1900s by architects Claude & Starck. The building was officially listed on the National Historic Register in September 1981 and extensive additions were constructed in 1982 and completed in 2023.

Civic Center



The historic Civic Center is located at 124 2nd Street near downtown. The Civic Center was built in 1927 as Baraboo High School. The Center is also home to the Veteran's War Memorial. It is managed by the City's Parks and Recreation Department.



The Center includes community meeting rooms, fitness center with weight room and cardio equipment, and kitchen facilities. The Center also holds a full size gymnasium with basketball and volleyball courts, a climbing wall, locker rooms with showers, and bleachers.

The Civic Center also houses the Baraboo Area Senior Citizen's Organization, which serves as a gathering space and community for seniors. The Boys and Girls Club is also located at the Civic Center.

Ochsner Park Zoo



The Ochsner Park Zoo is located at 903 Park Street. The Zoo is managed by the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

The Zoo first opened in 1926 with two bear cubs and two deer fawns, and now has over 30 different animal species and sees approximately 40,000 visitors annually. It is a USDA licensed facility and a member of the Wisconsin Municipal Zoo Associates.

The majority of animals are either rehabilitated wildlife that are not able to be released, or rescued from the exotic pet trade. The Zoo also participates in Species Survival Plans (SSP's), breeding programs that are run by the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Ochsner Park Zoo regularly holds educational talks, events, and enrichment programs.

Municipal Pool



The outdoor swimming pool is situated in Campbell Park, located on South Boulevard. The pool facilities offer open swim sessions, lap swimming, and swim lessons during the summer months.



Airport



The Baraboo-Dells Airport (KDLL) is located at S3440 County Road BD, Baraboo. The Airport is owned and managed by the Village of Lake Delton. It consists of two runways, bidirectional, one paved runway (1/19) and one turf grass runway (14/32). An on-site manager provides daily monitoring and maintenance of the facility.

5. Utilities and Community Facilities



Education

The City of Baraboo has both public and private schools that offer kindergarten through 12th grade.

Baraboo School District

Baraboo residents are served by the Baraboo School District, which also serves the villages of West Baraboo and North Freedom, the towns of Baraboo, Fairfield, and Greenfield; and portions of the towns of Delton, Excelsior, Freedom, Merrimac, and Sumpter. The following are kindergarten to high school options offered by the Baraboo School District:

West Kindergarten Center and Baraboo 4K (formerly known as the Baraboo Early Learning Cooperative)

Kindergarten
707 Center Street

Al Behrman Elementary
Kindergarten - 5th grade
400 Mulberry St.

East Elementary
Kindergarten - 5th grade
815 Sixth St.

North Freedom Elementary
Kindergarten - 5th grade
S4890 Cty Hwy I (located in North Freedom)

Gordon L. Willson Elementary
Kindergarten - 5th grade
146 Berkley Blvd

Jack Young Middle School
6th to 8th grade
1531 Draper St.

Baraboo High School
9th to 12th grade
1201 Draper St.

Private Schools

Private schools located in Baraboo include:

St. John's Lutheran School, 3-year old preschool to 8th grade

Community Christian School of Baraboo, 4-year old preschool to 12th grade

St Joseph's Catholic School, preschool to 12th grade

Higher Education

University of Wisconsin-Platteville Sauk County (Public University), the institution offers a range of Associate and Bachelor's Degrees, such as business administration, food and agriculture, hospitality and tourism management, arts and sciences, and pre-engineering.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

KEY THEMES HIGHLIGHTED BY PARTICIPANTS:



The City should continue to increase capacity of Police, Fire, and EMS Services as the community grows.



There is demand to expand the City's recycling program, including options for more regular pickups or a location for drop-offs.



The City should continue to improve high-speed broadband services throughout the entire community.



Roads should continue to receive repairs and upgrades to keep a well-maintained roadway system.



Minimize urban sprawl and rapid growth to ensure existing utility infrastructure and community facilities can meet community needs.

"Parks are one of my top answers [amenity] for multiple questions. This would change if the outdoor pool closed; it's an integral part of this community."

"I believe that the current services are not going to meet the needs of the City due to excessive and rapid growth. We should concentrate on improving services before our City starts to fall behind."

5. Utilities and Community Facilities



GOALS AND POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and recommended policies for maintaining high quality utilities and community facilities in Baraboo were developed through public input and consideration of current and future trends.

Utilities

Goal 1. Provide City utilities to meet the needs of all residents and businesses in a safe, sustainable, and cost-effective manner.

Policy 1.A. Develop goals, targets, procedures, and metrics for enhancing the sustainability of City infrastructure.

Policy 1.B. Develop goals and procedures for communicating progress in meeting financial and environmental sustainability targets with the community.

Policy 1.C. Coordinate utility upgrades and expansions with economic development, multimodal transportation, and parks initiatives. Explore public-private partnerships or partnerships with nearby municipalities or agencies to fund large projects.

Policy 1.D. Consistently monitor the City's utility system to ensure it has adequate capacity to accommodate projected future growth.

Policy 1.E. Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing urbanized areas to maximize use of the existing utility and infrastructure systems.

Policy 1.F. Prepare financial and operational studies to determine cost implications of extending services to potential land annexations or proposed development. Minimize urban sprawl development to reduce costs and resources associated to extending public utilities and infrastructure.

Policy 1.G. Continue to implement the city's Wellhead Protection program to ensure safe drinking water.

Policy 1.H. Continue to work with broadband providers to enhance broadband and fiber deployments, especially in areas that lack connection or high-speed service.

Goal 2. Improve upon inflow and infiltration (I&I) in the sanitary sewer system.

Policy 2.A. Continue improvements and upgrades to sanitary sewer mains by lining or replacement, including lines that are not located under roadways.

Policy 2.B. Promote education of the public and enforce building codes to curb and prevent illicit connections.

Goal 3. Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing utilities and community facilities. Develop utilities with concern for aesthetic appearance and integration with surrounding environments.

Policy 3.A. Place overhead utilities underground when feasible.

Policy 3.B. Establish proper buffer zones between overhead utilities, substation, and treatment facilities and residential and commercial uses.

Policy 3.C. Require consolidation of utility boxes for more efficient service and maintenance.

Policy 3.D. Explore opportunities to implement Green Complete Streets / Living Streets in coordination with street reconstruction projects.

Goal 4. Coordinate infrastructure improvements, such as street reconstructions, with sewer, water, power, and streetscaping to leverage and maximize the benefits from ecological services.

Policy 4.A. Encourage creative stormwater management strategies to reduce surface runoff and implement low impact development techniques when constructing new growth areas or improving existing infrastructure.

Public Facilities

Goal 1. Continue to provide services and facilities necessary to improve the quality of life of Baraboo’s residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors.

Policy 1.A. The City’s Capital Improvement Plan should include funding for renovation and maintenance of existing community facility buildings, as well as construction of new facilities and amenities. Encourage logical, cost-efficient expansion of facilities to serve future development.

Policy 1.B. Monitor and increase the capacities of police and fire protection services as needed.

Goal 2. Continue to strengthen a unique sense of place that leverages Baraboo’s natural resources and landscape through use of decorative streetscaping, vegetation, arts, and culture.

Goal 3. Continue to work collaboratively with private sector donors to integrate resources for community-wide benefits and public facilities.

Goal 4. Continue to work collaboratively with the private sector to enhance cultural amenities that create active and engaging events to attract and retain Baraboo residents.

5. Utilities and Community Facilities

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CHAPTER 6

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources



6.1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Baraboo is located in an area with diverse natural resources that shape Baraboo's economy and community identity. This chapter reviews existing conditions, analyzes trends, and forecasts several elements of the community, including:

- Agriculture and agricultural lands
- Natural resources
- Community history and cultural resources



6.2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

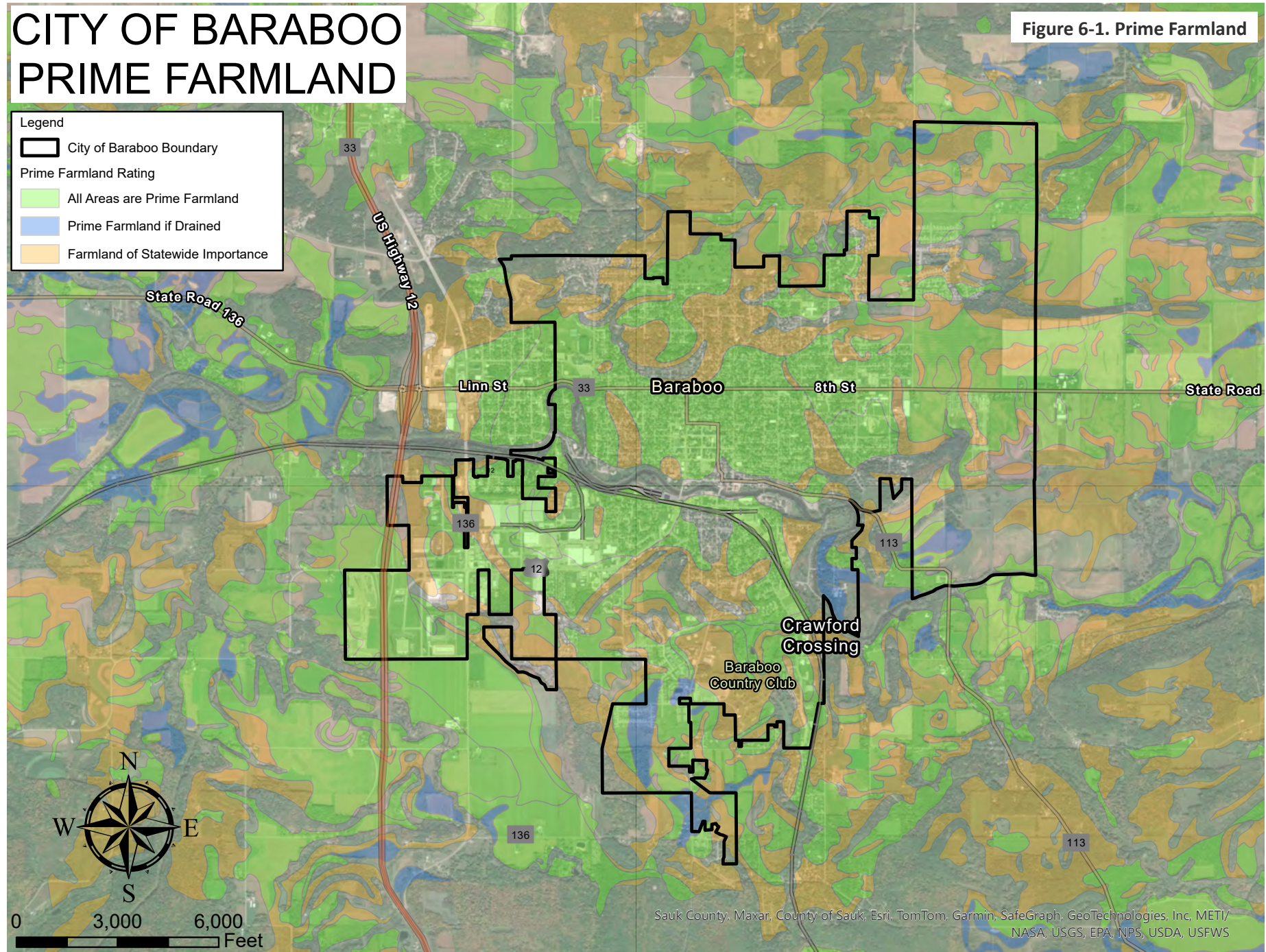
Baraboo currently has a limited amount of land zoned for agricultural use within city boundaries. The majority of properties zoned A-1 Agricultural Transitional or A-2 Agricultural Holding are located on the east side of the City with some pockets of A-1 located on the south and west side of the city. However, farming remains a key part of the heritage of the greater Baraboo area and still plays a significant role in the local economy and is the predominant land use in surrounding townships. Survey respondents often referenced Baraboo's rural and small town character as a key reason for living in Baraboo and one of the main goals of the Plan is to preserve the integrity of agricultural areas while also planning for smart growth and development.

As of 2017 in Sauk County, there were 1,412 farm operations and 298,906 acres of farmland. According to the UW-Extension (2014), approximately 63% percent of the total land area within the County consists of cropland, rangeland, pasture, tree farms and agricultural forests.

In 2017, Sauk County saw \$188,460,000 worth of agricultural product sales (37% in crops and 63% in livestock) accounting for 2% of the total value of crop sales in Wisconsin. Baraboo is located in a region with a history of agricultural activity, with surrounding land often used for farming purposes. The region is known for crop cultivation, including corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, and vegetables.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Services ranks soil suitability for different uses into eight classes; Class I soils are considered prime farmland, Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices, and Class VIII soils are considered useful for recreational purposes or natural habitat areas only. Over half of the land within city limits or within 1.5 miles of city limits is a Class I or Class II soil.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources



6.3. NATURAL RESOURCES



Topography

The Baraboo area is fortunate to have a diverse and picturesque topography that includes a mix of natural features, such as bluffs, hills, valleys, and water bodies. The topography of Baraboo plays a significant role in shaping the city's landscape, recreational opportunities, and overall aesthetic appeal. One of the prominent natural features in the area is the Baraboo Bluffs. These bluffs extend into the Driftless Area, which is a region known for its rugged terrain untouched by glacial activity. The Baraboo Range has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the federal government. The bluffs rise dramatically from the surrounding landscape and offer stunning panoramic views of the city and its surroundings. In addition to the bluffs, there are a number of valleys, hills, lakes, and rivers that provide natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

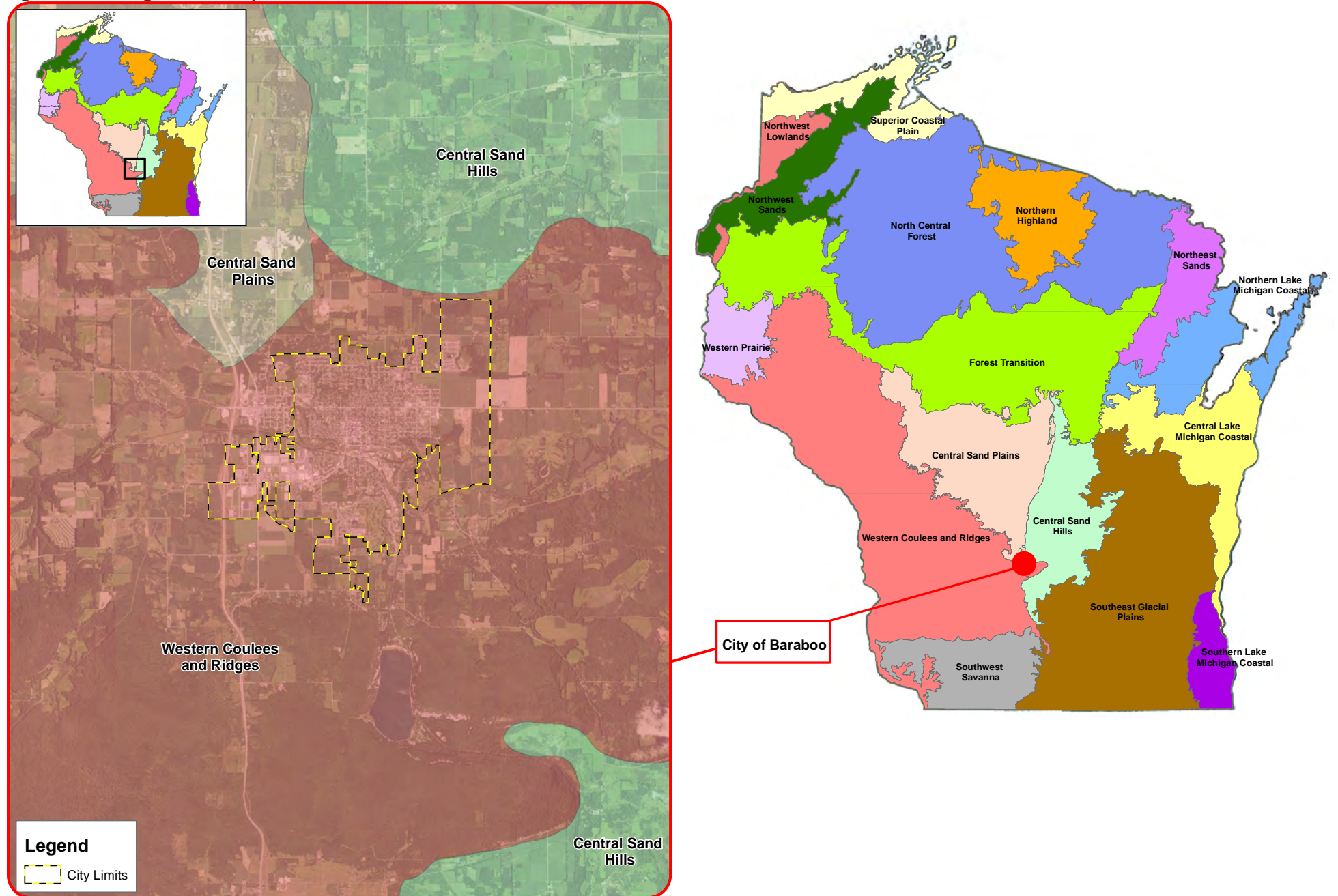
The elevation in the Baraboo area typically ranges between 775 feet to 1,145 feet and the highest point in the Baraboo Range is 1,600 feet. Continental glaciers, which flattened much of the upper Midwest's topography over millions of years, previously covered much of Wisconsin. The southwestern portion of the state was largely unaffected. Retreating glaciers left bluffs and

hilly topography, interspersed through flatter plainlands areas. This area is known as the "Driftless Region" or the "Coulee Region". The City of Baraboo straddles the divide between the glaciated and driftless areas of Wisconsin. The topography of Baraboo not only offers a scenic backdrop but also influences land use decisions, urban planning, and recreational opportunities. It provides a natural playground for outdoor enthusiasts, opportunities for hiking and exploration, and a connection to the region's geological history. Balancing development with the preservation of these natural features is crucial to maintaining the city's distinctive character and ensuring the well-being of both residents and the environment.

The topography of the Baraboo area can be characterized by rolling hills and valleys. Baraboo's unique landscape can be attributed to the fact that the city is located near the intersection of four ecological landscapes. The majority of the city is located in the Western Coulees and Ridges region; however, the surrounding Baraboo area is also located in Central Sand Hills, Central Sand Plains, and Southeast Glacial Plains. Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin are shown in Figure 6-1.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Figure 6-2. Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin





Bedrock Geology and Soils

The bedrock geology of Baraboo is characterized by sedimentary rock formations that were deposited during different geological periods. The Baraboo Range is primarily composed of quartzite and sandstone. Baraboo Quartzite is a distinctive feature of the region. Baraboo Quartzite is a hard, resistant rock that forms the rugged bluffs and cliffs seen in the area. It's part of the Cambrian Period's Upper Dells Group and is notable for its durability and resistance to erosion. The Eau Claire Formation is another significant sedimentary unit in the region, known for its sandstone and shale layers. It's part of the Late Cretaceous Period and contributes to the area's geological diversity.

Soils in the Driftless Area are generally characterized as moderately well drained to excessively well drained. More specifically, soils in the Baraboo Bluffs are generally well drained, medium textured soils over shallow

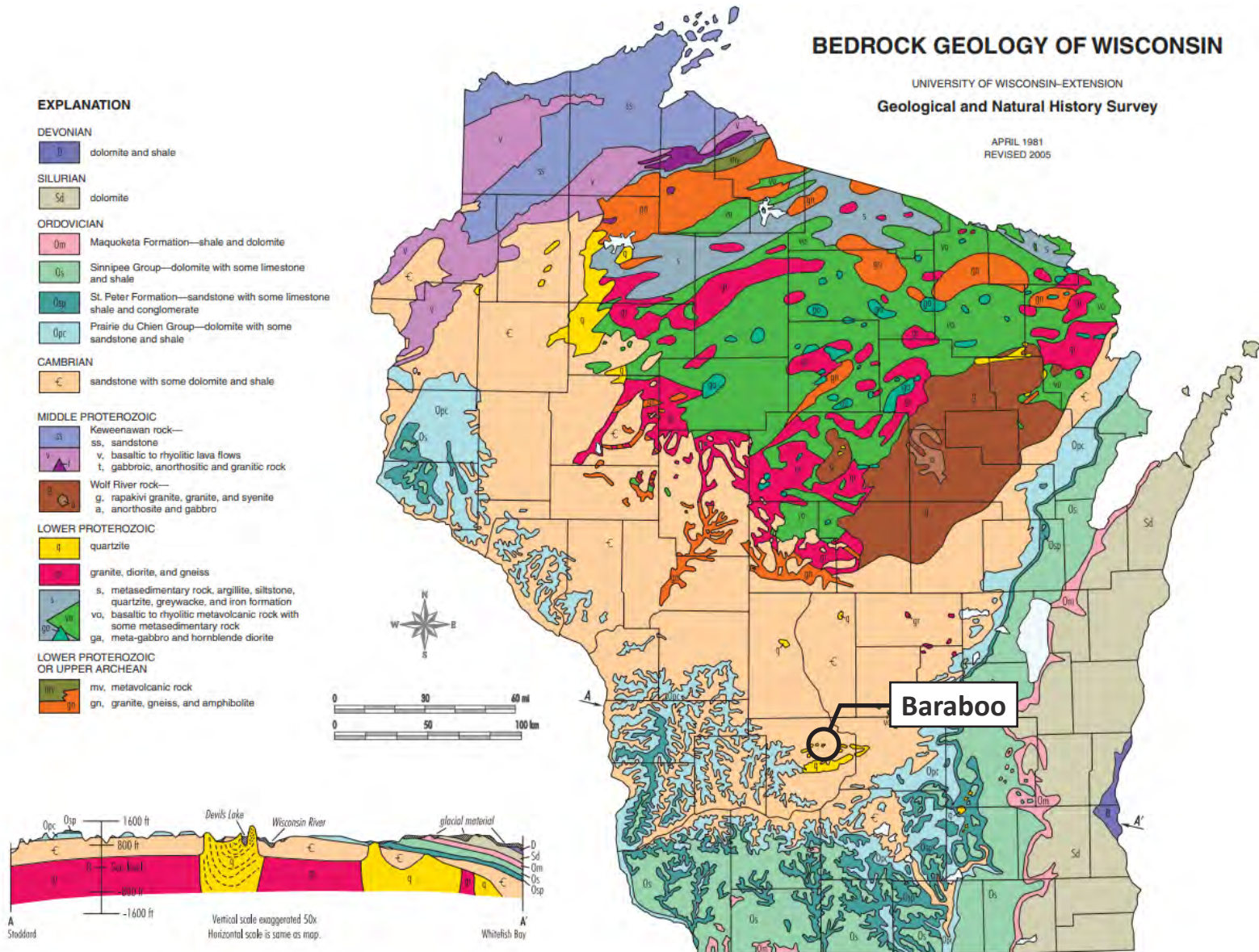
quartzite rock outcroppings. Many of the soils in Sauk County, especially west of Highway 12, are susceptible to higher rates of erosion. The land use causing the greatest amount of soil erosion is agriculture. Soil erosion can impact cropland productivity, surface and groundwater quality, fish and wildlife habitat, flooding, landscape aesthetics, and infrastructure maintenance.

Understanding soil suitability is key to identifying the best locations for future development. The following soil types are most common in the city of Baraboo and surrounding towns:

- La Farge-Norden-Gale: Gently sloping to very steep, well drained, medium textured soils, sandstone bedrock at a depth of 20 to 40 inches. Most areas are cultivated crops and pasture. Use for residential development is limited only when septic systems are utilized.
- Baraboo-Rock outcrop: Gently sloping to very steep, moderately well drained, medium textured soils and quartzite Rock outcrop, quartzite bedrock at a depth of 20 to 40 inches. Mainly suited for pasture and woodlands, use for residential development is limited only when septic systems are utilized.
- McHenry-St. Charles: Gently sloping to very steep, well drained, medium textured soils underlain by glacial till. Mainly suited for cultivated crops and pasture, use for residential development is limited only when septic systems are utilized on sloping lands.
- Wyocena-Gotham-Plainfield: Gently sloping to steep, well drained to excessively drained, moderately coarse textured and coarse textured soils underlain by sandy glacial till or outwash sand. Mainly suited for cultivated crops and pasture, use for residential development is good.
- Ettrick-Fluvaquents, wet-Curran: Nearly level and gently sloping, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained, mostly medium textured soils underlain by outwash sand or stratified loamy and sandy deposits. Mainly suited for cultivated crops and pasture, use for residential development is poor due to flooding possibilities.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Figure 6-3. Bedrock Geology of Wisconsin



Mineral Resources

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, there are currently no known metallic mineral deposits or occurrences in sufficient tonnage and grade such as iron, taconite, or gold in Sauk County that could warrant extraction. There are no metallic mining operations in the County. Iron ore mining in the Baraboo area began in 1887, and in 1900, ore was found and mining operations started. The area produced 643,030 tons of ore before ceasing operations in 1925 due to high costs and inability to compete with other mining operations.

Sauk County is located in a very significant region geologically and is home to several stone quarries and masonry industries. Upper Cambrian Sandstone is the typical underlying bedrock and limestone typically caps the hills in portions of the county.



Watersheds and Surface Water

Baraboo is enriched by various water resources, including rivers, streams, and groundwater aquifers. The Baraboo River is a notable natural feature that contributes to the local ecosystem and provides recreational opportunities, such as paddling sports and fishing. The City should continue to focus on protecting water quality through strategies like watershed management, floodplain regulations, and the prevention of pollution to safeguard this vital resource.

Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, intermittent waterways, and natural drainage ways make up the surface waters of the City and Sauk County. These resources are all water bodies, standing still or flowing, including natural drainage ways that collect and channel overland rainwater or snowmelt runoff. Natural drainage ways are characterized by intermittent streams, threads, rills, gullies, and dry washes that periodically contribute water to first-order streams. There are also many artificial drainage ways where the natural drainage ways have been altered by human activity. All these features can transport sediment and pollutants and are affected by their watersheds and the land surrounding them.

Baraboo is located in the Lower Wisconsin River Basin, which covers approximately 5,000 square miles of southwest and south-central Wisconsin, and is also located in the Lower Baraboo River watershed. Baraboo is the largest community located in the watershed. The watershed contains a portion of the Wisconsin and Baraboo Rivers, and the Boulder, Rowley, and Leech Creeks.

Baraboo River

Most notably, the Baraboo River cuts through the center of the city. The Baraboo River is about 120 miles long with a watershed area of 655 square miles. The river begins in Monroe County and ends at the Wisconsin River near Portage. The Baraboo River was once home to several dams, but is now a free-flowing river again after years of dam removals. The last dams were removed between 1996 and 2001 to improve water quality and restore fishery access. These dams were originally installed to generate power for Baraboo's early industrial and residential development.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Devil's Lake

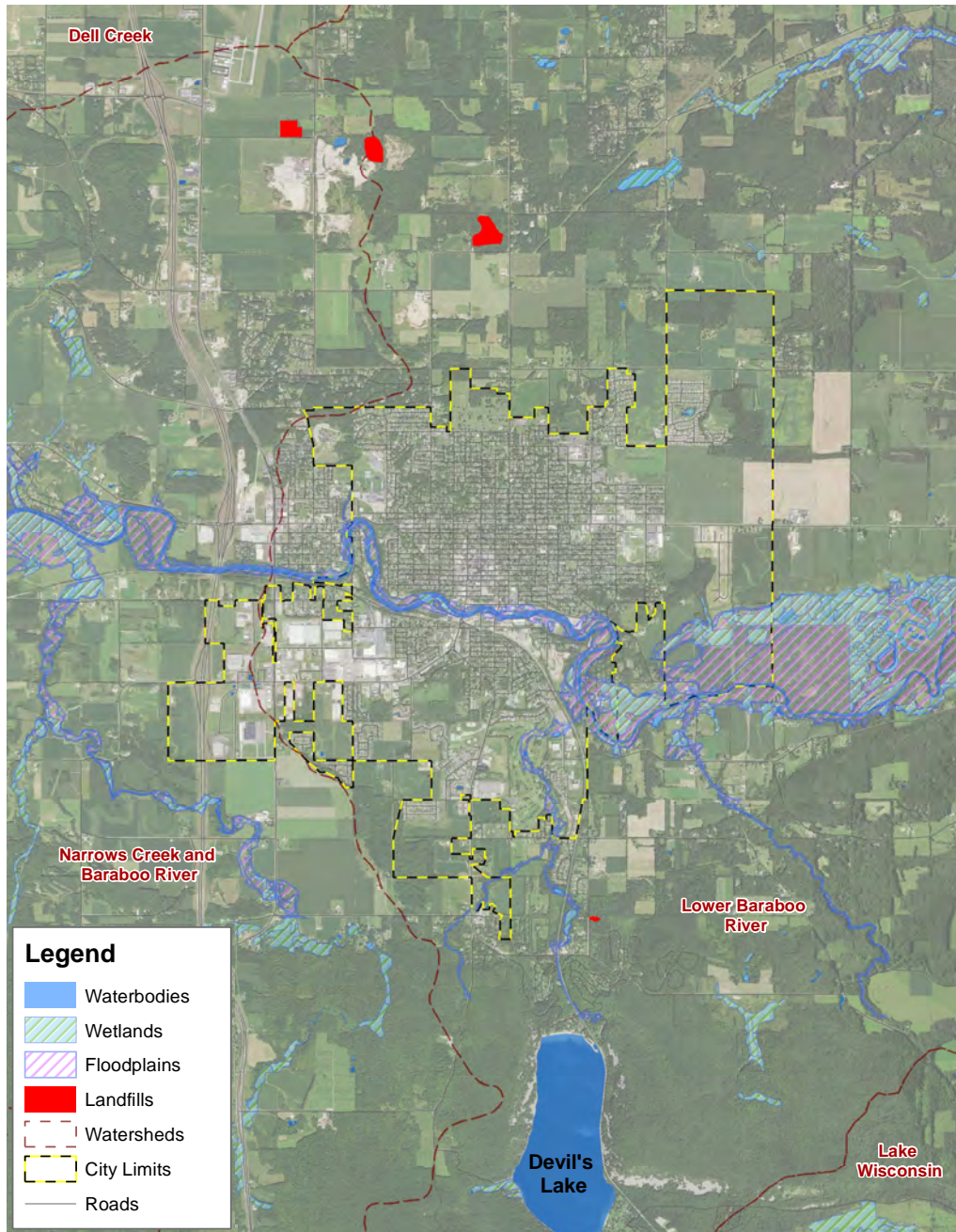
Although Devil's Lake is not located within city limits, this lake lies within arguably the most popular state park in Wisconsin. Devil's Lake is approximately 370 acres and a depth of approximately 47 feet. Devil's Lake was formed when the Green Bay glacial lobe blocked the Wisconsin River from its original path through the Baraboo Range, plugging both ends of the gap in the south bluff with glacial drift.

Nearby Creeks

Skillet, Boulder, Manley, Otter, Parfrey's Glen, Rowley and Pine Creeks are located near the city of Baraboo and are generally classified as Class II trout waters.



Figure 6-4. Environmental Characteristics



6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Impaired Waters

As required by the federal Clean Water Act, all states maintain a list of impaired waters that fail to meet quality standards. Common impairments include excess mercury and bacteria that are harmful to the health of humans and animals, excess nutrients that grow algae, and sedimentation that clouds water. Surface water impairment is primarily caused by human action, mostly resulting from agricultural and industrial chemical run-off. Impaired surface water can lead to groundwater contamination in the long run, especially when resulting from nitrate contamination associated with agricultural fertilizers.

Improving surface water and groundwater is a critical component of long-term sustainability and resiliency. Efforts which are often largely enforcement and/or educational in nature, can result in the common use of best management practices to protect our waterways. To mitigate groundwater contamination, having infrastructure designed to collect and treat stormwater before it enters waterways helps, as does public education to encourage reduced use of pollutants and better vegetation maintenance to help capture pollution before it enters waterways.

Portions of the Baraboo River are included in Wisconsin's 2022 impaired waters list. Most impaired waters in the watershed have excess bacteria, nitrates, total suspended solids (TSS), or phosphorus. These pollutant sources are caused by agricultural and urban runoff in Sauk County and the watershed upstream.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the sole source of potable water in the city of Baraboo. The City draws its water from five groundwater wells from sandstone and gravel formations located hundreds of feet below ground surface. In 2022, these five wells pumped over 340.4 million gallons of water, and an average of 932,825 gallons per day. The majority of the groundwater in the Baraboo area is obtained from a Cambrian sandstone aquifer. The quality of groundwater in Sauk County is generally good but could be at risk due to runoff pollutants. Even following municipal water treatment, low levels of microbial bacteria, contaminants, and naturally occurring chemical deposits are typically present in all groundwater samples. Baraboo's [2022 Water Quality Report](#) indicated that no drinking water samples contained contaminants exceeding safety limits.

Shorelands

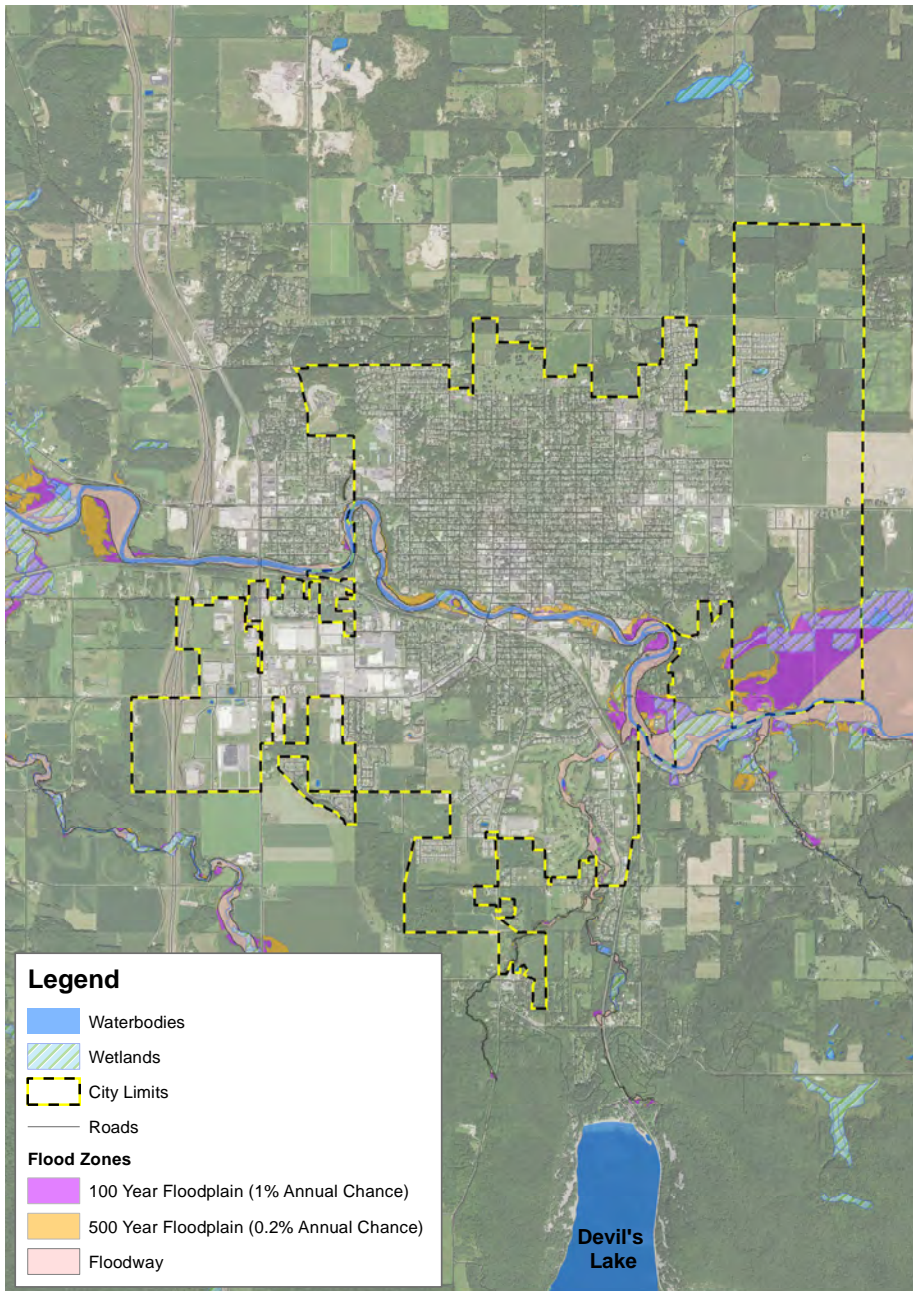
Shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation and act as buffers to protect water quality. To maintain the environmental, recreational, and economical quality of our water resources, the State of Wisconsin requires counties to adopt and enforce shoreland ordinances.

As required by the State, shorelands are defined as:

- All land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary highwater mark of a lake, pond or flowage; or
- All land within 300 feet of the ordinary highwater mark of a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater.

Incorporated municipalities are allowed to create and enforce their own shoreland zoning ordinances that differ from the State's regulations. The City of Baraboo's Shoreland Zoning is included in Chapter 17 (Zoning Code) of the Municipal Code.

Figure 6-5. FEMA Flood Hazard Areas Map



Floodplains

Areas within the City boundary that are considered non-developable due to their physical properties are primarily those properties within flood areas. This includes the floodplain along the river. Floodplains are the flood-prone lands adjacent to water bodies. Floodplains can be considered desirable development areas for potential property owners due to the scenic and recreational value lakes, rivers, and streams can provide. However, development near water bodies may put animal habitats and residents and their properties at risk. Development in floodplains can affect the environmental quality of an entire waterway.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has conducted prior floodplain mapping in Baraboo and latest map was conducted in 2013. According to FEMA, areas along the Baraboo River are in the floodway and 100 year floodplain. There is also a large floodplain located to the east of the current city limits which should be carefully considered when reviewing future annexations to the east. Development within the floodplain is restricted by a property's specific location in the floodplain, as mapped on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) developed by FEMA, and as depicted in Figure 6-5. Detailed flood mapping may be found on FEMA's website.

Natural and man-made changes in the landscape, and the age and accuracy of flood insurance maps have, in some cases, limited the reliability of using FIRM maps for the identification and designation of floodplains. The City also has floodplain development regulations, located in Subchapter II of Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code, which shall be consulted prior to any construction activity.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Wetlands

The majority of mapped wetlands within city limits are located along the Baraboo River. There are several larger wetland areas located to the west, southwest, and east of current city limits. There are very few mapped wetlands located within developed areas of Baraboo.

Wetlands can be defined as areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands may be intermittent/seasonal or perennial/permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants, replenish groundwater supplies, store floodwaters, and maintain stream flows, making them a valuable community resource.

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are a challenge to develop, and development in general should avoid these areas, as they are susceptible to challenges associated with topography and stormwater. The majority of the land in Baraboo consists of rolling hills and steep slopes are generally not common within city limits. There are a few hilltops or ridgetops located in the southeast portion of the city.

Forest and Woodlands

Wooded areas within the city are generally located in undeveloped areas, conservancies, and parks. However, the majority of undeveloped land in Baraboo city limits is generally open farmland. About a third of land in the county is forested and there are significant woodlands to the south of the city of Baraboo.



Hazard Mitigation

The County adopted the Sauk County Hazard Mitigation Plan: 2019-2024 and the City of Baraboo adopted the Plan on June 25, 2019. Hazard mitigation is any activity that is proactively done to reduce a community's vulnerability of damage from future disasters. The Plan describes critical facilities within Sauk County, assesses natural and manmade hazards, and presents a mitigation strategy. Considering potential hazards and preparing to mitigate hazards can save lives and property, protect valuable critical infrastructure, and reduce legal liability.

Baraboo is considered to be at medium risk for the following natural hazards:

- Flooding
- Tornadoes
- Hailstorm
- Thunderstorms
- Extreme cold
- Extreme heat

Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat and Open Space

The main types of fish and wildlife habitat in the Baraboo area are composed of rivers and streams, ponds, wetlands, and wooded and grassy sand prairie and agricultural areas near the city's boundaries and peripheries of developed areas. The wildlife habitat in Sauk County supports a range of species, including but not limited to, white-tailed deer, black bear, waterfowl, game birds, fur bearers, wild turkey, bald eagles, and amphibians.

Devil's Lake is home to nearly 100 species of birds, close to half the total in Wisconsin, and 880 plant species. Wisconsin's oldest state natural area, Parfrey's Glen, is located in the southeast corner of Devil's Lake State Park. The park consists of three other state natural areas: South Bluff/Devil's Nose, East Bluff, and Devil's Lake Oak Forest. Located to the northeast of the city, the Lower Narrows State Natural Area and Pine Island State Wildlife Area also provide space for nature preservation and recreational opportunities.

The Baraboo Range is a National Natural Landmark and is located to the south of the city of Baraboo. This range is approximately 27 miles long and 14 miles wide, and is the upper Midwest's best and largest example of an intact, continuous deciduous forest. The differences in elevation, exposure, and soils of the Baraboo Hills create a variety of ecological habitats including high, dry rock strata where white pine predominates; rocky cliffs covered with lichens and mosses; cool steep valleys and ravines of hemlock; dry and wet prairie, and marshes. At least 28 different natural communities have been identified, harboring 23 federal or state listed threatened or endangered species. About half of the more than 2,200 vascular plants in Wisconsin have been found in this tiny fraction of the State.

The International Crane Foundation (ICF), was founded in Baraboo in 1973 with the goal to conserve cranes and the wetland and grassland ecosystems on which they depend. This group works worldwide to provide education to combat threats to these ecosystems and to help restore crane habitats.

The Aldo Leopold Legacy Center, was founded in Baraboo in 2007, is dedicated to the legacy of Aldo Leopold, a pioneering conservationist and the father of wildlife ecology. The Center includes Leopold's famous "Shack," where he developed many of his influential ideas.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Threatened and Endangered Species

US Fish & Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool indicates the following threatened or endangered plant, insect and animal species may be present in or near the city of Baraboo:

- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Tricolored Bat
- Whooping Crane
- Monarch Butterfly
- Rusty Patched Bumble Bee
- Northern Wild Monkshood
- Prairie Bush-clover

Several migratory birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act may be present in or near the city regularly or seasonally, including:

- Golden Eagle
- Bald Eagle
- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Bobolink
- Canada Warbler
- Cerulean Warbler
- Chimney Swift
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Long-eared Owl
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Rusty Blackbird
- Wood Thrush

Wisconsin also lists endangered, threatened, and special concern species. Due to the fluidity of this list, a comprehensive list is not provided here, but may be found on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website.



6.4. COMMUNITY HISTORY & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historical Overview

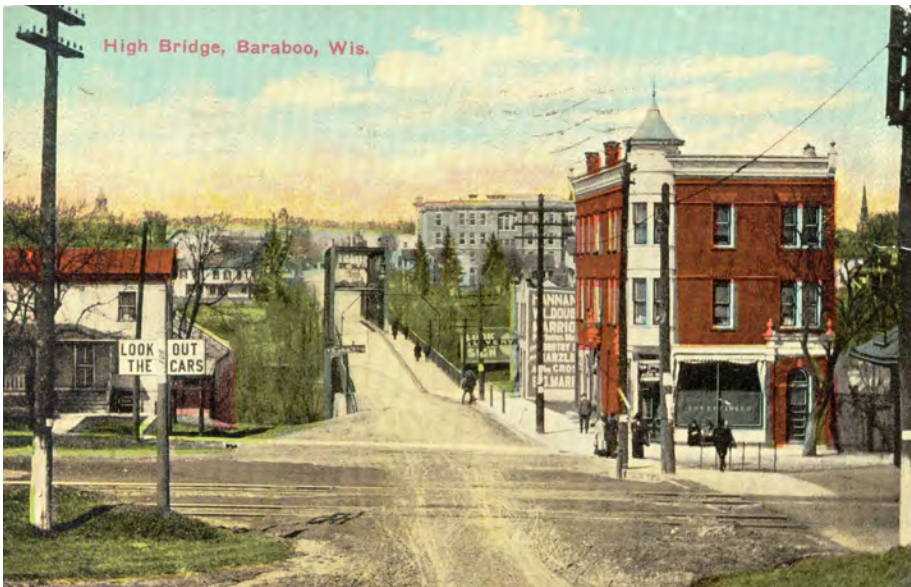
Preservation of historic and cultural resources is important to the vitality of any community and helps foster a sense of pride in the community. Preserving and highlighting historical and cultural preservation can also provide economic benefits and attract tourists to the Baraboo area.

According to Historian Mark Tully, the City of Baraboo derives its name from the Baraboo River. The River was named after French-Canadian Jean Baribault, who established a fur trading post near the mouth of the River in 1749.

The Baraboo River has nurtured human habitation for thousands of years. During the past thousands of years, descendants of the Ho-Chunk Nation built over 125 earthen burial mounds, some in the shapes of animals, on the banks and hills near what is now the City of Baraboo.

Euro-American settlement started in 1839 when the first of several dams was built to harness power for sawmills, flour mills, textile mills, and other industries. In 1846 Sauk County decided to relocate the county seat from Prairie Du Sac to the Baraboo River Valley and platted a new village named Adams around a public square. At the same time, George Brown platted a village name Baraboo mostly south of the river. Eventually both plats were combined and known as Baraboo. The community became a state-recognized village in 1866. In 1882, Baraboo became a city by State legislative action.

The Ringling Brothers, and other circus acts, called Baraboo home, earning the nickname “Circus City”. The Ringling brothers started their circus in Baraboo in 1884 and had their winter quarters in the city until 1918. Their legacy continues at Circus World Museum, the state’s most popular historic site operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society.



Historical illustration showing Baraboo’s topography



Community art highlighting Baraboo’s cultural and natural richness

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Historic Properties and Places

National Historic Designations

According to the Architecture & History Inventory (AHI) maintained by the State Historical Society, there are 479 structures with some architectural/historical significance in the Baraboo area.

There are seventeen properties in the City listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The majority are located on the downtown square and near the Baraboo River. The following properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- The Ringling Brothers Circus Headquarters Barn (August 1969)
- The Al. Ringling Theater (May 1976)
- The Albrecht C. Ringling House (May 1976)
- Seven Gables (January 1978)
- Walworth D. Porter Duplex Residence (September 1996)
- The Thompson House Hotel (December 1997)
- The Charles E. Ringling House (March 1997)
- The William Clark House (April 1980)
- The A.G. Tuttle House (November 1980)
- The Baraboo Public Library (September 1981)
- The Sauk County Courthouse (March 1982)
- The Manchester Street Bridge (October 1988)
- The Jacob Van Orden House (September 1996)
- The Gust Brothers Store (August 2002)
- Island Woolen Company Office Building (August 2011)
- Charles and Anna Ruhland House (March 2017)
- Chicago & North Western Depot and Madison Division Office (April 2022)



Al. Ringling Theater



Carnegie-Schadde Memorial
Public Library



Sauk County Courthouse



First United Methodist Church located in Baraboo's downtown



County Courthouse

Downtown Baraboo Historic District

In 2015, the City created the Downtown Baraboo Historic District. The City's Historic District (NRHP 6-8-2015) consists of 78 contributing buildings (and 11 non-contributing). The majority are located surrounding the Sauk County Courthouse Square. Development in this district began in the 1840s. The oldest contributing buildings in this district date back to the 1870s, when economic growth in Baraboo and a series of fires that destroyed older buildings spurred extensive construction in the area of the downtown square. The newest contributing building in the district is the 1966 former Baraboo City Hall. Three buildings in the district are also listed individually on the National Register, including the Sauk County Courthouse, the Al. Ringling Theater, and the Gust Brothers Store. This district includes examples of most popular architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the following:

- Italianate
- Romanesque Revival
- Neoclassical
- Colonial Revival
- Prairie School
- Beaux-Arts
- Modernist
- Vernacular Commercial

The district's resources consist primarily of two-story commercial storefronts, a county courthouse, city hall, theater, school, post office, and church. The buildings within the Downtown Baraboo Historic District are well preserved and have much of the same appearance today as they would have when they were originally constructed.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources





Historic Photo of the Depot. The Sauk County Historical Society owns the old Baraboo Train Depot and Division Office Building. It is pursuing restoration and adaptive reuse of the building. Photo by the Sauk County Historical Society.

Sauk County Historical Society

The [Sauk County Historical Society](#) is a non-profit group of Sauk County residents who are dedicated to sharing and preserving Sauk County's culture and history. The Sauk County Historical Society provides education and outreach services to promote the County's historical resources and also holds multiple events each year. The Sauk County Historical Society Museum is located inside the Van Orden Mansion. The Sauk County Historical Society bought the historic Island Woolen Mill office building in 2006 and restored the building to become the Sauk County History Center, which opened in 2013. The Sauk County History Center now houses the offices, archives and research center for the historical society.

Certified Local Government Program

Wisconsin municipalities with a qualifying heritage preservation ordinance and commission (HPC) may become a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the State Historic Preservation Office. CLG status enables the local government to apply for federal matching grants to preserve historic properties. This local-state-federal partnership encourages the integration of historic preservation into local government policy.

CLG's responsibilities include:

- Establish and maintain a qualified HPC by ordinance
- Maintain a system for identifying historic properties
- Enforce appropriate legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties
- Provide for public participation in the local preservation program
- Play an expanded role in nominating properties to the National Register
- Perform other agreed-upon functions delegated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Baraboo is not currently recognized as a Certified Local Government. The City has incorporated historic preservation requirements within the Zoning Code and has designated the Plan Commission to serve as the Historic Preservation Commission, tasked with enforcing the Code section.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

6.5. EXISTING PROGRAMS

Numerous Federal, State, Regional, Local, and private plans and programs exist which contribute to the preservation, conservation, or management of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in Sauk County. A partial list of preservation resources is shown below.

Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES)

This DNR operated program regulates municipal and industrial operations discharging wastewater and stormwater to surface or groundwater.

Forest Land Tax Program

These programs are run by the Wisconsin DNR and encourage sustainable forestry on private lands by offering tax incentives to landowners.

Sauk County Comprehensive Planning

Sauk County's Comprehensive Plan (2009) provides insightful information regarding farmland preservation and offers suggestions on smart development approaches to preserving agricultural land and natural resources while allowing for new development. This includes preferred development strategies near city limits, which will be important for the City to consider as Baraboo continues to grow.

City of Baraboo Ordinances

Ordinances have been adopted, and may be adopted in the future, to aid in the effort of conserving resources and protecting landowner rights, land values, and the public health and safety.

Wisconsin Historical Society

The Historical Society was founded in 1846 and helps people to connect with the past by maintaining and collecting stories and items. This organization also has grant funding available to help local communities identify and preserve historical features. The Wisconsin Historical Society also provides the following databases for public use: Archaeological Report Inventory (ARI), Archaeological Sites Inventory (ASI), Architecture and History Inventory (AHI), and National Register of Historic Places (NR).

The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), and particularly the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is the main source of information on historic

properties (standing structures, archaeological sites, and burial sites), and they also review/oversee compliance with Federal and State historic preservation laws. The SHPO also provides information on determining whether projects are subject to federal, state, or local historic preservation laws on the WHS website.

The Office of the State Archaeologist maintains the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD) and archaeological site records, issues permits needed for removing artifacts or conducting archaeology on non-federal public lands, and provides information on property tax exemptions for sites on the National Register of Historic Places. To perform work on non-federal public land in Wisconsin, archaeologists need to obtain a Wisconsin Public Lands Field Archaeological Permit.

The WHS also provides important information regarding burial sites such as applicable federal and state laws, process for requesting permission from WHS to conduct ground-disturbing activities within the boundaries of a recorded burial site, distinction between cataloged burial sites under State law, and other burial-site requirements for local units of government (e.g., restrictions on transferring a burial site owned by a municipality, responsibility for caring for abandoned private cemeteries).

Wisconsin Statewide Historic Preservation Plan

The Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)'s new Historic Preservation Plan (2016-2025) was completed during the same as this Comprehensive Plan. The Plan outlines specific goals and objectives to protect and enhance the state's cultural resources.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING - PUBLIC INPUT

Appendices E and F includes all survey comments, including those related to the agricultural, natural and cultural resources.

HERE'S A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED:



Baraboo's natural beauty and environmental features are the top reasons respondents live in the community.



Preserve historic buildings and the historic downtown area.



A focus on sustainability and protecting natural resources is a top priority for maintaining Baraboo's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.



Avoid sprawl and preserve farmland by focusing on redevelopment and infill projects, and enhancing existing neighborhoods.

"I enjoy living in Baraboo because of the vibe of the arts, conservation, the beauty and history of the Baraboo Bluffs and the historic nature of the community."

"Preserving natural areas should be a top priority, while doing our small part to not further biodiversity loss."

"It's important to preserve the beautiful natural areas that we love in the Baraboo area and limit the development of undeveloped land."

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources



6.6. ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE NEEDS

Regions and individual municipalities are competing globally to attract and retain entrepreneurs and a highly skilled workforce. Natural and cultural resources are critically important elements needed to cultivate the type of healthy, vibrant communities where people want to live, work, learn, and play. By investing in local and regional distinctive assets and culture, communities help foster innovation and entrepreneurial commercial activity, resulting in more resilient, unique local economies.

Baraboo's natural environment, agricultural heritage, parks and trail system are recreational and economic assets, all of which contribute to the city's unique sense of place. Stewardship to maintain and preserve these resources is important as the City plans for the next 20 years.

In the years ahead it will be important for the City to strengthen community resiliency, to help prepare for shocks and stressors, and to better manage unexpected events. This includes preparing to better respond to natural disasters, but also taking steps to prevent disasters. Planning with an emphasis on resiliency can help a community build a diverse economy to reduce

negative impacts from unexpected disasters and well as economic downturn.

Responding to the increase of climate change and in the number and duration of large storm events in recent years will be critical for Baraboo's infrastructure. Projects that help the City become more resilient to these types of changes are necessary over the next 20-year planning period. These projects include:

- Designing stormwater infrastructure for larger rain events
- Floodplain management
- Reduction of potential flood risk on property and infrastructure
- Expanding green infrastructure
- Reviewing and updating building and zoning code requirements
- Protection of cultural and natural resources



GOALS AND POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and recommended strategies for implementation of Environmental and Cultural Resources in Baraboo were developed through public input and consideration of current and future trends.

Goal 1. Promote the preservation of productive agricultural lands.

Policy 1.A. Maintain agriculture as a significant economic activity within Baraboo's extraterritorial jurisdiction. Identify and preserve highly productive farmlands.

Policy 1.B. Cooperate with surrounding communities to discuss growth plans and identify an orderly, efficient development pattern that will minimize impacts on rural areas and agricultural lands.

Policy 1.C. Utilize the City's extraterritorial plat review to prevent intensive non-agricultural development in areas that have been identified as agricultural preservation areas.

Policy 1.D. Review zoning regulations pertaining to the City's agriculture and consider ways to minimize impacts and adverse effects to adjacent properties. Require a buffer between new residential developments and agricultural uses to minimize conflicts.

Policy 1.E. Support efforts to improve local and healthy food options in the community by ensuring that regulations do not prohibit community gardens and farmers markets. Promote programs such as farm to table, farm to school programs, farmer's markets, and local food expositions.

Policy 1.F. Encourage and support the continuation of existing farm operations near Baraboo as a means of recognizing their importance to the character, economy, and quality of life within the area.

Goal 2. Conserve the area's ground and surface water resources, natural resources, air quality, threatened and endangered wildlife, and wildlife habitats.

Policy 2.A. Cooperate with surrounding communities and non-profit land conservation agencies on preservation of natural resources which are under shared authority or cross government boundaries.

Policy 2.B. As state or federal regulations are amended, and as new development practices evolve, to further protect the City's groundwater, natural resources and greenways, and the water quality of the community, the City should update the following:

- » Shoreland ordinance
- » Floodplain ordinance
- » Stormwater Quality Management Plan requirements
- » Erosion Control ordinance
- » Wellhead Protection ordinance

Policy 2.C. Notify the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other applicable regulatory agencies where environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, are identified and/or being harmed.

Policy 2.D. Monitor available data from the DNR for updates on air quality in the area and consider adopting ordinances limiting outdoor uses that have a proven adverse impact on air quality.

Policy 2.E. Continue landscape requirements that encourage the preservation of the City's existing tree canopy and vegetation.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Policy 2.F. Encourage programs that educate citizens on the tools, programs, and incentives that protect the natural environment. Work with the County Forester, the university, and the school district to educate area youth on the importance of preserving the area's natural resources and heritage. Support programs that educate the public about the negative impacts of invasive species, ways to prevent their introduction, and processes to eradicate them.

Policy 2.G. New development should follow smart growth and infill development principles. Prioritize locations with existing infrastructure to reduce urban sprawl, impacts on natural habitats, and preserve natural resources.

Policy 2.H. Promote the social and economic value that natural amenities, wildlife habitats, and open spaces provide for the City and region.

Policy 2.I. Continue to use the Baraboo Range Preservation Program for the purchase of land or development rights in land to assure that properties will be protected forever.

Policy 2.J. Preserve wildlife habitats throughout the City, especially those with endangered or vulnerable species. Use sustainable and preservation practices, such as promoting invasive species prevention programs, encouraging native landscaping techniques, educating the public on ways to reduce impacts on habitats.

Goal 3: Develop hazard and natural disaster mitigation strategies.

Policy 3.A. Continue to collaborate with Sauk County on regional emergency management and hazard mitigation efforts to keep mitigation strategies current for critical infrastructure.

Policy 3.B. Continue emergency preparedness programs and continue efforts to mitigate common hazards such as fire, flooding, power outages, and other emergency events.

Policy 3.C. Consider potential hazards when reviewing development proposals. Carefully review proposals to perform construction or to fill in floodplain and wetland areas.

Policy 3.D. Ensure that emergency response procedures are well-communicated and coordinated between various City departments, regional entities, public/private services, and the public.

Goal 4. Preserve, enhance, and promote Baraboo’s small-town, historic character, and cultural resources.

Policy 4.A. Pursue designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) which allows municipalities to apply for Wisconsin Historic Preservation Fund subgrants, comment on National Register of Historic Places nominations within its municipal boundaries prior to State review, and authorizes the use of Chapter 11 of the International Existing Building Code for locally designated historic buildings. To pursue this designation, the following must be met:

- » The CLG must enact and enforce a historic preservation ordinance that regulates historic property.
- » A CLG must provide annual reporting to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on its activities.
- » The ordinance must not allow historic property owners to “opt-out” of local historic designation.
- » Designation must not require owner consent.
- » The commission must approve work on locally designated properties and recommendations may not be “advisory”.

Policy 4.B. Consider creating a Historic Preservation Plan for the downtown district to provide an organized framework that preserves historic properties. The Plan may prioritize individual buildings and districts for preservation and reinvestment, identify specific areas and opportunities for rehabilitation and redevelopment, and provide design guidelines that promote appropriate development and rehabilitation in a manner compatible with Downtown Baraboo’s historic character. The Plan might also identify strategic amendments to the Central Business (B-1) zoning district and surrounding neighborhoods to help preserve the historic character of the downtown area.

Policy 4.C. Consider the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission. At least 1 Commission member should have an architectural background and 1 Commission member should also be a member of the Sauk County Historical Society. Establishing a qualified Commission is an important component for acquiring and maintaining status as a Certified Local Government (CLG).

Policy 4.D. Promote state and federal tax credit benefits for properties with national historic designation.

Policy 4.E. Support community events and programs that celebrate the history and culture of Baraboo.

Goal 5. Encourage environmentally sensitive development to minimize negative impacts on the environment, including water quality and soil integrity.

Policy 5.A. Work with new developments to adequately plan stormwater infrastructure to capture, temporarily store, infiltrate, and slowly release rainwater from more frequently occurring larger rain events.

Policy 5.B. Review and modify the City’s zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance to incorporate additional green infrastructure requirements to reduce pollution from urban runoff. Such elements could include grassed/ bioswales, infiltration basins, bioretention facilities, native landscaping, porous pavement, and vacuum sweeping of large parking lots.

Policy 5.C. Encourage property owners to utilize programs that provide rebates for home retrofitting of sustainable technology.

Policy 5.D. Adopt standards to ensure that new development is constructed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

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CHAPTER 7

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7. Economic Development



7.1. INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a critically important function for the City of Baraboo. Without a strong tax base, there is insufficient revenue to make the types of investments successful communities require, including investments in education, transportation, safety, clean water, and compatible neighborhoods.

The Economic Development chapter provides a framework for public investment in economic development activities consistent with the overall goal of pursuing economic development that brings good, family-sustaining jobs to the City and supports the long-term growth and vitality of the city's neighborhoods, historic downtown, and commercial areas.

7.2. BACKGROUND DATA / EXISTING CONDITIONS

Labor Force

The labor force is the portion of the population that is 16 years or older who are employed or unemployed but actively seeking employment opportunities. As a business, it is helpful to know information about the population that will be depended on to fill open positions in the future. Baraboo’s population has grown steadily over the past several decades. Between 2023 and 2040, projections predict a 13.7% increase in the City of Baraboo’s population. The 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) shows Baraboo had a labor force participation rate of 65.6%, which is similar to the rate for Sauk County (67.5%). Labor force data is detailed in Table 7-1.



Table 7-1. Employment Status

	2011		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
City of Baraboo				
Persons Age 16 and Over	9,323	-	10,470	-
In Labor Force	6,495	69.7%	6,868	65.6%
Employed	5,969	64.0%	6,600	63.0%
Unemployed	526	5.6%	268	2.6%
Unemployment Rate	-	8.1%	-	3.9%
Sauk County				
Persons Age 16 and Over	48,541	-	52,183	-
In Labor Force	35,047	72.2%	35,232	67.5%
Employed	32,921	67.8%	34,358	65.8%
Unemployed	2,126	4.4%	874	1.7%
Unemployment Rate	-	6.1%	-	2.5%
Wisconsin				
Unemployment Rate	-	7.1	-	3.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

7. Economic Development

Educational Attainment

A helpful indicator of the economic potential of an area is the education attainment of its residents. Generally, a population with a higher level of education reflects a more skilled workforce with higher earning potential. A more skilled population can also be seen as an attractive quality for businesses considering relocating to a community.

According to the American Community Survey (2021), almost 91% of Baraboo adults (25 years and older) had a high school diploma or higher, and 26.3% have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, which is below the statewide average (31.5%) but higher than the Sauk County average (24.9%). Education data is detailed in Table 7-2 below.



Table 7-2. Educational Attainment

Highest Education	City of Baraboo				Sauk County			
	2017		2021		2017		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9th grade	131	1.6%	205	2.3%	1,171	2.7%	1,162	2.5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	651	7.8%	631	7.0%	2,811	6.4%	2,595	5.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,913	35.0%	2,460	27.1%	15,588	35.4%	15,128	33.1%
Some college, no degree	1,766	21.2%	1,971	21.7%	9,400	21.4%	9,623	21.1%
Associate's degree	771	9.3%	1,418	15.6%	4,723	10.7%	5,810	12.7%
Bachelor's degree	1,435	17.2%	1,804	19.9%	6,924	15.7%	8,051	17.6%
Graduate or professional degree	655	7.9%	580	6.4%	3,397	7.7%	3,317	7.3%
Note: Population 25 years and over								

Source: 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 7-3. Employment by Industry

Industry	2011		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	67	1.1%	88	1.3%
Construction	244	4.1%	250	3.8%
Manufacturing	997	16.8%	955	14.5%
Wholesale trade	347	5.8%	203	3.1%
Retail trade	843	14.2%	940	14.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	158	2.7%	258	3.9%
Information	113	1.9%	92	1.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	242	4.1%	320	4.8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	348	5.9%	461	7.0%
Educational, health and social services	1051	17.7%	1409	21.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	892	15.0%	1218	18.5%
Other services, except public administration	259	4.4%	68	1.0%
Public administration	378	6.4%	338	5.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment

Employment in Baraboo is led by two prominent industries. Educational, Health and Social Services Industry is the greatest with 21.3% of employment. The second leading industry is Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services with 18.5% of all employment (See Table 7-3).

In terms of the occupations of Baraboo’s labor force, approximately 36.8% of Baraboo’s labor force is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations, while 20.1% are employed in Service Occupations (See Table 7-4).

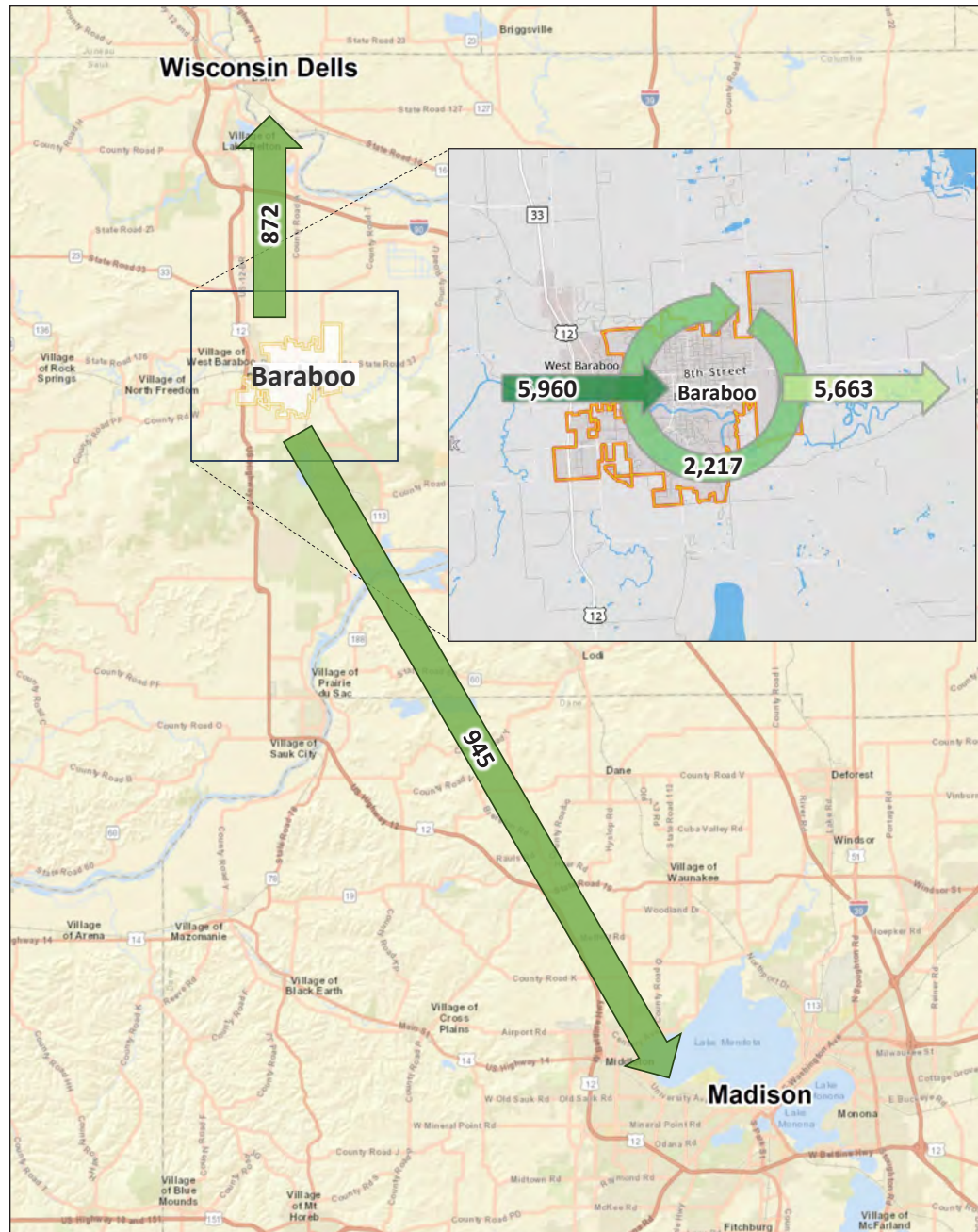
Table 7-4. Employment by Occupation

Occupation	2011		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	1,567	26.4%	2,431	36.8%
Service occupations	1,133	19.1%	1,329	20.1%
Sales and office occupations	1784	30.0%	1,304	19.8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	442	7.4%	463	7.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,013	17.1%	1,073	16.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

7. Economic Development

Figure 7-1. Commuting Patterns



Travel to Work

Nearly all employed Baraboo residents work in the state of Wisconsin and 76% work in Sauk County. According to the Resilient Baraboo – Economic Resiliency Planning Report (October 2022), Baraboo and West Baraboo have 5,663 outbound commuters, 5,960 inbound commuters, and 2,217 commuters that remain in the community. The three most common job destinations for commuters from Baraboo / West Baraboo include: Baraboo (1,989 commuters), Madison (945 commuters), and Lake Delton / Wisconsin Dells (872 commuters). (See Table 7-6).

Almost half (48.3%) of Baraboo residents travel less than 15 minutes to work, while 26.5% of residents travel more than 30 minutes to work. Detailed travel times to work are identified in Table 7-5.

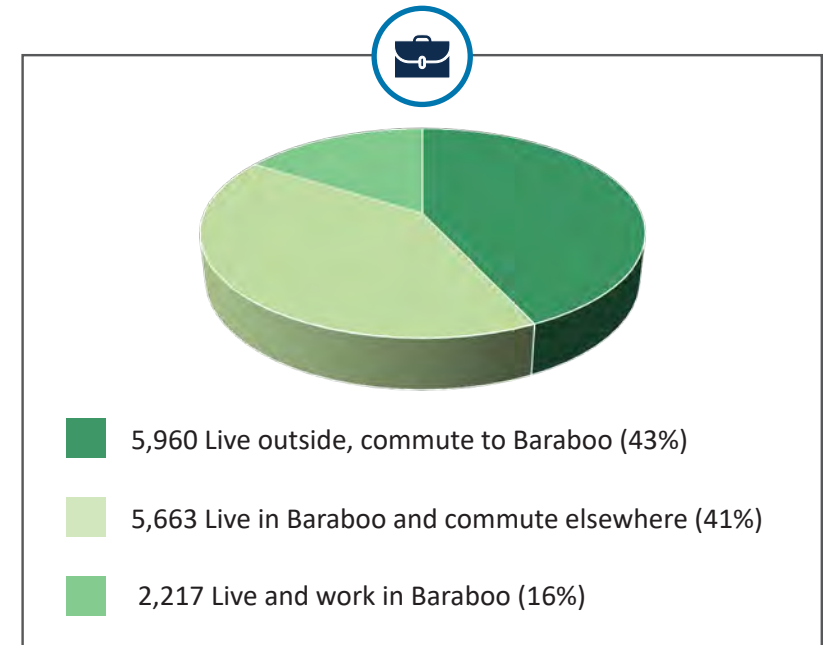


Table 7-5. Travel Time to Work for Baraboo Residents

Time	2011	2021
Less than 10 minutes	27.7%	34.4%
10 to 14 minutes	21.1%	13.9%
15 to 19 minutes	16.4%	10.1%
20 to 24 minutes	11.5%	9.7%
25 to 29 minutes	4.3%	5.4%
30 to 34 minutes	7.6%	7.7%
35 to 44 minutes	1.4%	5.9%
45 to 59 minutes	5.0%	7.5%
60 or more minutes	4.9%	5.4%
Mean travel time to work	18.6 min	21.3 min

Source: 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 7-6. Place of Work for Baraboo Residents

Location	2011	2021
Worked in state of residence	99.1%	99.5%
Worked in county of residence	82.3%	76.0%
Worked outside county of residence	16.8%	23.5%
Worked outside state of residence	0.9%	0.5%

Source: 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



The mode of transportation primarily taken to work is a car, truck, or van (88.4%) with the majority of travelers, driving alone (79.5%). There has been an increase in the percentage of residents that walk to work and residents who work from home (See Table 7-7).

Table 7-7. Means of Transportation to Work for Baraboo Residents

Travel Mode	2011	2021
Car, truck, or van <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drove alone • Carpooled 	94.2%	88.4%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	N/A	N/A
Walked	3.0%	4.2%
Bicycle	0.4%	0.0%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.0%	1.5%
Worked at home	1.4%	5.9%

Source: 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

7. Economic Development

7.3. ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The City of Baraboo's economy has both strengths and weaknesses which can continue to be improved to benefit the community's businesses and labor force. The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are based on a combination of public input, steering committee input, and analysis conducted by the planning team.

Strengths

- Proximity to Interstate 90/94 which provides access to regional markets like Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and the Twin Cities.
- Located in a naturally beautiful region with popular tourist attractions such as the Wisconsin Dells, Devil's Lake, Driftless Region, etc.
- Historic and vibrant downtown.
- Proximity to the growing Madison region.
- Strong mix of locally owned and chain or big box retail stores.
- Exceptional recreational opportunities including bicycling, hiking, fishing, boating, kayaking, golfing, etc.
- Diversity of businesses including manufacturing, agricultural-oriented businesses, construction services, small commercial and retail, and professional services.
- A quality school system and strong parks and recreation amenities.
- Small town feel attracts small business owners and visitors.
- Strong arts and culture scene for a small town.
- Rail access and proximity to Amtrak Station in Wisconsin Dells and Portage.



Weaknesses

- Roadways are in poor condition.
- Relatively few properties available for shovel-ready development.
- Aging population and decline in 18 and under population.
- Limited financial resources for development assistance.
- Lack of statewide budget and funding sources for growing infrastructure needs.
- Lack of housing options may discourage potential workers from relocating to Baraboo.
- Lack of childcare options and perceived school district reputation may discourage young families from moving to Baraboo or staying in Baraboo.



Opportunities

- Invest in existing and new recreational facilities.
- Leverage state and federal grants / funding to promote restoration and revitalization of historic buildings.
- Promotion of service-based small business for visitors.
- Focus on creating and expanding niche markets for tourism and manufacturing sectors. Maximize the eco-tourism market created by the City's natural assets and resources, such as the Baraboo River and Devil's Lake. Prioritize conservation of natural assets while expanding the outdoor recreation and eco-tourism markets.
- Promote facade improvement program for downtown property owners and fund annually.
- Encourage low intensity production uses to occupy former retail or office spaces. Some low intensity production uses include: 3-D printing studios, medical manufacturing, microbreweries, small scale food production, etc.
- Housing development for elderly and mid-market quality.
- Improved walkability of downtown, including enhanced connections to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Programming by Baraboo Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Baraboo, and the City to strengthen Baraboo's business climate.
- Additional housing, including workforce housing and a range of housing to meet market demands.
- Leveraging state and federal grants / funding to expand opportunities for active living, outdoor recreation, and biking and walking systems.
- Updates to the City's zoning ordinance to ensure City regulations lead to the types of developments intended and desired for the community.
- Encourage investments in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture practices.

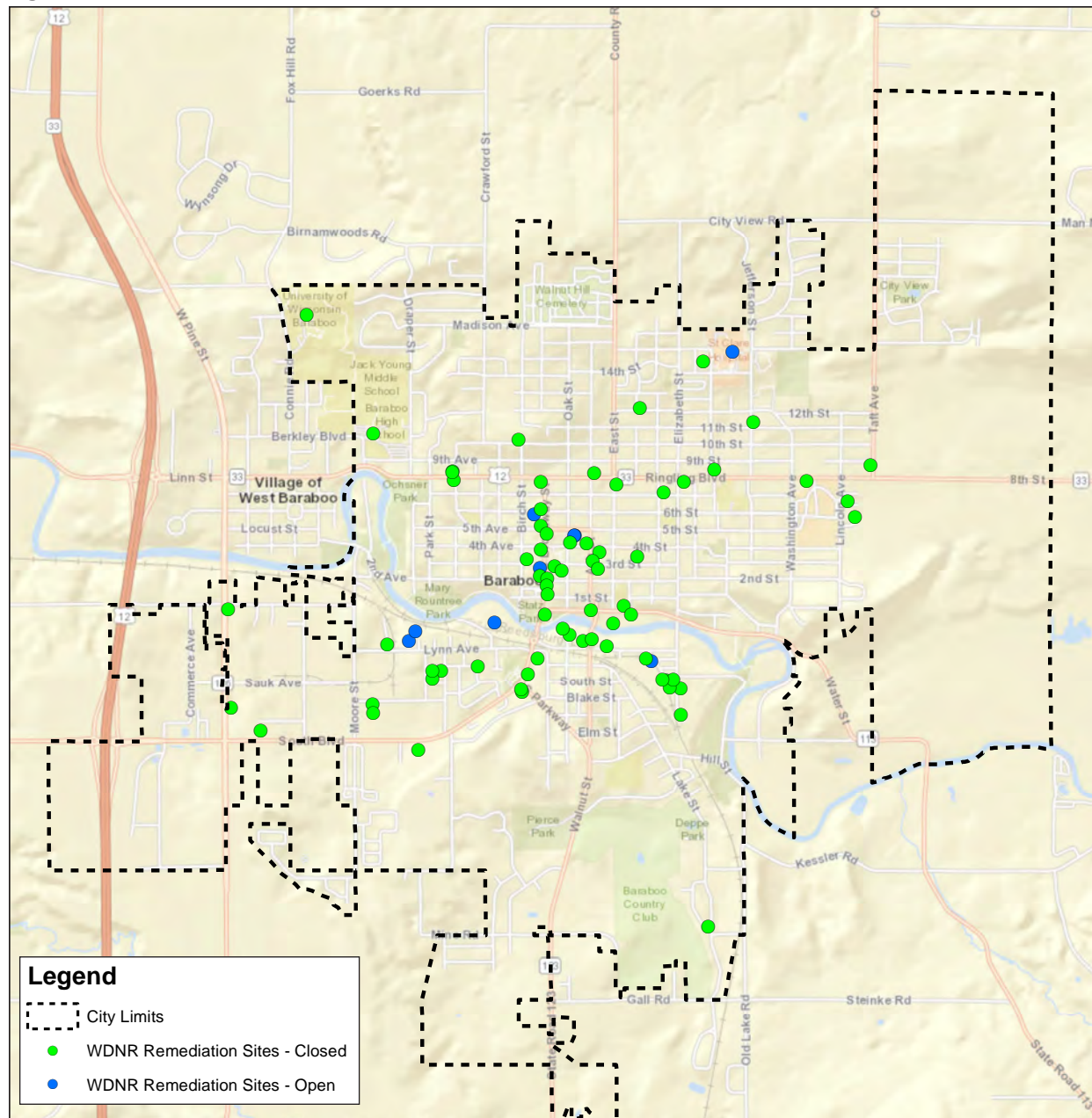
Threats

- Growth in the Madison / Middleton region could create challenges in maintaining a "small town feel".
- Lack of qualified workforce in certain industries.
- Online retailers will continue to compete with Baraboo's local businesses.
- Dramatic increase in inflation in the past few years has burdened many households in the region.
- Cost of living increases continue to rise while incomes are generally stagnant.
- City funding sources are limited due to State laws and State budget.
- Future development encroaches on and depletes natural assets that define Baraboo's character.



7. Economic Development

Figure 7-2. Remediation Sites



Brownfields and Contaminated Sites

Brownfields are locations that are contaminated, or believed to be contaminated, therefore limiting the potential for future development, redevelopment, or business expansions on the property. A brownfield site limits the economic activity of a site, affects the viability and aesthetics of the surrounding area, and potentially poses a threat to human health and the natural environment. There are often challenges to redeveloping on brownfield sites; however, these sites provide an opportunity to engage public and private funding sources in order to promote economic development. Redeveloping brownfields can transform blighted properties into quality, taxable properties which can improve local neighborhoods and corridors and increase nearby property values.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the City of Baraboo has 78 contaminated sites listed on the WDNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment map. More information regarding the specific locations, property ownership information, and status of remediation efforts for these sites is available from the WDNR. These contaminated sites may require special attention prior to redevelopment projects occurring.



WHAT WE HEARD - COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community input highlighted the following to strengthen the Baraboo's economy:



Prioritize attracting more activity and retail to the City's downtown business district



Desire to expand local businesses, services, and small-scale retail in the City.



General preference for locally-owned stores.



Strong desire for more grocery store options.



Preserve the historic character of the downtown is a top priority.



Strong desire for more childcare options



Encourage outdoor recreation related businesses



More Programming and events in the City's downtown

"Shops - stores that draw people downtown. The 'big box' stores have pretty much taken our downtown shoppers, where local stores closed. There must be a means to return some of those shops / stores back downtown."

"Encourage entrepreneurship through low interest loans, grants, and classes."

"A downtown grocery store of some sort is crucially missing. A grocery store that actually provides the staple foods in the downtown urban core would be useful to the incoming residents of current and future apartment construction."

7. Economic Development

7.4. ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE NEEDS

Key Trends

Emerging trends will shape Baraboo's future economy and appropriate economic development programs and policies of the City. The following are some of those emerging trends.

Workforce of the Future - Aligning Education and Work

Technological innovation will result in new jobs as well as changes to existing jobs. In turn, workers must develop the technical and non-technical skills necessitated by these changes. It is difficult to predict which skills workers will require in the future, but many high growth jobs share a need for workers who have both specialized technical expertise and the ability to adapt to change. The City should consider policies that target three main areas:

1. Supporting skills training that meets industry needs;
2. Communicating the skills businesses need; and
3. Engaging in state and regional efforts to close the skills gap.

Source: The Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association (NGA Solutions)

Globalization

An increasing number of products and services are free-flowing across international borders due to low-shipping costs, improved telecommunication, and global demand. This has expanded markets for some products, but also made certain prevalent industries in Baraboo vulnerable to competition.

Manufacturers seeking to be competitive while retaining local production seem to generally focus on niche markets or substitute technology for labor to increase productivity and decrease labor costs. Many incentives offered by state and federal programs do so to generate job creation or retention. This mismatch can leave some economic development organizations with few tools to assist companies looking to remain competitive without investing in manual labor production.

Businesses throughout Wisconsin have been engaged in efforts to combat globalization while focusing on "buy local" campaigns. This concept, whether business-to-business or business-to-consumer, looks to retain as much money in the local economy as possible.



Downtown Baraboo Inc. launched a "shop local" downtown campaign.

Entrepreneurship

Economic development is increasingly focused on promoting entrepreneurship. The Kauffman Growth Entrepreneurship Index, an indicator of how much entrepreneurial businesses are growing, identified trends in Wisconsin in 2021.

The New Employer Business series provides information on new employer businesses, a subset of all entrepreneurial activity. This series includes measures which capture trends in the emergence of these businesses, their representation in the population and among all firms, and the time it takes these businesses to make a first payroll.

	National Trend	State of WI Trend
Rate of New Employer Business Actualization	9.16%	9.37%
Rate of New Employer Businesses	0.15	0.10
New Employer Business Velocity	2.06	1.94
Employer Business Newness	6.98%	4.72%

The Kauffman Indicators of Early-Stage Entrepreneurship captures early-stage entrepreneurial activity, broadly defined. It includes four key early-stage measures of entrepreneurial activity.

	National Trend	State of WI Trend
Rate of New Entrepreneurs - Percentage of population that starts a new business	0.4%	0.2%
Opportunity Share of New Entrepreneurs - Percentage of new entrepreneurs who created a business by choice instead of necessity	80.9%	85.2%
Startup Early Job Creation - Average number of jobs created by startup in their first year, normalized by population	4.7	3.7
Startup Early Survival Rate - Percentage of startups that are still active after one year	81.7%	82.4%

National trends in early-stage entrepreneurship include:

- Overall, men are substantially more likely to start businesses each month than women.
- The rate of new entrepreneurs in 2020 was the highest among Latinos and lowest among African Americans.
- The 2020 rate of new entrepreneurs among immigrants is close to double than that for the native-born.
- The rate of new entrepreneurs was highest among Americans aged 45–54 and lowest among Americans aged 20–34.

Common practices adopted to encourage entrepreneurship include facilitating networking and collaboration, improving access to financing, providing training and education, offering supportive services such as incubators and technical assistance, and adopting favorable public policies.

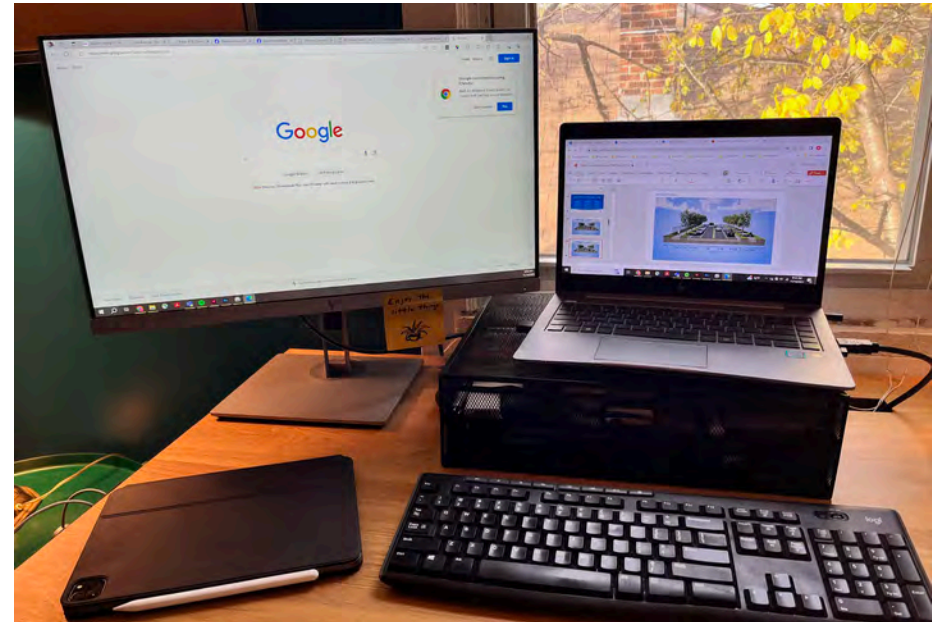
Most of the entrepreneurial programs that have been created are focused on a set of targeted industry sectors, such as high technology, manufacturing, or in some cases retail businesses. The most common entrepreneur, however, is a solo individual often starting a business within their own home. This includes a group of people recently termed “pajama entrepreneurs” or “third bedroom entrepreneurs”, who leverage their expertise to provide design, business and technical consulting, business management, and other services.

7. Economic Development

Remote Work

Working from home was gaining popularity prior to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, the pandemic forced many employees and employers to adopt the work from home model, at least for a short period. This has transformed the way businesses and their employees handle their operations and many new employees seek out jobs that allow some flexibility to work remotely.

Baraboo may be a desirable location for employees that are able to work from home or have a hybrid work schedule. Baraboo is approximately 45 minutes to the Middleton / Madison area, and some remote or hybrid workers may prefer to live in a more rural area like Baraboo and commute several times a week. Baraboo is a full service community with great recreation opportunities, small town feel, and a vibrant downtown that may attract young families and remote workers.



7.5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

There are a variety of local, regional, statewide, and federal economic development programs available to municipalities to assist them with supporting existing businesses and recruiting new businesses. Many of these the City already takes part in. In addition, there are programs available for individual businesses to assist in start-up and expansion.

There are four major categories of economic development programs:

- **Financial Incentives:** Programs which provide businesses with assistance to lower their financing costs. Examples include grants, low-interest business loans, equity financing, and business incubators.
- **Technical Assistance:** Programs which provide businesses and local jurisdictions with assistance through research, job training, information regarding marketing, regulations, and financial assistance programs.
- **Tax Incentives:** Tax credits and deductions which lower the tax liability of businesses and individuals who have contributed in some way to increase economic activity in the state. Specific tax incentives include tax incremental financing (TIF) and exemptions from sales tax on capital equipment.
- **Promotion / Coordination:** Activities, often with the cooperation of the private sector, promoting state or local economy or a specific sector of an economy.

Effectively using these programs and associated tools requires an investment by the community to provide resources such as staff to organize and manage these tools, foster partnerships, and secure and manage funding.

Federal, State, and Regional Economic Development Programs

Economic development programs the City of Baraboo and Baraboo businesses are involved with and / or utilize include:

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)

REAP creates economic development opportunities for rural businesses by supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency projects through loan guarantees and grants. The program provides assistance to qualified applicants to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Grants for up to 25% of total eligible project costs, are available, as are loan guarantees on loans for up to 75% of total eligible project costs.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural Economic Development Loan Program (RED Loan)

The Rural Economic Development Loan program provides funding to rural projects through local utility organizations to create and retain employment in rural areas. Funding can be used for building construction, equipment, working capital, or infrastructure. The program offers up to \$2,000,000 in financing, with as low as 1% interest and 10-year terms.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Administration (WHEDA)

WHEDA offers many financial assistance programs to assist small businesses and homeowners with low-interest loans and grants. WHEDA's mission is to "stimulate the state's economy and improve the quality of life for Wisconsin residents by providing affordable housing and business financing products."

Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA)

The DOA offers some financial assistance programs to assist small businesses with low-interest loans and grants, and communities with grants to build infrastructure necessary to accommodate business development.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

The WEDC offers programs that help with many areas of business development, including business planning, initial capitalization, site selection, permitting, regulations, employee training programs, economic development tax credits, and expansion programs.

7. Economic Development

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WisDOT has many programs that provide grants and loans to businesses and local communities for transportation related needs. The Transportation Economic Assistance and Development (TEA-Grant) Program, operated by WisDOT, offers grant money to communities or private businesses for transportation projects that will attract and retain businesses and jobs in the State of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation offers programs to companies that are looking to expand, relocate, or start-up in its service area. It also maintains lists of available land and marketing resources for communities in which it provides service.

Competitive Wisconsin, Inc.

Competitive Wisconsin is a nonpartisan coalition that engages business, higher education, agriculture, and labor and provides analysis and recommendations for action on issues affecting Wisconsin's economy and quality of life.

Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber supports and promotes the growth of businesses in Baraboo and works to enhance the quality of life for the surrounding community. The Chamber and its members strives to improve the economic conditions of the community, with emphasis on creating job opportunities and supporting businesses and tourism. The Chamber serves as a conduit, connecting a network of local businesses to developers, City staff, the public, and elected officials. The Chamber also provides an extensive business directory for the Baraboo area on the Chamber's website.

Downtown Baraboo

Downtown Baraboo, Incorporated (DBI) is a non-profit, voluntary corporation composed of small businesses and professional establishments located within the geographic boundaries of the central downtown business district of Baraboo. DBI operates for purposes of promoting and improving the physical appearance, economic well-being, management and coordination of the downtown business area. DBI strives to market Downtown Baraboo as a

destination for both tourism and also for our local and extended community, within the greater Sauk County Area.

City of Baraboo Community Development Authority (CDA)

The Community Development Authority (CDA) of the City of Baraboo was established in 1978 by combining the Baraboo Housing Authority with the Redevelopment Authority. The CDA's mission is to ensure affordable, attractive housing and to foster business and community development consistent with the general plan of the City of Baraboo. The CDA operates two apartment complexes as agent for the City, administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for housing rehabilitation and economic development loans for expansion of an existing business, as well as loans for start-up businesses.

Sauk County Development Corporation (SCDC)

The mission of the Sauk County Development Corporation (SCDC) is to promote and retain the diverse economic vitality of Sauk County and its individual communities. Some of the services the SCDC provides include:

- Partnering with public bodies and private organizations to nurture a civic and economic climate that supports and encourages local businesses.
- Facilitating the development and recruitment of a quality skilled workforce through public and private investment in employee development to meet the needs of Sauk County businesses.
- Nurturing and soliciting the growth of diverse industry, tourism, agri-business and other businesses that are compatible with local goals to fill County employment needs.
- Promoting stewardship of the County's natural resources and sensitive land development to promote sustainable development.
- Enhancing the economic health of the County by identifying trends and responding to new issues and opportunities in this era of global competition and rapid change.

- Impartially serving as a resource for all communities, businesses, and competing interests within Sauk County recognizing that our ultimate customers are the citizens of Sauk County.
- Bolster partnerships and networks that support economic development in the Sauk County region.
- Work to retain and grow existing businesses throughout Sauk County.
- Support and nurture entrepreneurs and business start-ups.
- Facilitate the attraction and retention of a quality, skilled workforce.
- Serve as a catalyst to further develop and strengthen the quality “livable communities” throughout Sauk County where skilled workers will want to live.
- Advocate for local and regional policies that are conducive to business development.

Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP)

Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP) is the economic development agency for the eight-county Madison Region of south-central Wisconsin, including Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock, and Sauk Counties. Through a comprehensive regional approach to economic development, the strategic pursuit of job creation and business growth in target clusters, and a coordinated talent development pipeline, MadREP leads the expansion and innovation of a dynamic economy where people and businesses thrive. MadREP serves as a partner and collaborator to the WEDC, state agencies, economic development initiatives within counties, chambers of commerce, and the private sector.

Some of the services MadREP provides include:

- Proactive business development, retention, and expansion efforts
- Targeted business attraction via outreach to site selection professionals and in response to prospect inquiries
- Strategic development of primary industries, including agriculture, information technology, life sciences, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing

- Expansion of international opportunities for regional businesses, including exporting and foreign direct investment
- Delivery and analysis of economic data that affects the Madison Region
- Mapping of industry supply chains to identify and address gaps, disconnects, and opportunities
- Convening education / workforce / talent development professionals and business / industry representatives to address human capital needs
- Support of physical innovative spaces and expansion of entrepreneurship resources across the region
- Technical assistance to start-ups and entrepreneurs, including help with market valuation, market position, and value proposition
- Marketing the Madison Region’s economic development assets and opportunities to national and international audiences
- Expanding access to business and leadership opportunities for emerging and minority professionals
- Convening the region’s economic development professionals to collaborate and leverage resources to achieve common goals

T-Mobile Hometown Grant

T-Mobile is committing up to \$25 million over the next 5 years to support small towns across the country by funding community projects. According to the grant criteria, the City is eligible to receive a grant up to \$50,000. This grant helps fund projects such as building, rebuilding, or refreshing community spaces such as improving parks, ballfields, libraries etc.

7. Economic Development

City of Baraboo Economic Development Programs

Incentive programs the City of Baraboo provides to spur economic development include the following:

City of Baraboo Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The City of Baraboo has used tax increment financing which has been successful in assisting with economic development. The use of TIF dollars in a sensible manner to promote and encourage private sector economic investments is important to ensuring the City's economic competitiveness. The "tax increment" is the amount of property taxes collected on the new development within a geographical area designated as a "[tax increment financing district](#)". The tax increment collected represents the new tax revenue for all taxing jurisdictions (i.e. City, County and school district). While there is a complex set of laws that govern tax increment financing, it can generally be used to promote industrial development, redevelopment, economic development, and affordable housing. Tax increment revenues can finance public infrastructure, site improvements, land acquisition and site preparation. The revenues can also be used to support debt in the form of tax increment bonds.

Public Private Partnerships are an innovative collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company that can be used to finance or build projects. Tax increment financing in Baraboo may be used to attract both business development and expansions, as well as residential development (including workforce housing) through incentives leveraged by this tool. By incentivizing development that provides larger public benefits, the City can utilize TIF to achieve economic development goals.

City of Baraboo Facade Improvement Program

The purpose of the Facade Improvement Program is to provide resources to assist City businesses and downtown building owners with their revitalization efforts within the Downtown Baraboo Business Improvement District. This program may be used to make improvements to any side of a building that is visible from a public right-of-way and resources available through the program include forgivable loans / grant funds, repayable loans and limited technical assistance from City and Community Development Authority for the City of Baraboo staff.

The Program is intended to finance high-quality building improvements that will improve the appearance and character of the BID revitalization area. The Program is not intended to finance routine repairs or maintenance that would be required under existing building codes or that does not contribute to the character of the downtown.



What is the Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC)?

The role of the BEDC is to advise the city council on matters related to economic development, such as business development, maintenance and development of commercial and industrial districts, and business attraction programs.

BEDC's mission statement is "To provide vision, collect data, and recommend policies that promote a sustainable, diverse, and resilient local economy while maintaining the essential qualities that make Baraboo unique."



The project team met with BEDC members to gather their input and ideas.



GOALS AND POLICIES

Outlined below are goals and policies that are aimed at guiding future economic development and supporting the vitality of business in the City of Baraboo. These goals and policies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1. Baraboo will maintain a sustainable and diversified economy for residents and businesses to prosper.

Policy 1.A. Encourage the development of locally owned and operated business.

Policy 1.B. Work with the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce and Sauk County Development Corporation to develop an active business retention and expansion visitation program, including an evaluation of existing retention efforts in future strategic planning ventures.

Policy 1.C. Encourage commercial and industrial development that will provide a benefit to the community, such as long-term employment that offer family-sustaining wages, services to the community, supply chain benefits, or other methods businesses that can positively contribute to Baraboo's quality of life.

Policy 1.D. Work with the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce and Sauk County Development Corporation to maintain and share an up-to-date inventory list of available industrial and commercial properties within Baraboo.

Policy 1.E. Encourage the creation of a community makerspace and/or business incubator to promote and support local entrepreneurs.

Policy 1.F. Work with local community organizations and groups, including churches and non-profits, to organize events and make available otherwise underutilized facilities to small businesses for entrepreneurship.

Policy 1.G. Increase relevant job training and skill development. Use this to address labor needs of existing businesses.

Policy 1.H. Work with the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce to promote the tourism and outdoor recreation industries and increase revenue for existing businesses, such as restaurants, retail stores, and lodging.

Policy 1.I. Create a policy for use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Goal 2: Enhance Baraboo's identity as a healthy, safe, sustainable, and attractive city that provides a high quality of life that attracts and retains a creative, skilled labor force.

Policy 2.A. Attract businesses that provide family care services and resources (e.g., childcare, elderly care, etc.) to retain and attract families.

Policy 2.B. Enhance Baraboo's image as a healthy and active community. Continue to develop the sidewalk and trail network and enhance parks and natural areas as key components of the city's green infrastructure.

Policy 2.C. Coordinate land use, housing policies, and land development regulations to support an adequate supply of good quality workforce housing.

Policy 2.D. Continue to enhance the visual character of travel corridors with landscaping, decorative lighting, and up-to-date accessibility features (i.e., curb ramps, countdown timers, marked crosswalks, etc.).

7. Economic Development

Goal 3: Identify ways to address the “Brain Drain” issue to retain and attract young people to Baraboo. The City should actively increase the appeal of the community to young residents and new graduates.

Policy 3.A. Support increased opportunities and financial programs for first-time home ownership.

Policy 3.B. Continue to develop and maintain the downtown area, cultural attractions, community events, dining and shopping options, and leisure opportunities that contribute to the community’s high quality of life.

Policy 3.C. Collaborate with local schools and secondary education institutions to promote local trade and business opportunities for graduates.

Policy 3.D. Support the creation of planned, mix of housing types and uses within the city, including the neighborhoods that cater to younger residents with design elements such as condominiums, small lot sizes, mix of land uses, parks, trails, and similar amenities. These elements may also be an attractive option for empty nesters and senior citizens.

Policy 3.E. Continue to foster the Baraboo young professionals organization that focuses on networking and educational opportunities.

Policy 3.F. Support the traditional trades and skilled labor as a vital component of the community and provide “upskill” and knowledge enhancement opportunities resulting in a more resilient and adaptive workforce.

Goal 4: Promote and encourage smart growth principles to direct growth in areas that have existing infrastructure, reduce sprawl, and preserve natural areas and farmland.

Policy 4.A. Promote planned commercial development in concentrated areas and discourage unplanned, incremental strip commercial development along major community corridors.

Policy 4.B. Promote compact and walkable neighborhoods that accommodate work-from-home lifestyles.

Policy 4.C. Implement the recommendations in the Redevelopment Opportunities Map to promote and encourage the infill development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation opportunities highlighted.

Policy 4.D. Establish regulatory and financial incentives programs to support redevelopment and adaptive reuse of underutilized, blighted, and/or vacant properties.

Policy 4.E. Implement the recommendations provided in the Future Land Use Map to provide efficient and logical expansion areas for new office, commercial, and industrial areas on the southwest side of the community, and the City should consider reserving designated sites for such development from premature development by other land uses.

Policy 4.F. Implement the recommendations provided in the Future Land Use Map to provide for new commercial development opportunities on both the east and west sides of the community, and the City should consider reserving designated sites for such development from premature development by other land uses.

Goal 5: Continue to strengthen Baraboo’s downtown as the key central business district and core of the community.

Policy 5.A. Maintain and enhance downtown Baraboo as a hub for unique shopping and entertainment opportunities.

Policy 5.B. Inventory existing regional programs and consider creating additional local small grant and loan programs that may encourage economic activity, including funding that may preserve unique, historic assets and renovate existing downtown buildings.

Policy 5.C. Continue to adequately fund the downtown façade program and consider revising the program to allow for financial assistance for converting or improving downtown upper floors into residential units.

Policy 5.D. Amend the City’s B-1 Central Business zoning district to permit the construction of a limited number of multi-family housing complexes and increase number of patrons for downtown businesses.

Policy 5.E. Identify and develop a mixed-use zoning district that allows multi-family housing developments and increases density surrounding the downtown area.

Policy 5.F. Consider implementing community arts programs for the downtown area (i.e., murals, utility box painting, crosswalk painting).

Policy 5.G. Develop a downtown signage and wayfinding plan to direct pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The Plan should include a common theme to enhance the appearance of Baraboo’s downtown.

Policy 5.H. Develop a downtown master plan and incorporate elements from the City of Baraboo Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan (2006) to identify and prioritize downtown improvements, including opportunities to develop a public- private partnership for redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized buildings.

Policy 5.I. Provide mixed-use developments that incorporate multiple uses and create a people-centered environment.

Policy 5.J. Host events for residents and visitors downtown on a regular basis.

Policy 5.K. Consider designation to become a member of the [Wisconsin Main Street Program and Connect Communities program](#) to receive technical support and training in revitalizing Downtown Baraboo.

7. Economic Development

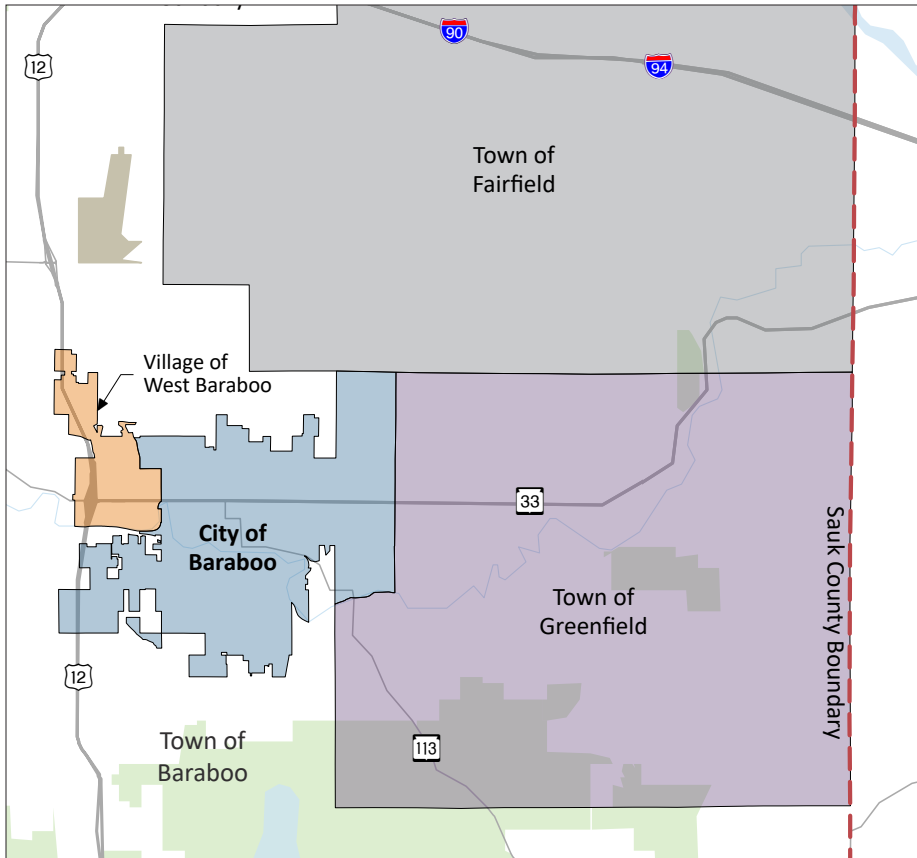
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CHAPTER 8

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

8. Intergovernmental Cooperation



8.1. INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental cooperation is an important tool needed to operate municipalities in an efficient and cost-effective manner, as well as to control and promote growth in an orderly fashion for City of Baraboo residents and businesses along with the adjacent units of government. The intent of this chapter is to identify, inventory, and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships. The Plan element establishes goals and related policies for guiding future intergovernmental activities.

Per the requirements of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes goals, objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision-making; references all plans and agreements to which the City is a party under §66.0301, §66.0307, or §66.0309, Wisconsin Statutes; and identifies known existing or potential conflicts between this Comprehensive Plan and the plans of adjacent villages, towns, Sauk County, State of Wisconsin, and the Baraboo School District.

8.2. BACKGROUND

The City of Baraboo has a Mayor-Council form of government organized under Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 62 since its incorporation. The City of Baraboo is located in Sauk County and neighbors the Village of West Baraboo, Town of Fairfield, Town of Greenfield, and Town of Baraboo. The City of Baraboo is located in Wisconsin's 2nd congressional district, WI Senate District 27, and WI Assembly District 81.

Federal, State, regional agencies, and local units of government cooperate with the City of Baraboo on a range of economic, transportation, recreation, natural resource, and social service initiatives and programs. The City should continue to foster positive communication and cooperation with these entities.

8.3. EXISTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Intergovernmental Plans, Agreements, and Relationships

The City of Baraboo currently has a cooperative boundary agreement in place with the Town of Greenfield. This agreement was established in 2008 for the purpose of establishing boundaries and facilitating orderly growth as the City intends to maximize population density within City limits before adding new lands.

Other indirect relationships exist between neighboring jurisdictions, the Baraboo School District, Sauk County, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and several other State agencies. Enhancing the relationship of the City with all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions can and will advance dialogue and actions necessary to ready the City for future changes in land use and growth pressures.

Village of West Baraboo

The Village of West Baraboo is located directly west of the City of Baraboo and has a current population of 1,627 people. The City provides sanitary sewer and municipal water service to the Village. There are some areas located in the Town of Baraboo, to the south of the Baraboo River, that are shown on the Village's future land use map and these areas also border city limits. There is potential for conflict in this area due to the Village anticipating this area to be used for residential and institutional uses and the future land use map for the City identifies this area as generally suitable for commercial. The City could consider meeting with the Village and the Town of Baraboo to discuss the future plan for this area in greater detail. The City currently provides sanitary sewer service to the village.

Town of Baraboo

The Town of Baraboo generally surrounds the City of Baraboo and has a population of 1,816. The Town of Baraboo Comprehensive Plan identified the following land use conflicts: ongoing conflicts between the desire to protect scenic areas, rural character, and agricultural lands with increased development pressure and private property owner's interests; maintaining low taxes with a predominantly residential and agricultural land use base; annexations by the City of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo; and increased traffic resulting from commercial growth along the Highway 12 corridor and residential growth on the edges of West Baraboo and the City of Baraboo. The Town's comprehensive plan also suggests allowing clustered housing as an option within the City's extraterritorial area and maintaining equitable shared-service agreements.

The City currently provides sanitary sewer service to a portion of the town.

Town of Fairfield

The Town of Fairfield had a population of just over 1,078 persons in 2020. The Town is located to the northeast of the City of Baraboo. The town prioritizes protecting its prime agricultural lands and natural resources. The Town's comprehensive plan recommends low-density conservation residential development and is generally not supportive of commercial or industrial growth. The southwest portion of the town is located within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction and the majority of this area is identified as Extraterritorial Planning District in the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The intent of this Extraterritorial Planning Area is to promote regional cooperation with the City to allow for limited, planned rural growth. Any proposed land divisions within this area are recommended to utilize clustering and conservation development guidelines. The intent of this district is to work with the City to allow limited clusters (3 home maximum) in which remaining land is preserved to be undeveloped. There are no conflicts with the Plan at the moment.

8. Intergovernmental Cooperation

Town of Greenfield

The Town of Greenfield is located to the east of Baraboo. In 2020, the Town had a population of 911. The Town prioritizes conserving the township's natural assets and rural character by managing development to support sustainable land uses including agriculture and forestry. The Town's land use plan comprised of three land use districts: Agricultural Preservation District, Forest Preservation District, and Environmental Conservancy District.

The City of Baraboo and the Town of Greenfield have a cooperative boundary agreement in place to identify future growth areas and to facilitate orderly development within these areas. Within this agreement, there were several boundary adjustment areas broken down into three phases. The 1st phase resulted in land to the east of Highway T annexing into the City. The 2nd and 3rd phase identified potential future growth areas to the east of annexed areas, but only after a certain timeline and substantial development occurred, as defined in the boundary agreement. There has not been sufficient substantial development to meet the criteria to annex areas identified in phase 2 and 3. The City agreed that in exchange for the boundary changes as set forth in the boundary agreement the City will not initiate, support, or approve any annexation within the Town unless such annexation is specifically approved by a resolution of the Town. Also, the City agreed that the City will not purchase land within the Town, unless the purchase is specifically approved by resolution of the Town. The boundary agreement also mentions the creation of a joint committee on extraterritorial zoning for areas identified in Phase 2 & 3, but a committee has not been established yet.

Sauk County

Sauk County has adopted several long range plans, including the 2025 to 2029 Sauk County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Great Sauk State Trail Cooperative Plan, Baraboo River Corridor Plan, and the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan. The Sauk County Comprehensive Plan (2009) focused on promoting sustainability through the implementation of objectives which address facets of viable community development, such as land use, educational opportunities, and transportation. One of the major recommendations that has been realized is the realignment of Highway 12.

There are no apparent existing or potential conflicts with this Comprehensive Plan.

Baraboo School District

The Baraboo School District functions as a separate organization to the City of Baraboo. The District serves the City of Baraboo, Villages of West Baraboo and North Freedom, the Towns of Baraboo, Fairfield, and Greenfield; and portions of the Towns of Delton, Excelsior, Freedom, Merrimac, and Sumpter. There are no known conflicts between the Comprehensive Plan and the various adopted plans and policies of the Baraboo School District.

Baraboo Fire and EMS District

Baraboo Area Fire and EMS District (BAFED) works under a joint agreement between five communities: City of Baraboo, Village of West Baraboo, and townships of Baraboo, Greenfield and Fairfield and contracts services with the Town of Excelsior. The District building is located at 135 4th Street with two new Fire/EMS stations planned beginning on 2024.

Regional Agencies

The City of Baraboo—and all of Sauk County—is not located within a Regional Planning Commission’s (RPC) planning jurisdiction. Typically, an RPC has the function of preparing and adopting a master plan for the physical development of the region.

State Agencies

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are the primary state agencies the City of Baraboo coordinates with to achieve the goals and objectives of the Plan.

The WDNR provides service to all Sauk County residents out of its South Central Wisconsin office in Poynette and Madison. WisDNR has been active in natural area planning and acquisition around Baraboo and is designated as the water quality management planning agency for Sauk County. The Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is the state agency which administers the state’s Farmland Preservation Program for farm owners in the surrounding towns. There are no known conflicts between the City’s plan and the plans and actions of these State agencies.

The WDOT Southwest District, located in Madison, serves all of Sauk County. The District office was notified of all transportation-related issues affecting the City to ensure ongoing communication and so that potential conflicts could be identified and discussed during the planning process.



8. Intergovernmental Cooperation

8.4. POTENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICTS

Baraboo's Comprehensive Plan is designed to minimize conflicts with neighboring jurisdictions, while at the same time balance the needs of a growing, vibrant community. The City can annex land to accommodate for future growth and conflicts may arise between the City and surrounding towns due to the perceived loss of tax base. Most of the surrounding township lands are currently in farm use or environmentally sensitive areas. The amount of Town taxes collected from farmed lands is relatively small due to the State of Wisconsin policy of taxing farm land as an agricultural use, and therefore, loss of tax base is typically not a large financial impact to the townships. Current State law requires the annexing village to compensate the Town from which property is annexed with what the tax collections would have been for the annexed property for a period of five years.

Future roads constructed near city limits have the potential to cause conflict with adjacent municipalities. Adopting a common Official Streets map can help the City plan for future roads while also identifying future road connections with nearby municipalities to ensure that the roads are properly located. Surrounding municipalities and the County should be involved during the planning process.

Timing of future development is potentially an issue of conflict. Development on larger lots using on-site waste disposal can be an impediment to future City expansion. Prevention of premature development while allowing a reasonable use of the land owner's property will have to be addressed. Development decisions will continue to reside with the property owner. Coordinating development timing among various independent owners will likely continue to be a challenge.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

The City of Baraboo recognizes the importance of coordinating with neighboring communities. If conflicts arise, initial attempts to resolve such conflicts could involve written or face-to-face communication between elected or appointed community officials. If these efforts do not result in a mutually satisfactory agreement, more formal conflict resolution methods could be explored, such as mediation or arbitration. When there's potential for intergovernmental conflict, it may benefit the local governments and interested parties to review countywide and regional planning objectives and policies to determine whether local interests are consistent with regional goals. Alternative dispute resolution techniques are available as described in Wisconsin State Statutes 802.12. While this section considers intergovernmental conflict resolutions specifically, similar conflict resolution methods may be leveraged to handle disputes with elected officials, residents, business owners, and City employees as applicable.

Potential Subjects of Dispute:

- Annexations/boundary disputes
- Land use compatibility/rezoning proposals
- Sharing staff, facilities, or equipment
- Renting equipment
- Joint purchasing
- Revenue sharing
- Municipal service/maintenance agreements

Methods for Conflict Mitigation:

- Open discussion prior to decision making
- Sharing planning documents (ex. comprehensive plans)
- Participating in regional planning (ex. regional housing studies, regional transportation plans, county future land use mapping etc.)
- When adopting/amending local policies, compare the policies of adjacent municipalities
- Meet with adjoining jurisdictions

- Extraterritorial review agreements
- Cooperative boundary agreements
- Revenue sharing agreements
- Public outreach and education
- Adopting special use districts

Methods for Resolving:

- Open discussion
- Negotiation
- Facilitated or mediated negotiation
- Litigation

8.5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

Moving forward, an open and continuous dialogue between the City of Baraboo, Sauk County, and other governmental jurisdictions will result in cooperative and mutually beneficial efforts. These efforts are critical to the future planning and development of public and shared services. Without the coordination and cooperation of local governmental jurisdictions, decisions critical to preserving and enhancing local and regional characteristics, activities, and natural resources will be compromised.

As growth and land use changes continue in the area, especially near the Madison area, development in the Baraboo region may be a contentious topic. Collaboration with communities in the region to attract new development and retain existing businesses is vital. Continued work with adjacent jurisdictions towards cooperative boundary agreements would also reduce contention and potential conflict.

The City of Baraboo will seek to cooperate with all neighboring municipalities, county and state agencies, and the school district for mutual benefit. To ensure compatibility with the planning goals and objectives identified in the City of Baraboo’s Comprehensive Plan, the City will share their plan with adjacent communities and agencies and would like to participate in future planning efforts with these entities.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

The City of Baraboo recognizes the importance of coordinating with neighboring communities. If conflicts arise, initial attempts to resolve such conflicts could involve written or face-to-face communication between elected or appointed community officials. If these efforts do not result in a mutually satisfactory agreement, more formal conflict resolution methods could be explored, such as mediation or arbitration. Alternative dispute resolution techniques are available as described in Wisconsin State Statutes 802.12.

8. Intergovernmental Cooperation



GOALS AND POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and recommended strategies for implementation of intergovernmental cooperation were developed through public input and consideration of current and future needs.

Goal 1: Effectively communicate and collaborate with state agencies, regional organizations, overlapping jurisdictions, and adjacent municipalities.

Policy 1.A. Provide a copy of this Comprehensive Plan to all surrounding local governments.

Policy 1.B. Work with adjacent jurisdictions to encourage an orderly, efficient land use pattern and protect groundwater quality and the natural environment within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction in a manner that forwards the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1.C. Work with adjacent jurisdictions to efficiently utilize and expand the utility and public facilities networks within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Policy 1.D. Cooperate with Sauk County and neighboring jurisdictions on comprehensive planning efforts, including the determination of future municipal boundary changes, consolidation of services, land use policies, and extraterritorial decisions.

Policy 1.E. Work with the Baraboo School District on school district planning, potential school siting, joint recreational spaces and programming, and other areas of mutual concern.

Policy 1.F. Consider creating development plans for the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction to guide the land use and development in a manner that forwards the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan. Invite all impacted municipalities to discuss potential growth opportunities and identify potential conflicts prior to publishing said development plan.

Policy 1.G. Consider adopting a policy for notifying surrounding municipalities of projects or developments within a specified distance of an adjacent municipality.

Policy 1.H. Coordinate with adjacent municipalities on the extension and connection of regional trails and bike paths.

Policy 1.I. Coordinate with WisDOT on land use and transportation decisions which may impact the City. Regular communication and participation in decisions will be an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Policy 1.J. Actively participate, review, monitor, and comment on pending comprehensive plans or other planning projects for nearby communities and Sauk County.

Policy 1.K. Cooperate with impacted municipalities, planned neighborhood developers, and the Baraboo School District on proposed neighborhood development plans.

Policy 1.L. Exercise extraterritorial powers where necessary to protect City interests or where intergovernmental cooperation efforts do not yield desirable results.

Policy 1.M. Continue exploring improvements to Devils Lake State Park by collaborating with the WisDNR, Sauk County, and the Town of Baraboo.

Goal 2: Create or revise boundary agreements with adjacent municipalities.

Policy 2.A. Review existing boundary agreement with the Town of Greenfield and evaluate whether the agreement should be amended to reflect existing conditions and vision between the City and Town.

Policy 2.B. Explore the possibility of creating a joint boundary agreement with the Town of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo. If created, the Plan should identify potential areas for urban growth and areas to remain rural in character. Additionally, the agreement can explore new shared service agreements.

Policy 2.C. Establish regular, formal discussions of mutual concern with the Village of West Baraboo, Town of Baraboo, and Town of Greenfield.

8. Intergovernmental Cooperation

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CHAPTER 9 LAND USE

9. Land Use



9.1. INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the activities that take place on the land and parcels that make up a community's land area. Land uses generally respond to market forces and community plans and policies such as the comprehensive plan, zoning code, and other policy documents. The land uses in a community also respond to regional economic, social, and structural trends. Well-guided land use aligns the City's resources, promotes equitable development, and ensures compatibility among nearby uses.

Defining appropriate land uses involves more than making ecological and economical choices. It is also about retaining values, lifestyles, cultural assets, and community character, as identified by community members. While planning for future land use may sometimes be perceived as encroaching on private property rights, its true purpose is to safeguard individual rights and empower landowners, citizens, and local communities to shape their own future. The land use plan is also a transparent tool for the community and developers to use when considering investments. Together the land use text and associated Future Land Use Plan describe how land is to be used and how it should function for the next 20 years.

Many communities similar to Baraboo are facing problems due to unplanned growth, such as pollution, a loss of community character, traffic congestion, and sprawling development. Infrastructure and maintenance costs can place a heavy burden on local governments and negatively impact taxpayers. Local governments often have public infrastructure and facilities that their tax base can sustain and building more infrastructure further increases the burden on local governments and makes them more fragile. By giving communities the opportunity to define the way they wish to grow and by developing a vision to reach that target, the extent of these problems can be actively prevented or minimized, while preserving the character and values.

This chapter evaluates background data and trends to establish and define land use classifications that are applied across the city's jurisdiction. It sets a guide, that works along with the other comprehensive elements of the Plan, for development and redevelopment of land for future growth in the City of Baraboo. The Plan will be implemented through private and public investment in land development, as well as through more detailed planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances, public improvements, and public-private partnerships.

9.2. LAND USE TODAY

Baraboo has been developed and defined by its edges in a natural “bowl” of the Inner Baraboo Valley. Development in Baraboo has primarily followed the natural contours and major transportation corridors; such as U.S. Highway 12 and STH 33, 113 and 123, the Baraboo River running through the middle of the City, Devil’s Lake State Park to the south, and lands with slopes greater than 20 percent located to the east. The City has continued to expand to the north, south, and southwest over the past two decades. Baraboo’s development continues to encroach on the surrounding natural amenities that define the city’s character.

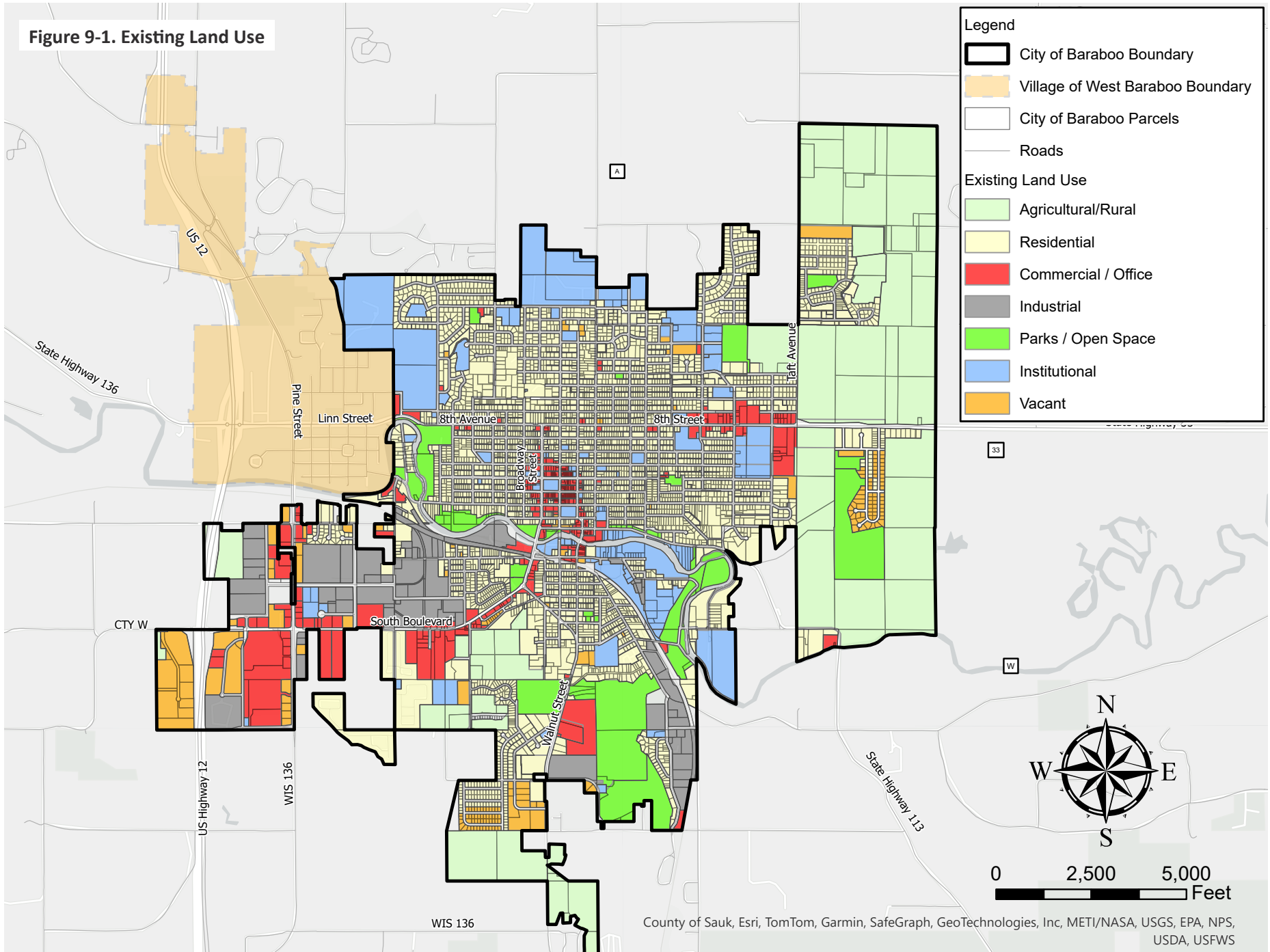
Through 2024, residential continues to make up Baraboo’s largest land use with over 1,330 acres (31.7% of the total land area). Table 9-1 and Figure 9-1 show the current land use categories and total acreages. Agriculture is the second largest land use (29.8% of the total land area), which is predominantly located on the outer portions of the City.

Table 9-1. Existing Land Use

City of Baraboo		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Residential	1,375.3	33.0%
Agricultural	1,161.0	27.9%
Institutional	455.4	10.9%
Parks / Open Space	342.6	8.2%
Commercial	319.1	7.7%
Industrial	303.7	7.3%
Vacant	208.4	5.0%
TOTAL	4,165.4	100.0%



9. Land Use





SHAPING COMMUNITY GROWTH

Factors influencing the type and location of future development in Baraboo include, demographics, real estate trends, markets, capacity of local and regional infrastructure, and the pattern of existing development.

Future development should prioritize infill development to minimize urban sprawl as much as possible. This also acknowledges that infill development cannot always meet community needs, especially considering the pressing housing demand. Greenfield development and growth should balance the need to expand while prioritizing the conservation of natural assets that define Baraboo's character and minimize the financial burden placed on public infrastructure and resources.

Key factors influencing the shape of the Future Land Use Plan include:

- Baraboo's population and number of households has grown during the past decades and is expected to experience steady growth over the next twenty years.
- In 2022, the City of Baraboo completed a Housing Study that projected housing needs for the next five years. It indicated that low vacancy rates suggest that there is a significant demand and a lack of options for housing in Baraboo. The housing shortage, which is consistent with the entire country, continues to raise land values and unit prices.
- In 2022, the city had commitments from developers and contractors to build over 1,000 housing units by 2027. These units include a mix of housing types, such as single-family, multi-family apartments, and duplexes. Some duplex units will target entry-level, workforce, or senior housing buyers. Many of these units will be built in undeveloped greenfields.
- Baraboo's Riverfront has been a key area for redevelopment to expand attractive residential, commercial, park and open spaces, and industrial uses along the Baraboo River.
- There is a continued desire to keep the downtown area a community focal point that reinforces Baraboo's character and serves as one of its economic drivers.
- Popularity of online commerce will continue to hasten the decline of aging, outdated commercial developments.



9. Land Use



These factors suggest:

- People in Baraboo will be seeking a variety of housing products from multi-family to single family, rentals to owner-occupied. As the City allocates land for residential uses, it can encourage an appropriate mix of housing types to meet demand. This may require more land within the city's boundaries or new land to be annexed to be classified as residential or mixed use.
- As possible, future residential land uses should include a mix of densities and attempt to avoid having one predominant type of residential development. The City can continue to use various development incentives and funding strategies, like tax increment funding (TIF) and bonds to encourage a mix of housing types.
- The city should identify land surrounding its downtown that can be reclassified to include a mix of uses, including residential and commercial.
- The City should continue to identify potential areas that can accommodate growth and demand. Sites that currently have access to existing utilities and infrastructure should be the top priority to minimize unnecessary sprawl.



9.3. FUTURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

This Comprehensive Plan establishes a set of future land use categories (Table 9-2 and Figures 9-2 and 9-3) that reflect both the City’s current land use patterns and desired development patterns over the next twenty years. In some cases, future uses are different from what occurs today. The transition of these properties from their current use to the recommended future use is expected to occur over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land. Other recommendations will be implemented through planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances, public improvements, and public and private partnerships.

The goals of the Future Land Use Map are to accomplish the following:

- Grow as a compact, efficient, and financially sustainable community.
- Strengthen the vitality and role of the downtown as the City’s economic hub.
- Facilitate the development of a variety of housing options.
- Support the growth of business and industry, with increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Leverage transportation system improvements, including roads, trails, and sidewalks to connect land uses, support development and encourage economic growth.
- Consider annexation where financially sustainable.
- Preserve natural amenities within the city’s boundaries. Minimize unnecessary development and sprawl to preserve natural amenities surrounding the city.
- Increase the quality of life through thoughtful land use decisions.

Future land use areas and zoning districts are different. Zoning districts contain specific requirements and standards for the development of land, such as height limitations, setbacks, and types of uses. The land use categories are meant to be more general, allowing for greater flexibility in making land use and zoning decisions. The future land use map and future land use descriptions should be used by City staff and officials as a general guide to adjust zoning maps and to provide recommendations and decisions on rezoning and other development requests.

Table 9-2. Future Land Use

City of Baraboo		
Type of Land Use	Acres	%
Medium Density Residential	986.9	23.7%
Planned Neighborhood Mixed Use	703.6	16.9%
Institutional	428.1	10.3%
Low Density Residential	416.5	10.0%
Parks and Open Space	404.3	9.7%
Mixed Commercial	319.0	7.7%
Agriculture, Rural, or Vacant	190.8	4.6%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	174.1	4.2%
Office and Light Industrial	156.3	3.8%
High Density Residential	148.6	3.6%
General Industrial	135.3	3.2%
Riverfront Mixed Use	55.0	1.3%
Mixed Use Downtown	35.8	0.9%
Urban Reserve Area	9.9	0.2%
TOTAL	4,164.3	100.0%

9. Land Use



Low Density Residential Neighborhood

Identifies residential development with a mix of single-family detached homes, and two-and-three family homes that are stacked and/or share common walls.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: 5 or less units/acre.

***Note for all residential land uses:** The gross densities are not rigid, but rather show the preferred densities. When determining the density, the calculation should include units and acreage from the entire block the lot is a part of and not just a single interior lot. Additionally, any existing or proposed rights-of-ways should be excluded from the land area density calculation.



Medium Density Residential Neighborhood

Identifies residential development with a mix of housing types, including single family detached and attached homes, twin homes, townhomes, duplexes, row-houses, and moderate density multi-family housing consisting of attached and detached housing units.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: 3 to 10 units/acre.



High Density Residential Neighborhood

Identifies residential development with a mix of multi-family housing types that are stacked and share common walls, including apartment buildings and condominiums.

Depending upon size, neighborhoods will include a private or public playground or neighborhood park and will be served by an interconnected network of public streets providing sidewalks and/or trails and on-street parking along at least one side of the street. Neighborhoods may also include a small commercial use such as a convenience/gas station, corner store, or childcare center.

Gross density: 6 or more units/acre.



Neighborhood Mixed Use

Intended to allow a variety of residential and commercial uses that maintain a neighborhood scale and pedestrian orientation. It allows a mix of residential uses including multi-family or clustered housing types, such as detached single-family homes and large apartment buildings. It also allows a variety of commercial uses catering to the needs of the neighborhood, such as retail, restaurant, specialty businesses, services, or civic uses.

Development should include connection and integration into neighborhoods, with buildings oriented towards streets with parking placed behind or next to primary buildings.

This district is generally intended for areas that are already developed. The City should consider a text amendment to create a Neighborhood Mixed Use district.



Planned Neighborhood Mixed Use

This land use category is intended for future development. It should include the following: single family residential, two-family/twin house residential, townhouse and multi-family residential, mixed residential, neighborhood office, neighborhood business, institutional, and public open space.

Development should consist of predominantly residential uses. Single-family residential and designated public open space should account for at least 50% of the development area. This planning concept disperses higher density development throughout the community and limits the concentration of any single type of development.

Future developments should include neighborhood concepts that plan for future road, trail, park, and infrastructure expansion. This will ensure that new development maintains and enhances the community's character.



Mixed Use Downtown

Includes a vertical or horizontal mix of functions and uses, including commercial retail sales and service activities, multi-family residential, offices, public institutions, hospitality, parks, entertainment, and other associated uses and activities. Mixed use development may be located in a single building or a larger designated area. This category is intended to feature historic buildings.

Downtown uses should be arranged in a pedestrian-oriented environment with on-street parking; minimal building setbacks; and building designs, materials, placement, and scale that are compatible with the character of existing development. It serves as an essential link to Baraboo's heritage and small-town character of the community. Commercial activities will be located at street level and the area will offer a more diverse and unique variety of commercial and residential uses.

9. Land Use



Riverfront Mixed Use

This designation includes a blend of commercial, residential, office, mixed use, hospitality, entertainment, and institutional land use.

Approvals for such projects should be granted only after submittal, public review, and City approval of detailed site, landscaping, signage, lighting, stormwater, erosion control, and utility plans — usually as part of a Planned Unit Development. Mixed use centers are intended as vibrant urban places that should function as community gathering spots. This category is meant to encourage a vibrant and attractive riverfront area.



Mixed Commercial

Identifies areas established for a mix of primarily commercial uses including retail, personal and professional services, lodging, restaurant/dining, entertainment uses along with limited amounts of high-density residential use.

These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots.



Public / Institutional

Includes a range of public, semi-public, and private facilities that provide community services. Primary uses include governmental, utility, educational, religious, social, utility, telecommunications, and healthcare facilities.



Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces are used for recreation, relaxation, and preservation, and access to nature. Uses include active and passive parks, nature/wildlife areas, and other public outdoor recreation and entertainment facilities.

This includes open space that is publicly and privately owned consisting of environmental resources, waterways, steep slopes, historic areas, natural lands, wetlands, and floodplains.

Future park locations and development should be dictated by the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and could be located in any district designation.



Agriculture, Rural, or Vacant

This designation acts as a “holding district,” and is intended to preserve productive agricultural lands in the long-term, protect existing farm operations from encroachment by incompatible uses, promote further investments in farming, maintain eligibility for farming incentive programs, and ensure that development does not land-lock the City.

This designation focuses on lands actively used for farming and/or with productive agricultural soils and topographic conditions suitable for farming. It also includes woodlands and other open space areas. Lands in this category also include farmsteads, cottage industries, agricultural-related businesses, “value-added” farm production, and limited residential development at densities at or below one home per 35 acres.



Office and Light Industrial

Identifies areas established for offices, office-warehouses, warehousing, information technology facilities, construction yards and shops, and similar businesses that provide wholesale goods and services as well as a limited/minor amount of supportive commercial use.

The location of these businesses are concentrated and separated from other businesses to reduce the disruption and nuisances of industrial uses, i.e., heavy trucks and loud noises. These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets with sidewalks and or trails that provide safe access through landscaped surface parking lots.

9. Land Use



General Industrial

Identifies areas established for manufacturing, processing, assembly, and heavy industrial business. Public and private utilities, i.e., power plants, electrical substations, and information technology/telecommunications relay towers, and telecommunication facilities may also be included.

The location of these businesses is concentrated and separated from other businesses to reduce the disruption and nuisances of industrial uses, i.e., heavy trucks and loud noises. These areas will be served by an interconnected network of public streets.



Extraction

This designation includes lands in current or approved use for sand, gravel, or rock extraction. These include the operations to the north of the City.

The location of these sites are separated from other businesses to reduce the disruption and nuisances of extraction uses, i.e., heavy trucks and loud noises.








Urban Reserve Area (Overlay)

This overlay future land use designation defines areas that may be appropriate for long-term urban (City) development beyond the present 20-year planning period; however, this does not preclude development before the end of the planning period.
















Premature development and utility extensions should not be promoted in these areas. The policies of the agriculture future land use designation should apply in the meantime. If conditions have changed to warrant new development in this area, the City should amend the future land use map to reflect new conditions and provide an updated land use designation appropriate for the specific area.

Figure 9-2. Future Land Use (Zoomed-out)

Legend

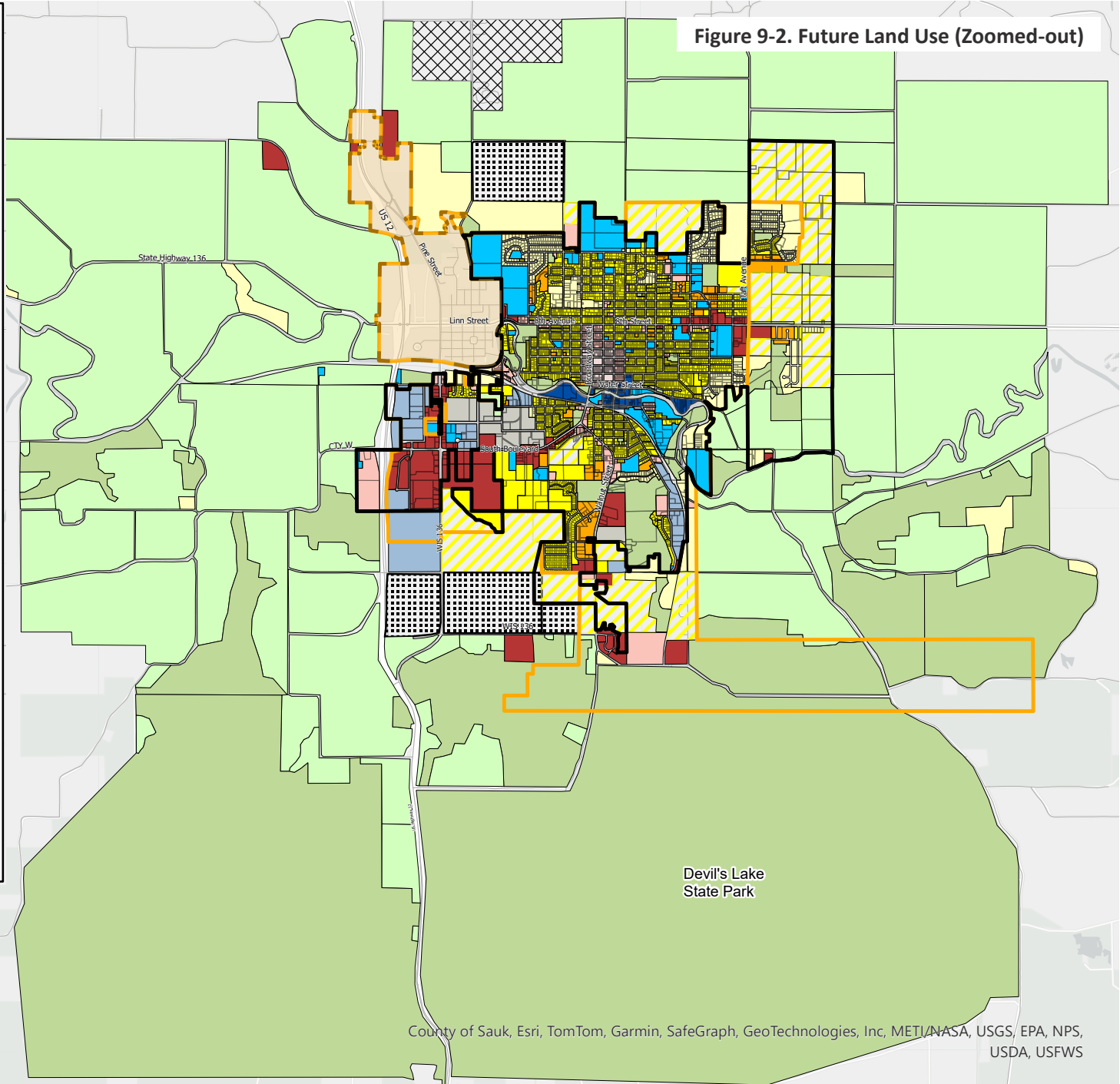
-  City of Baraboo Boundary
-  City of Baraboo Parcels
-  Village of West Baraboo
-  Roads
-  Sewer Service Area

Future Land Use

-  Agriculture, Rural, or Vacant
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Planned Neighborhood Mixed Use
-  Institutional
-  Mixed Commercial
-  Mixed Use Downtown
-  Riverfront Mixed Use
-  Neighborhood Mixed Use
-  Office and Light Industrial
-  General Industrial
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Urban Reserve Area
-  Extraction

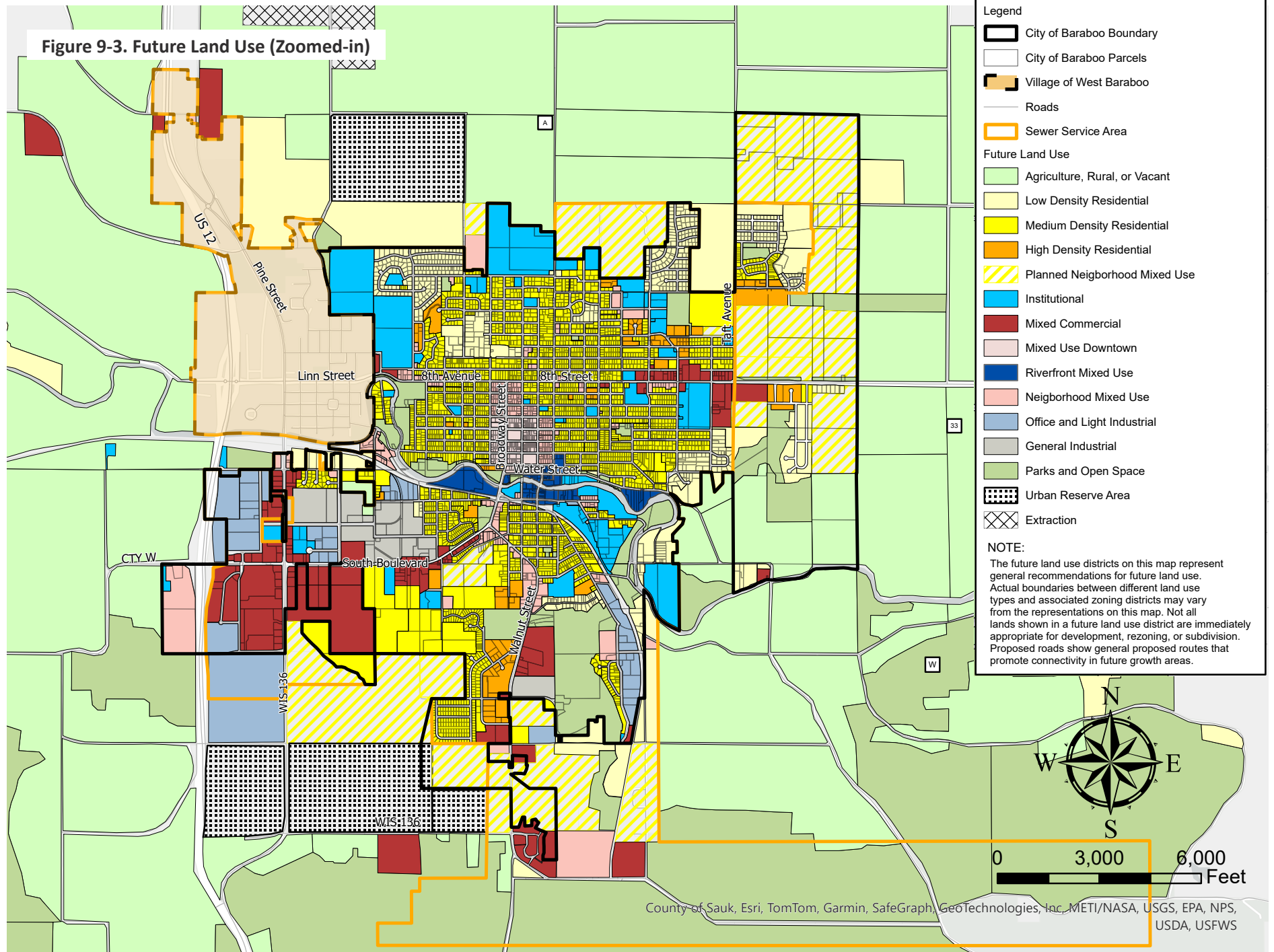
The future land use districts on this map represent general recommendations for future land use. Actual boundaries between different land use types and associated zoning districts may vary from the representations on this map. Not all lands shown in a future land use district are immediately appropriate for development, rezoning, or subdivision. Proposed roads show general proposed routes that promote connectivity in future growth areas.

NOTE:



9. Land Use

Figure 9-3. Future Land Use (Zoomed-in)



9.4. FUTURE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Opportunity 1: Principles for Traditional Neighborhoods and Sustainable Growth and Land Use

The Land Use Plan is shaped by a variety of factors including:

- The original town development
- Existing natural features and amenities
- Existing built environment
- Experience implementing the previous Comprehensive Plan
- Development trends and projections for future growth including population, household, and employment forecasts
- System plans for transportation, sanitary sewer, water supply, surface water management, electric and natural gas
- Desire to promote sustainable land use patterns when and where appropriate
- Current zoning ordinance
- Community input throughout the comprehensive planning process

The Land Use framework for Baraboo’s future community growth is built on a set of “sustainable growth” planning principles. These principles focus on creating a community that is economically prosperous, equitable, welcoming, safe, attractive, and accessible. Sustainable growth principles promote life-cycle housing, community-supported businesses, good performing public schools, and multi-generational recreation facilities easily accessible by walking, biking, and driving while also protecting the natural environment.

These principles focus on balancing critical economic, social, and environmental factors in guiding and regulating land development and redevelopment. They aim to optimize previous and future infrastructure investments while setting the stage for orderly, environmentally sensitive growth that can be supported by adequate and acceptable levels of fees and taxes.

Sustainable planning principles, applied to City land use policy, can serve as a catalyst for Baraboo to take advantage of opportunities from which the public will benefit. The principles described in the following pages, as well as the goals and strategies described in this chapter, establish a framework for guiding Baraboo’s continued evolution and growth.

9. Land Use

Makes Full and Efficient Use of City Services

To maximize investments in civic infrastructure such as sewers and streets, growth should be adjacent to existing development, or take maximum advantage of underutilized “infill” areas in the form of redevelopment to produce a connected and financially sustainable city. This principle supports the community’s desire to minimize sprawl development and preserve natural amenities and resources.

Encourages “Human-Scaled” Design

Contemporary suburban-style development, catering to automobile transportation, typically spreads out over the landscape, and lacks a walkable, human scale. This development pattern is characterized by wide distances between buildings, separated, single-use developments, and commercial facilities with large, separated parking lots that lack safe, pedestrian access.

More compact, accessible patterns of development use land and resources more efficiently while supporting a broader range of transportation options such as walking and cycling. Well-planned larger-scale development can make a positive contribution to Baraboo’s economy while also exhibiting the level of detail and human scale of the City’s older traditional neighborhoods. In this way, the City’s character would work in harmony with its residents and its economy. Compact development can reduce the need for extensive road networks and utility extensions which can help the City save on future infrastructure costs and maintenance related to water, sewer, and transportation

Creates Housing Opportunities and Choices

Baraboo has a range of housing needs from aging housing stock and a lack of modern homes to large-scale apartment buildings. Mixing more diverse housing types within interconnected neighborhoods and offering a wider array of ownership and rental price points are needed to meet the City’s future housing needs and preferences.

The Plan strongly recommends that new areas of residential development be developed as neighborhoods, rather than merely as an assemblage of subdivisions. To accomplish this, it is encouraged that future neighborhoods

include a variety of housing choices, and also provide for a mix of nonresidential uses such as parks, schools, religious institutions and small-scale shopping and service areas.

Mixes Compatible Land Uses

The concept of single-use zoning grew out of a need to separate living places from major industries to protect the health of residents and the natural environment. Mixing different yet compatible uses, such as housing with or near shops and services, creates a more sustainable community by leveraging infrastructure investments. The mixing of compatible uses also reduces environmental impacts while increasing convenience by reducing the distances people must travel (typically by car) to conduct their daily lives.

Community plans and land development policies that allow for mixing a range of appropriate uses provide for a broader range of development opportunities. They also provide increased market flexibility, allowing the development community to respond to changing trends and shifts in consumer preference.

Encourages Distinctive Neighborhoods with a Sense of Place

Newer residential development often occurs as single use subdivisions or in isolated pods of apartment buildings or patio homes. This is largely caused by outdated, single use zoning and subdivision regulations or leapfrog development. Baraboo should promote the building of diverse and walkable neighborhoods, providing a mix of uses and housing types designed in an environmentally conscious manner that reflect community members’ preferences.

Preserves Open Space and Vital Natural Areas

Community input highlighted the natural amenities and resources as one of Baraboo’s most important community asset. Preserving, protecting, and providing access to undeveloped open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas balances the built and natural environment, provides habitat for plants and animals, passive recreational opportunities, and places of natural beauty. Open spaces, whether for recreation, habitat, or flood control

have also been shown to provide measurable financial value to adjacent development and enhance overall community character.

Creates Transportation Options

Many communities have begun to realize the need to provide a wider range of transportation options. A completely auto-dependent city limits access of such groups as young people and older seniors. Baraboo's compact development is an ideal size for accessing destinations via walking, biking, or rolling. An increase in the city's physical size should not reduce access. Techniques that increase the ability of all residents to move freely around the city include:

- Better coordination between land use and transportation
- Improved connectivity within the street network
- Multi-modal (or complete) streets that accommodate multiple forms of transportation.

This expands transportation options and increases opportunities for social interaction. Equally important, incorporating physical activity into the daily routine of citizens creates a healthier and more physically fit community, reducing demands on health care and increasing longevity.

Achieves Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

Community input highlighted that Baraboo is a great place to live, learn, work, and play. City government should stay close to its constituents by using tools and techniques that collect and monitor residents' and business owners' needs. Issues and ideas voiced by the community cannot be adequately considered and acted upon without the collaboration of citizens and their government. Partnerships between neighbors, businesses, foundations, nonprofit organizations, schools, developers, and the city will support and accelerate the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

A Vibrant Downtown District

The city should continue to strengthen the vitality, appearance, and dynamics of the Downtown area. This can, in part, be accomplished by following factors/issues impacting the Downtown:

- Promote its unique and historic features.
- Promote the redevelopment of properties as mixed use to strengthen retail and commercial uses, and to integrate new households and employment opportunities into the area.
- Maintain an attractive streetscaping with decorative lighting, sidewalks, ADA intersection crossings, benches, on-street parking, and tree lined streets approaching downtown.
- Connections to the Baraboo Riverfront area and trails.
- Seek redevelopment and investment opportunities for vacant or underutilized sites, as well as encouraging reinvestment in existing facilities and businesses.
- Continue to maintain and enhance existing public open spaces in the Downtown area. Identify new sites that can serve as unique public spaces to strengthen the Downtown character.
- Encourage the development and location of specialty commercial uses.
- Blend public and private investment to create a diverse and lively mix of businesses.
- Encourage a mix of downtown uses, including retail, services, entertainment, civic, institutional, offices, and moderate and high-density housing.
- Identify opportunities and challenges associated to land use, utilities, parking, design standards, transportation, and access that either enable or limit the Downtown area to become a focal point.
- Establish and fund the renovation and restoration of downtown building facades as well as financial incentives to encourage businesses to locate Downtown.

9. Land Use

Opportunity 2: Infill Development

Costs to develop a new subdivision continue to increase, making it more difficult to build new homes at a reasonable price. New subdivisions also require the expansion of utilities and services. One option for building new housing units, or even new commercial buildings is infill development. Infill development refers to building on unused lands within an existing development pattern. Infill development typically occurs where utilities and services are already available. This type of development can increase tax base while avoiding the costs of infrastructure expansion and will help prevent urban sprawl into valuable farmland.

Both infill development and redevelopment can present unique challenges for developers including site limitations with smaller parcels, fragmented ownership of vacant parcels, potential environmental contamination, and potential zoning or other regulatory hurdles. Understanding the benefits of infill development, the city should analyze tools it has to facilitate the development process of these lands. This includes improving the zoning approval and building permitting processes, providing incentives for new development whether those are local or state funded incentives, and marketing sites available for infill development.



Example of infill development - new townhomes built in a residential neighborhood

Opportunity 3: Annexation Considerations

As the City of Baraboo continues to grow in population and experience the demand for land to provide additional housing, commercial or industrial development, the annexation of lands adjacent to and beyond the City's current municipal boundaries will be considered.

To ensure that annexation results in a net benefit to the community, it will be necessary to complete a thorough evaluation process before any commitments or actions occur, because while annexation allows the city to grow its taxable land, it also increases its maintenance and service obligations.

The Plan recommends completing these steps before any annexation commitment or action:

- Complete a financial cost-benefit analysis on the implications of the proposed annexation, including the costs of providing and maintaining additional roadway, utilities, parks, and other public facilities and services. The long-term obligations the city will incur (including for maintenance and expanded services) should be weighed against the potential tax revenue gains from the new development.
- Consider the impact of expanding the city's municipal boundary against any increased negative pressures the downtown will face. It will be important to maintain and promote a strong concentration of businesses and services within and around the downtown core.
- Coordination with Sauk County and the adjacent townships.
- Evaluate the potential impacts to natural resources associated with development.
- Communication with the affected landowners.

Opportunity 4: Land Use Agencies and Programs

There are a number of available agencies and programs to assist communities with land use projects. Below are brief descriptions of a couple agencies and programs.

University of Wisconsin – Extension

The UW-Extension can provide research and outreach planning services to Wisconsin communities. The Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development (CNRED) program brings skills and expertise to address local issues including: community development, economic development, local leadership training, public policy issues, natural resource education, land-use planning, shared decision-making and consensus building, and access to information technologies.

9. Land Use



Opportunity 4: Opportunities for Redevelopment/Revitalization

One component of the Plan is to promote the redevelopment and revitalization of several areas of the City to provide jobs, tax base growth, housing opportunities, and improve community aesthetics. Redevelopment projects often require additional planning, coordination, and may have other expenses related to site assembly or environmental cleanup. Considering these factors, the Plan recommends the City consider activities such as tax incremental financing, grant writing, and other planning activities to promote private reinvestment in these areas.

Multiple areas (shown in Figure 9-3) have been identified as key districts or corridors to consider for future redevelopment and revitalization projects. The City should consider creating and adopting area or corridor plans that specifically identify potential development and redevelopment projects as well as creates design guidelines for the proposed area. The two areas the City should focus on first is the downtown and riverwalk districts. While the Plan's revitalization areas may not be an exhaustive list of all revitalization opportunities, the Plan recognizes these areas as the most important opportunities and the order of priority is listed below.

REVITALIZATION DISTRICTS/CORRIDORS

Downtown

Downtown Baraboo serves as the community's premiere destination for nightlife, shopping, and entertainment options. The downtown area also has an opportunity to become a bigger destination for residential and office units. Development projects in the downtown area shall focus on preserving downtown Baraboo's historical features and architecture while also enhancing the downtown streetscape to create an enhanced sense of place. Generally, new developments should focus on providing commercial

uses or service-based business on the main floor and residential and office uses should generally be located above the main floor. Larger residential and office developments may be appropriate as standalone projects if the proposed development appears to be consistent with surrounding properties and if adequate on-site parking is provided.

The City should take an active role in the revitalization of the downtown by improving the public realm through street enhancements, pedestrian crossing enhancements, streetscaping enhancements such as street lighting, landscaping, benches etc., and public art installations. Additionally, the City should consider taking an active role in acquiring, assembling, remediating (if necessary), and marketing key redevelopment properties that can contribute to improving the downtown area.

The City should adopt a Downtown Master Plan that provides a more in-depth analysis of revitalization opportunities and outlines a long-term vision for downtown development. The Plan should identify the key stakeholders and assign specific responsibilities to each organization. It should also provide site or block specific redevelopment analysis and recommendations.

Riverwalk

The City adopted the [Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan](#) in 2006 with the purpose of exploring development along the Baraboo Rapids. This plan suggested market niche opportunities for this area including: riverfront residential, riverwalk entertainment/retail, range view housing, lodging, riverwalk trail, and employment-knowledge worker. The City should continue to implement the recommendations provided in the Plan. The City should consider creating a Downtown Master Plan that highlights the Riverfront area.

Potential projects in the riverwalk area include a combination of neighborhood cleanup, infill development, redevelopment, property maintenance standards, new construction, and historic restoration projects.

8th Street

The 8th Street corridor is the main entrance to the city from the east. Approximately 10,000 to 12,500 vehicles travel this corridor daily. This area is currently a mix of commercial, institutional, and residential uses.

The City could consider creating a neighborhood or transitional mixed use district that allows for a combination of residential, commercial, and institutional land uses within this corridor. New developments should be encouraged to incorporate shared parking and should follow the development guidelines as established in the [2005 Baraboo Comprehensive Plan](#), which states that all developments should incorporate the following design elements:

- Natural building materials, such as wood, brick, or stone
- Awnings, covered walkways, and other pedestrian amenities
- Pitched roofs, often multi-planed with pronounced gable sections
- 1½ to 3 story building appearance with each story being of “normal” (10-18 feet) height
- Small to moderate commercial building footprint – no “mega-box” retail buildings
- Articulated building facades (protrusions and recessed in exterior walls)
- Architectural details such as porches, arches, columns, dormer windows, and geometric design details in commercial buildings walls and windows
- Attractive landscaping.

Street reconstruction has recently occurred on 8th Street with the street changing from a 4 lane road to a 3 lane road. Crosswalk enhancements, including refuge islands, have been incorporated in th reconstruction.

The City should implement the recommendations presented in the Eastside Corridor Study (2017) and may want to consider updating this study in the next 5-10 years.

A variety of potential revitalization efforts include neighborhood cleanup, enhanced streetscaping, and new development.

South Boulevard

This corridor provides the main connection and is a key gateway between the downtown area and the new Highway 12 on the west side of the city. This area includes a mix of retail, service, office, and industrial development. This is also an important corridor for employees in this district and other districts within the city. Potential projects may include a combination of design guidelines, façade rehabilitation, redevelopment, and infill development.

Industrial Court

This area is an important employment center in the Baraboo region and is a key district for Baraboo’s tax base. This area is planned to remain as a center for industrial development and employment uses. Revitalization efforts should improve the overall aesthetics and employment potential within this area.

Devil’s Lake Gateway

Walnut Street and Lake Street serve as important corridors connecting downtown Baraboo to Devil’s Lake State Park, which is the most visited state park in Wisconsin. This area has a number of different uses including residential, commercial, service, industrial, and a country club. Development in this area should be carefully considered and positively contribute to the natural surroundings.

1208 Oak Street

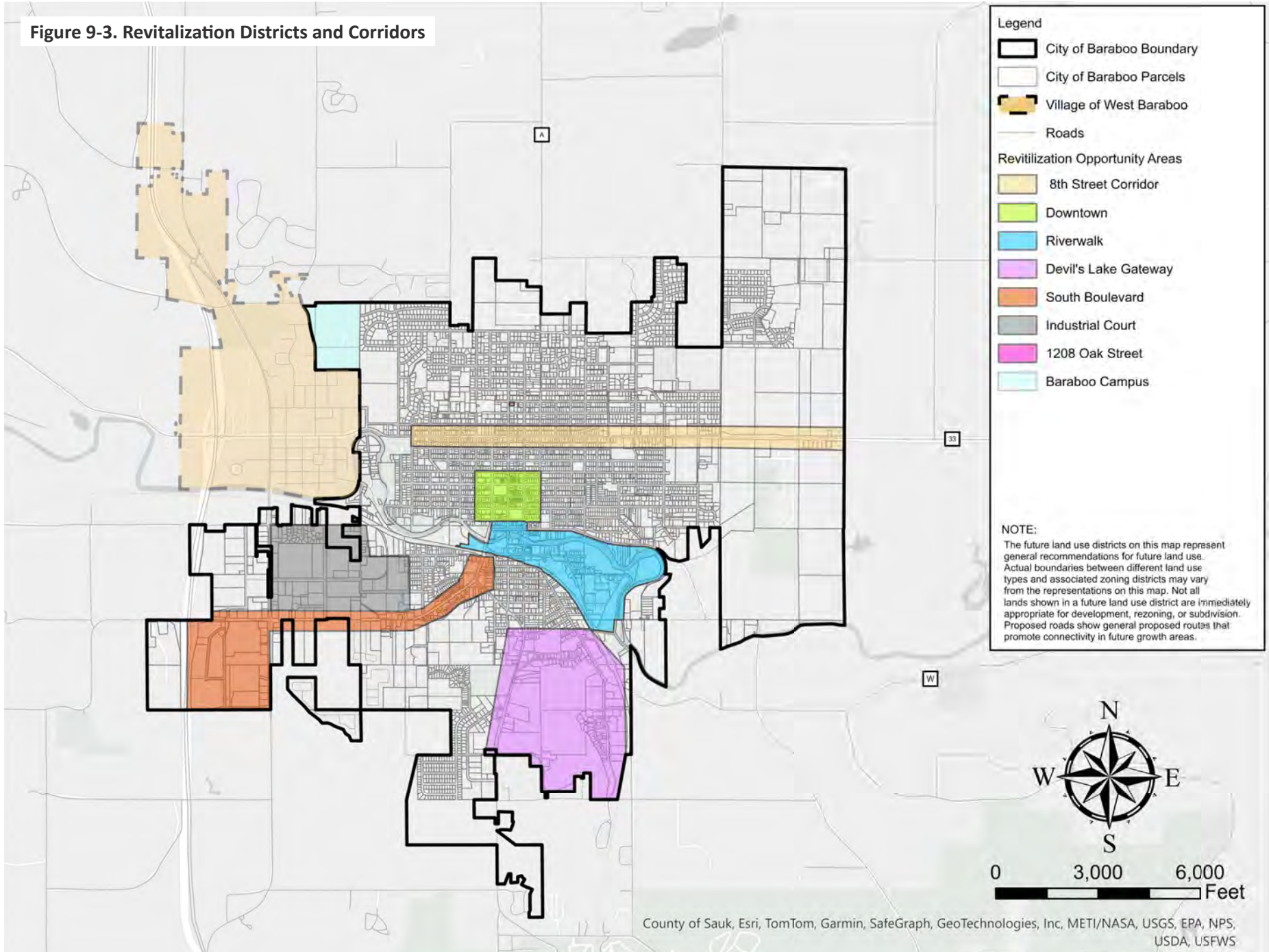
The old St. Mary’s-Ringling Hospital has been unoccupied and is seen as blight and a nuisance for the past few decades. To address this, the City has expressed desire to encourage development of the property and should explore potential adaptive reuse opportunities for this site.

UW Baraboo Campus

In the event that the UW-Platteville at Baraboo Sauk County contracts or closes, the City should consider redevelopment opportunities. A master plan for the site should engage the public in determining the best reuse of this property. A land use plan amendment may be required after a master plan or public process is conducted.

9. Land Use

Figure 9-3. Revitalization Districts and Corridors



Opportunity 5: Cost Efficient Development in Areas without Existing Public Infrastructure and Services

As mentioned previously, development should prioritize infill development to minimize unnecessary sprawl and expensive infrastructure expansions. This Plan also acknowledges that infill development cannot always meet community needs, especially considering the pressing housing demand. This section provides tools to identify locations that would be the most suitable for new development.

A critical component for new development is having access to adequate infrastructure and services. This includes streets and sidewalks, sanitary and water service, stormwater management, electric and gas service, parks and open spaces, and communication facilities.

Extending these into undeveloped areas is expensive and can become a heavy financial burden on the taxpayers. As development seeks to expand into undeveloped areas, especially those outside the City's current boundary, there should be strong consideration to the financial resources required to extend services for any given undeveloped area.

The following map (Figure 9-4) outlines a phasing strategy that shows the ideal development expansion into undeveloped lands. Growth phases are based on:

- Level of existing development
- Availability of nearby public infrastructure and/or services
- Natural constraints (e.g., topography, etc.)
- Impact to natural amenities
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses

The following phases facilitate the process of identifying which undeveloped lands are the most economically viable and would support a desirable growth pattern for the City of Baraboo. These development phases do not imply that lands will be provided services or annexed in an any timeframe.

Phase 1

These areas are mostly development ready, but may require some form of infrastructure to initiate development or to fully develop. These are likely to be developed within the next 5 years of the Plan being adopted.

Phase 2

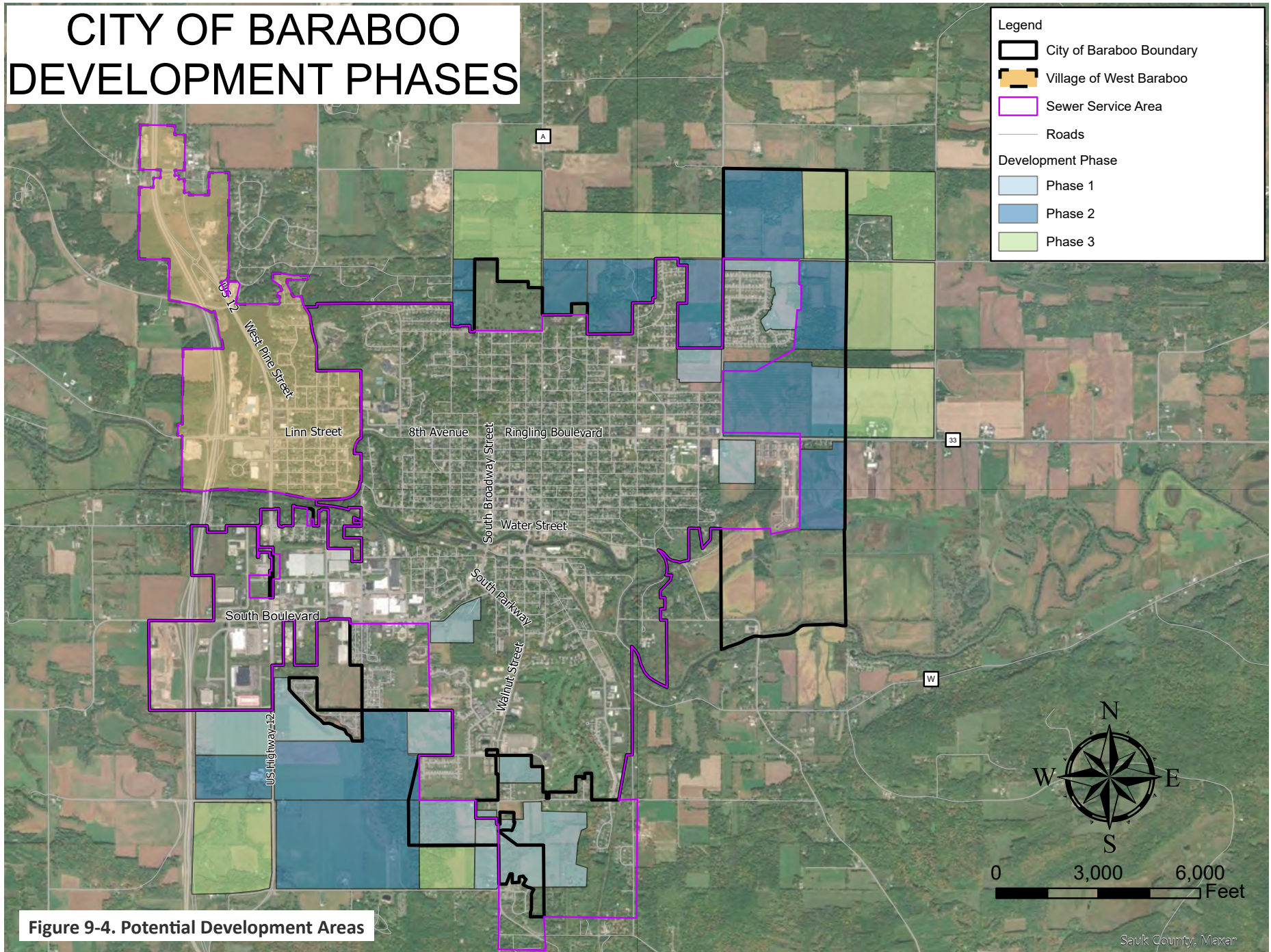
The development of properties in phase 2 will most likely need phase 1 to develop, lands to be annexed, or some additional infrastructure and utility expansion prior to being developed.

Phase 3

These areas will require major infrastructure resources and may face heavier development constraints. These could develop earlier in some cases if conditions are right and orderly development has already taken place up to that point.



9. Land Use





GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and strategies set the development direction for the community and describe the land use expectations that the city hopes to achieve during this planning period. The goal of the Plan is to create a diverse and self-sustaining plan with suitable language to allow for creative and innovative planning and development that is aware of unique natural and historic resources. These goals and policies are based on public input and a study of current and future trends.

Goal 1: Provide a range of land use types and the most appropriate locations for development and redevelopment.

Policy 1.1: Maintain a land use plan that designates land use areas and guides development to appropriate locations in order to ensure compact, orderly and desirable land use patterns.

Policy 1.2: Work with adjacent townships to renew orderly annexation agreements for areas that are located within the city's planned growth areas. Work cooperatively with the adjacent townships, Sauk County, and property owners to encourage logical growth and development.

Policy 1.3: Require the annexation of developed or undeveloped properties located outside the city limits prior to the extension of utility services to those properties.

Policy 1.4: Pursue an equitable distribution of public facilities, services, and open spaces across all neighborhoods.

Policy 1.5: Acknowledge market realities of commercial and industrial development, remove impediments to their development where possible, and be mindful of the reality of limits on retail, service, and industrial demand.

Policy 1.6: Pursue public/private partnerships and target economic investment in residential, commercial, and industrial developments that fulfill a demonstrated need and/or achieve established community objectives.

Goal 2: Maintain a distinctive character, unique identity, and physical image of Baraboo's neighborhoods.

Policy 2.1: Invest in creativity and nurture entrepreneurship as a City-wide approach to economic development.

Policy 2.2: Design livable neighborhoods in Baraboo that are pedestrian oriented and are generally located within a ten minute walk (approximately 1/3 mile) of a public park, open space area, or greenway.

Policy 2.3: Promote architectural/site aesthetics that are compatible with community standards.

Policy 2.4: Encourage the maintenance and reinvestment in existing developed property to retain community character and to prevent the creation and spread of blight. Develop and enforce property maintenance codes and outdoor storage codes to maintain neighborhood quality and tax base stability.

Policy 2.5: Work with developers and property owners to establish enhanced and attractive gateways to the community.

Policy 2.6: Develop and enforce community site planning and land development standards that promote and support an appealing visual character to the city.

Policy 2.7: Preserve historic buildings and other physical characteristics that define Baraboo's character, especially in the downtown area.

Policy 2.8: Discourage high traffic volumes and speeds in residential neighborhoods.

9. Land Use

Goal 3. Plan for the orderly, efficient and fiscally responsible growth of residential, commercial, industrial and other forms of development within the community.

Policy 3.1: Encourage the development of trail systems and open spaces in new developments with “points of interest” destinations.

Policy 3.2: Provide inclusive, integrated neighborhoods accommodating a mix of housing types and residential occupancies. The City should work with developers to ensure that new development incorporates traditional neighborhood design principles described in this chapter to maintain vibrant and attractive neighborhoods throughout Baraboo.

Policy 3.3: Buffer larger commercial and industrial developments from environmentally sensitive areas, residential neighborhoods and other incompatible land uses within the community.

Policy 3.4: Continue to guide residential growth in an orderly and compact manner so new developments can be effectively served by public improvements.

Policy 3.5: Encourage compatible infill development throughout the developed portions of the City, especially in the downtown square, along the Baraboo River corridor, commercial areas on South Boulevard and STH 33. Encourage the efficient use of land, the establishment of a strong tax base, and cost-effective provision of city services.

Policy 3.6: Require adequate transitions between different land uses through appropriate land use planning and zoning standards.

Policy 3.7: Ensure agricultural practices are compatible with surrounding land uses and are located in appropriate land use districts.

Policy 3.8: Design new neighborhoods so that they are centered around civic spaces, such as parks, schools, places of worship, monuments, and similar features.

Policy 3.9: Evaluate the feasibility of form-based codes when updating zoning standards. Form-based codes can encourage unified aesthetics and promote a unique character throughout Baraboo.

Goal 4. Identify, evaluate, and preserve natural resources and systems prior to designating areas for development.

Policy 4.1: Identify areas of significant natural resource benefit and protect these areas from premature or incompatible development.

Policy 4.2: As development and redevelopment occurs, encourage the protection and restoration of bluffs, ravines, prairies, wetlands, water resources and river corridors.

Policy 4.3: Work with landowners to either obtain property or ensure protection of natural areas with high ecological value.

Policy 4.4: Use planning, land use regulations, site plan review, and the design of public improvements to act as a responsible steward of the environment and protect waterways, floodplains, wetlands, unique environmental areas, steep slopes, and the wooded hilltops and ridgelines.

Policy 4.5: Encourage innovative stormwater techniques, such as the use of bio-retention, rain gardens, and other low impact best management practices where appropriate.

Goal 5. Encourage the continuing evolution of Downtown as a vital and sustainable mixture of commercial, residential, and civic uses.

Policy 5.1: Develop a Downtown Master Plan to guide development initiatives and ways to strengthen the downtown's character. The Plan should consider the downtown's public realm and streetscaping, transportation and access, housing, retail and shopping, office spaces, entertainment, and existing and future businesses.

Policy 5.2: Retain the historic character and identity of the Downtown area.

Policy 5.3: Allow additional housing in the Downtown area as a means of expanding the market for Downtown businesses and as a source of new investment.

Policy 5.4: Keep the primary civic functions of the community situated in the Downtown in order to attract people to the area.

Policy 5.5: Use civic investment and community events to make Downtown the primary gathering place for Baraboo residents and visitors.

Policy 5.5: Continue development along the Baraboo River to promote outdoor recreation and businesses, while preserving its natural attributes. Encourage new and renovated buildings adjacent to the river to have two fronts (street side and riverside), with both fronts meeting the downtown aesthetic standards.

Goal 6. Value, preserve, and maintain historic properties, documents and historic sites.

Policy 6.1: Encourage investment in economic development opportunities involving adaptive reuse of historically important buildings as a means of growing the economy while preserving community identity and the growth of heritage tourism.

Policy 6.2: Support redevelopment of underutilized parcels that is consistent with the historic character of the community.

Policy 6.3: Encourage rehabilitation/restoration of degraded historic properties.

Policy 6.4: Encourage reuse of historic buildings for destination uses such as arts and culture, entertainment and restaurants.

Policy 6.5: Encourage historic design standards wherever city, state or federal funds are used in conjunction with a residential rehabilitation project.

9. Land Use

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10. Implementation



10.1. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan as a general goal and policy guide to resource conservation and land development in the City of Baraboo has little meaning if it is not carried out with well-defined implementing programs and specific action items. Completion of the Plan is by no means an end in itself; rather it is the beginning of a new planning cycle. The City of Baraboo Comprehensive Plan is an actionable document, intended to guide decisions.

Implementing programs need to be developed incrementally to achieve the intent of a sustainable plan. These programs can take many forms and Implementation will occur incrementally through zoning, ordinances, policies, programs, and investments. These tools control land use activities to assure they are compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and reflect the community vision.

The Plan is not an attempt to predict the future, but rather an attempt to document the values that Baraboo citizens share. The Plan guides a variety of community issues including housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, and land use.

10.2. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility lies with the City itself to ensure the Plan is implemented. To fully accomplish what the Comprehensive Plan envisions, partners are needed to work with the City on implementation. While the Plan does not directly guide their actions, the intent is to show how ongoing work through a variety of partners can be coordinated together to increase overall impact and effectiveness in achieving shared goals.

The Baraboo Comprehensive Plan aims to be easily accessible to the general public in nature but still is a complex policy document that accounts for interrelationships among various systems, interests, and policy choices. As such, principal groups responsible for implementing the Plan include the City Council, Plan Commission, and City staff, and they should have a consistent understanding of the Plan's priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations.



10.3. ZONING ORDINANCE

Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by governmental units to implement planning policies. It consists of the Official Zoning Map and the supporting ordinance text. The purpose of a Zoning Ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare of the people of Baraboo. The Ordinance regulates and restricts the location of buildings proposed for specific uses, the height and bulk of buildings, provides parking and landscaping standards, and regulates and determines the areas of yards and housing density.

Within a Land Use Plan designation, there may be several zoning districts that will accomplish the intent of that designation. For example, an area designated in the Plan for residential may be zoned any one of several zones that permits residential development. The particular zone will be based upon the type of conditions in that area and how they apply to the development policies of the Plan.

Any zoning proposal, whether on a large area basis or an individual property, must be determined to be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Where a conflict exists between the Plan and existing zoning, the Plan directives should prevail. In cases where the Comprehensive Plan is not followed, the findings of fact for the zoning proposed should explain the reasons for not following the Comprehensive Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are amended from time to time to reflect new policies adopted by the City. The City should review its existing Zoning Ordinance and Map for inconsistencies with the adopted Comprehensive Plan Update, and create a schedule for amending the zoning documents to reconcile divergences or amending the Comprehensive Plan. An important first step is to compare the current zoning map with the adopted Land Use Map and reconcile discrepancies. There may be valid reasons why the two documents are not identical, but these reasons should be clear.

10. Implementation

10.4. PLAN INTEGRATION AND CONSISTENCY

The City of Baraboo's Plan Commission, City Council, City staff, and citizens should utilize the Comprehensive Plan in reviewing all proposals pertaining to development in the City. Development proposals should be examined to determine whether they are consistent with city preferences as expressed in the Plan. As part of the development review, a thorough review of the Plan is necessary with particular attention given to the goals and objectives. Where the impact of a proposed development is minimal, the review may simply be a determination of whether the Plan provides relevant direction and whether the requested action is in conformance with the Plan. Development proposals with significant potential impacts will require a more detailed analysis to determine such proposal's consistency with the Plan.

The planning process has ensured that plan chapters and goals complement each other. In the future, as plan amendments occur, it is important that the City of Baraboo Plan Commission and City Council conduct consistency reviews. Reviews by the Plan Commission will ensure the document continues to represent an organized approach to planning.

Capital Improvements Program

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a capital expenditure plan for a community's infrastructure including: streets/sidewalks/alleys; water and sewer systems, park and trail system, and public buildings. The program outlines major projects the City plans to undertake in the next 5-10 years and how they may be financed. The CIP is updated every year for the five year period. The approval process for the CIP should include a review by the City Council to ensure consistency of the projects with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Bond rating agencies pay particular attention to the CIP, using it to assess how well the City plans and finances capital improvements needed to keep pace with growth and to maintain existing infrastructure. These needs are based on established standards in the Comprehensive Plan, on other City planning documents, and on estimates of population growth and implications of this growth on the City's infrastructure.

The manner in which the City funds capital improvements allows the City to control the timing of development. Because urban development requires City infrastructure, the City can control the timing of development by identifying when the City plans to make the necessary infrastructure improvements for development to occur.

The major categories of expenditure that should be identified in the CIP include, but are not limited to:

- New public facilities
- Capital improvements to existing facilities
- Street maintenance and reconstruction
- Utility installation and reconstruction
- Parks, play equipment, and trails

A capital expenditure plan should be prepared that communicates efforts to:

- Ensure that community priorities are reflected.
- Provide a consolidated financial picture of anticipated expenditures and outline recommended funding strategies to underwrite capital investments.
- Document and communicate capital improvement processes for City improvement projects to promote consistency and public understanding of the public improvement process.
- Effectively plan for public improvements that support community needs in the areas of housing, transportation, recreation, public safety, and public utilities, with corresponding growth in the City's tax base.



Intergovernmental Cooperation

Another critical Plan implementation program is the City of Baraboo’s cooperation with the townships, special interest groups, and the County. Planning issues often have regional implications that affect several jurisdictions. To carry out not only the City Comprehensive Plan but also to aid other jurisdictions to accomplish their goals and policies, coordination agreements and cooperative decisions must be made. In adopting agreements and recognizing regional and other jurisdictions’ plans, the City is committed to the vital coordination that is necessary to accomplish effective planning for the area.

To ensure consistency across jurisdictional boundaries, the City of Baraboo encourages early dialogue between adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions as they develop or revise their comprehensive plans and ordinances. Where inconsistencies are identified and a resolution cannot be reached, procedures should be developed to encourage a consensus between parties to address concerns and facilitate regional cooperation. (Refer to the Plan’s Intergovernmental Relations Chapter for more information.)

Incentives for Development

Considering the metaphor of the carrot and the stick, incentives represent the carrot while zoning and subdivision regulations represent the stick. Incentives are often useful when new, innovative concepts are being promoted or the private development community is reluctant to take the first step and needs some encouragement. They can include a range of techniques and programs including:

- Streamlining development reviews
- Reducing or waiving fees
- Participating in Public-Private Partnerships (3-P’s)
- Establishing and administering grant programs
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Economic Development Loan Program

Community Involvement and Communication

The City should continue to encourage opportunities for citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development processes through appointed citizen commissions and boards, and attendance and participation at public meetings. The City should continue to disseminate information through the City’s website (<https://baraboowi.gov/>) brochures, and press release distribution to area newspapers.



10. Implementation

Action Items

A community's final step in the comprehensive planning process is to set priorities for strategies associated with the specific Plan elements to achieve its vision and goals. Just as many distinct policies can speak to a given goal, a community can select a range of strategies or action items—consistent with its policies—to achieve any of its goals. Reaching an understanding of which should be given the highest priority is a key step a community should take to implement the Plan.

Table 10.1 provides a summarized list of major action items to implement policy recommendations in each element of the Plan. The action items have been assigned a priority rating of high to moderate, with a completion timeline in terms of a short or medium time frame that the City should undertake to implement the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The recommended action items may require substantial cooperation with others, including other governmental units, property owners, land developers, and builders. In addition, other local and City government priorities may affect the completion of these action items within the time frames presented.

10.5. PLAN EVALUATION, MONITORING, AMENDING, AND UPDATING

To ensure the Plan remains a dynamic and living document, the City should implement an on-going planning process that uses the Plan to develop annual improvement programs. Simultaneously, the Plan should be reviewed and evaluated to ensure that its goals, policies, and programs continue to reflect changing community needs and attitudes.

The most important method of implementing the City of Baraboo Comprehensive Plan is to use the Plan as part of the day-to-day planning routine by committed elected and appointed officials, City staff members, and citizens. The Plan should be referenced in planning studies and planning staff reports and used when considering each new development, redevelopment, and incentive, with the intent of achieving the vision and goals set forth in the Plan.

Circumstances will continue to change in the future as the City grows and evolves. Consequently, Baraboo's Comprehensive Plan will need to be revised to remain current. While many of implementation strategies can be accomplished in the short term, several others will be continuous or ongoing and do not have specific implementation timelines. The Implementation Priority Guide (Table 10.1) should be used to evaluate and monitor the implementation of goals and strategies.

Annual Plan Amendment Process

Evaluating the Comprehensive Plan is an ongoing process and may lead to the realization that the Plan requires updating and amendment. While major updates are typically made at five- or ten-year intervals, instituting a program of annual amendments provides an opportunity for relatively minor Plan updates and revisions such as changed conditions—in future land use designations, implementation actions, and review of the Plan for consistency with ordinances and regulations.

The need to amend the Plan will depend greatly on evolving issues, trends, and land use conditions resulting from the actions of public and private parties. Periodic updates and implementation evaluation will allow for updates to ensure the Plan’s goals, objectives, and actions are still relevant to the current conditions, needs, and concerns.

A Plan amendment should be prepared and distributed as an addendum to the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Identification of the potential Plan amendments should be an on-going process by the Plan Commission and City staff throughout the year.

Citizens, property owners, land developers, community organizations, and other government entities can also submit requests for Plan amendments. Proposed Plan amendments should be reviewed and approved by the Plan Commission.

Plan amendments should be adopted in a manner similar to the Plan itself, including public hearings, citizen input, and consideration of actions by both the Plan Commission and City Council. Plan amendments should be adopted by resolution.

Implementation Responsibility

The responsibilities for the actual initiation and monitoring of the goals and implementation action items of the Comprehensive Plan lie with the following groups:

Citizens

The City’s citizens should continue to be involved in the implementation and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan. They are responsible for bringing their concerns and issues to City staff and City Council.

City Staff

City Staff should review all development issues associated with zoning and subdivision of land for compliance with stated goals and policies and land use map. Staff should also monitor planning activities to aid in the need for revisions and updates.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission should use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool for decision making for growth, development, and redevelopment to assure the projects, proposals and policies are in accordance with the Plan. On an annual basis, the Commission should submit an annual report of the activities and achievements as well as recommendations for future planning initiatives.

City Council

The City Council should receive and act upon recommendations in accordance with the vision, goals, and policies of the Plan. It is imperative that the City Council provide overall policy guidance and consider issues and changes when they are consistent with the stated purpose of the Comprehensive Plan.

10. Implementation



Updating the Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan should be updated at least once every ten years. Generally, a full Comprehensive Plan update should not be expected more often than once every five years. To ensure that the City's Plan is an effective management tool, review may be needed before a full ten-year update. More frequent reviews will help identify areas where additional resources or actions are needed to help realize the City's vision. Part of this effort will include addressing conflicts which may arise between the elements of the Plan. Consistent implementation evaluation ensures the Plan can be adapted to address any future community circumstance.

To ensure transparency and public involvement, the process outlined below should be followed to analyze implementation progress, assess any needed amendments or updates, and allow public involvement and comment. In brief, the Plan evaluation process shall follow these steps:

1. The City of Baraboo Plan Commission shall undertake an annual review of the Comprehensive Plan using the Annual Evaluation Checklist. The Commission will also monitor progress implementing the Plan's goals and strategies by reviewing the Implementation Priority Guide. The

Commission will consider any necessary amendment(s) to the Plan to address requests from citizens and changes to social, economic, and environmental conditions. Implementation progress notes and details of possible amendments to chapters should be documented on the Annual Evaluation Checklist. Optionally, the Commission should review the previous year's permit approvals and denials, as well as conditions applied to approved permits. Following discussion, the Commission may consider improvements to the permitting and approval process and City Ordinance.

2. The Plan Commission shall call a public hearing to afford the public time to review and comment on recommended Plan amendments. The public hearing shall be adequately noticed. Any updates should follow statutory requirements for comprehensive plan amendments.
3. Based on public input, Plan Commission recommendations, and other facts, the City Council will then formally act on amendment(s) recommended by the Plan Commission. Plan revisions should be acknowledged via a signed resolution.

10.6. IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITY GUIDE

This section serves as a “priority” list for implementing and realizing the vision of this Comprehensive Plan. It prescribes those actions necessary to realize the goals and strategies highlighted in previous sections of the Plan. The Plan addresses many important components critical to sustaining a healthy community while preserving the community character and resources residents enjoy.

Goals are the “purpose or end” that provides direction for the City staff, City Council, City Plan Commission, other governmental organizations, and residents. Strategies are more specific statements that set preferred courses of action to achieve goals in the future.

The Implementation Tasks Guide (Table 10.1) should be followed to ensure desired outcomes are achieved. The Guide identifies implementation action items, key partners, and estimated timelines for improvements proposed in the Plan.

- **Action Item** – This is a program, policy, or recommendation to achieve the goals outline in each chapter of the Plan. There can be a combination or multiple programs, policies, or recommendations listed to achieve a single goal.
- **Champion or Primary Responsible Party** – This column identifies the potential partners or entities that could be involved in the implementation effort for that particular goal, program, policy, or recommendation. Just because a group is identified does not make them responsible for implementation, but the City may want to include them in the discussion.
- **Priority** – This is the suggested time-frame to complete or implement each action item. This is an estimate and should be flexible as community priorities or resources change. These should not be viewed as strict deadlines.

The following pages are key implementation strategies of each element of the City of Baraboo Comprehensive Plan. Goals, policies, implementation leads, key partners, and funding sources are not listed in any order of rank or priority.

Implementation Priority

The following show the timing of when action items should be achieved:

- Ongoing = In progress
- Near term = 1 to 3 years,
- Midterm = 4 to 5 years

Implementation Acronyms

The following are acronyms used in the implementation matrix under the Champion or “Primary Responsible Party:”

- PC - Plan Commission
- CC - Common Council
- PW - Public Works Department
- DB - Downtown Baraboo
- BEDC - Baraboo Economic Development Commission
- BAC - Bicycle Advisory Committee
- CDA - Community Development Authority
- PRC - Parks and Recreation Committee
- BID - Business Improvement District
- WSU - Water and Sewer Utilities

10. Implementation

Table 10.1. Implementation Tasks

CITY OF BARABOO			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Parties”
Chapter 3: Housing	New housing development should follow smart growth and infill development principles. Prioritize development in locations with existing infrastructure to reduce urban sprawl and impact on natural amenities.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CC, Developers
	Update the City’s Housing Study every five years to evaluate housing needs and identify opportunities to address those needs.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CC
	Promote the downtown area as an attractive and convenient place to live. Support funding programs that aim to modernize downtown building upper floors for housing purposes.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CC, DB, BEDC
	Support housing programs that provide funding for housing maintenance and rehabilitation, reduce blight, and improve neighborhood conditions.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CC, CDA
	Identify opportunities to acquire and rehabilitate or demolish dilapidated buildings.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CDA
	Align City zoning and policies to support and advance a mix of housing types within each residential district. Provide a range of living options by size, type, and price within each neighborhood.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CC
	Maintain an ordinance that limits the number of short-term rentals in neighborhoods throughout Baraboo.	Ongoing	Staff, PC, CC
Chapter 4: Transportation	Create and adopt an Active Transportation Plan that guides future expansion of the City’s pedestrian and bicycle system.	Midterm	City Staff, BAC
	Adopt a Complete Streets policy. This policy is recommended to address areas where traffic calming is needed, decreasing intersection crossing distances, and expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.	Near Term	City Staff, CC
	Limit the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets in favor of connected streets that offer more access.	Ongoing	PC, CC, Developers

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Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Parties”
Chapter 4: Transportation (continued)	Adopt a sidewalk and multi-use path policy. This policy should include design specifications and construction standards for new sidewalks and multi-use paths and should provide guidance on when these facilities are required.	Near Term	PW, PRC, BAC
	Work with WisDOT to update the City’s functional classification map which can increase the possibility that state and federal funding assistance may be applied to road construction projects.	Near Term	PW
	As the community grows, encourage the development of public transit services and facilities in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.	Near Term	City Staff, PW, CC, DB, BEDC
	Support the creation of a downtown master plan and focus on enhancing the streetscape and roadways to benefit all users.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, BD, BEDC, BID
Chapter 5: Utilities and Community Facilities	Coordinate utility upgrades and expansions with economic development, multimodal transportation, and parks initiatives.	Ongoing	City Staff, PW, WSU, PRC, CC
	Consistently monitor the City’s utility system to ensure it has adequate capacity to accommodate projected future growth.	Ongoing	City Staff, PW, WSU
	The City’s Capital Improvement Plan should include funding for renovation and maintenance of existing community facility buildings, as well as construction of new facilities and amenities.	Ongoing	City Staff, CC

10. Implementation

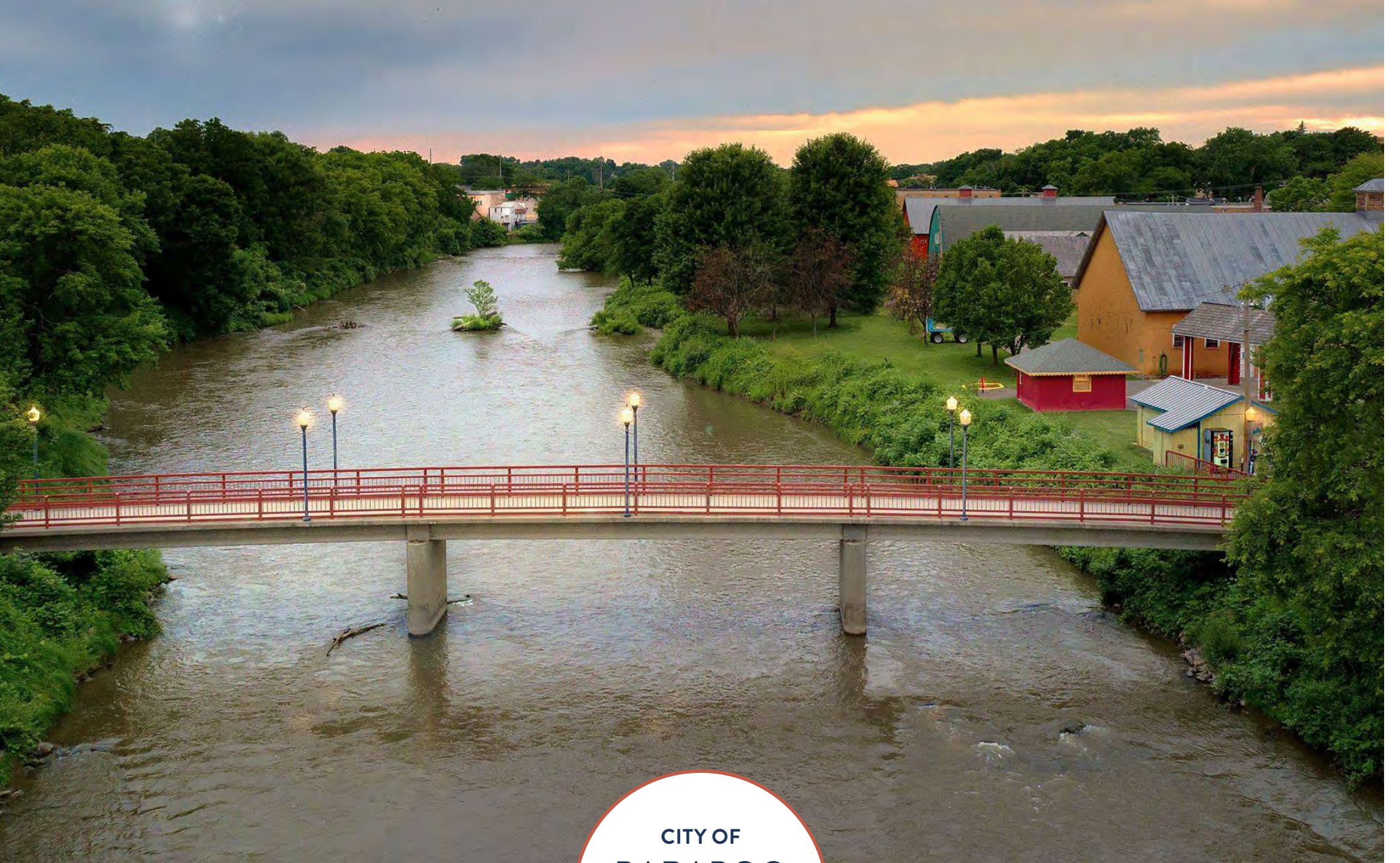
CITY OF BARABOO			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Parties”
Chapter 6: Agricultural, Natural, and cultural resources	Preserve, enhance, and promote Baraboo’s small-town, historic character, and cultural resources.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CC, DB, BEDC, BID, PRC
	Maintain agriculture as a significant economic activity within Baraboo’s extraterritorial jurisdiction. Identify and preserve highly productive farmlands.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC
	Support efforts to improve local and healthy food options in the community by ensuring that regulations do not prohibit community gardens and farmers markets. Promote programs such as farm to table, farm to school programs, farmer’s markets, and local food expositions.	Ongoing	City Staff
	Continue to collaborate with Sauk County on regional emergency management and hazard mitigation efforts.	Midterm	City Staff
	Pursue designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG).	Near Term	City Staff
	Review and modify the City’s zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance to incorporate additional green infrastructure requirements to reduce pollution from urban runoff.	Near Term	City Staff
Chapter 7: Economic Development	Work with the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce and Sauk County Development Corporation to develop an active business retention and expansion visitation program, including an evaluation of existing retention efforts in future strategic planning ventures.	Near Term	City Staff
	Encourage commercial and industrial development that will provide a benefit to the community,	Ongoing	City Staff, BEDC
	Work with the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce and Sauk County Development Corporation to maintain and share an up-to-date inventory list of available industrial and commercial properties within Baraboo.	Near Term	City Staff
	Continue to enhance the visual character of travel corridors with landscaping, decorative lighting, and up-to-date accessibility features (i.e., curb ramps, countdown timers, marked crosswalks, etc.).	Ongoing	City Staff, PW, CC, BID

CITY OF BARABOO

Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Parties”
Chapter 7: Economic Development (continued)	Continue to foster the Baraboo young professionals organization that focuses on networking and educational opportunities.	Ongoing	City Staff, BEDC
	Implement the recommendations in the Redevelopment Opportunities Map to promote and encourage the infill development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation opportunities highlighted.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CC, CDA, BEDC
	Consider designation to become a member of the Wisconsin Main Street Program and Connect Communities program to receive technical support and training in revitalizing Downtown Baraboo.	Ongoing	City Staff, DB
	Continue to adequately fund the downtown façade program and consider revising the program to allow for financial assistance for converting or improving downtown upper floors into residential units.	Ongoing	City Staff, BID
	Amend the City’s B-1 Central Business zoning district to permit the construction of a limited number of multi-family housing complexes and increase number of patrons for downtown businesses.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CC
	Develop a downtown signage and wayfinding plan to direct pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.	Midterm	City Staff, DB
	Develop a Downtown Master Plan and incorporate elements from the City of Baraboo Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan (2006) to identify and prioritize downtown improvements.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, DB, BID
Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation	Work with adjacent jurisdictions to efficiently utilize and expand the utility and public facilities networks within the City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction.	Ongoing	City Staff, CC, Towns of Greenfield, Baraboo, and Fairfield, Village of West Baraboo
	Cooperate with Sauk County and neighboring jurisdictions on comprehensive planning efforts, including the determination of future municipal boundary changes, consolidation of services, land use policies, and extraterritorial decisions.	Ongoing	City Staff, CC, Towns of Greenfield, Baraboo, and Fairfield, Village of West Baraboo, Sauk County
	Explore the possibility of creating a joint boundary agreement with the Town of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo.	Midterm	City Staff, CC

10. Implementation

CITY OF BARABOO			
Plan Element	Action Item	Priority*	Champion or “Primary Responsible Parties”
Chapter 9: Land Use	Update Zoning Ordinance to support the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use goals and strategies.	Near Term	City Staff, CC
	Work with adjacent townships to renew orderly annexation agreements for areas that are located within the City’s planned growth areas.	Midterm	City Staff, PC
	Design livable neighborhoods in Baraboo that are pedestrian oriented and are generally located within a ten minute walk (approximately 1/3 mile) of a public park, open space area, or greenway.	Ongoing	City Staff, BAC
	Provide inclusive, integrated neighborhoods accommodating a mix of housing types and residential occupancies.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CC
	Encourage compatible infill development throughout the developed portions of the City. Encourage the efficient use of land, the establishment of a strong tax base, and cost-effective provision of city services.	Ongoing	City Staff, PC, CC, PW, DB, BEDC, BID, WSU
	Identify areas of significant natural resource benefit and protect these areas from premature or incompatible development.	Ongoing	City Staff, BEDC
	Continue development along the Baraboo River to promote outdoor recreation and businesses, while preserving its natural attributes. Encourage new and renovated buildings adjacent to the river to have two fronts (street side and riverside), with both fronts meeting the downtown aesthetic standards.	Near Term	City Staff, PC, CDA, Developers



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