
Volume I

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Plan

Public Participation

From the very first meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee, it was clearly stressed that public input and involvement was a major issue. Since that time; hundreds of citizens have attended many multitudes of meetings. Some citizens have answered the call for the larger milestone meetings -- while others have committed more time by being key members on the “working groups” that were charged with completing certain elements of the Dane County Comprehensive Plan.

When it appeared participation may have been waning, the Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee, with the help of the Dane County Board of Supervisors, created a funding source to redouble the citizen outreach efforts connected with this plan.

As required by statute, the Dane County Board adopted a Public Participation Plan in January of 2003. This plan, located in Volume III, is a list of processes, procedures and tools available to be used to increase public participation with the Dane County Comprehensive Plan.

The basic purpose of this public participation plan is to provide for a rigorous process through which Dane County citizens, public officials, and stakeholder groups may participate, in meaningful and effective ways, in developing Dane County's Comprehensive Plan. This plan has been developed based upon the understanding that citizens and groups are the source of tremendous creativity, and that their creativity and input will produce better planning decisions. This public participation plan recognizes every citizen's right to participate in the process of making local government decisions. Because the decisions represented by Dane County's Comprehensive Plan will define what Dane

County will look like for many years to come, public participation in the development of the plan is critical. Significant financial, time and energy investments will be needed to complete this planning effort. Given these investments, broad and active public participation is an essential strategy for developing a County plan and planning process that will stand the test of time.

Wisconsin Statutes, Section 66.1001(4)(a)...

“The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for a wide distribution of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.”

Additionally, other technologically based tools implemented and used regularly by this project were: the web page (www.daneplan.org); the listserv (list.co.dane.wi.us) and the prolific use of email through out the process. Staff was able to disseminate information far and wide to participants and committee members. This had an effect of making much more information available to people who were and were not regularly part of the process.

The Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee would like to take this time to thank all who helped in the creation, editing, writing, and formation of this document.

Plan Structure

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS -- THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION MODEL

The Farmland Preservation Plan of Dane County gives us a valuable model of how local and regional plans work together in Dane County. This county plan is an organized framework with generalized policies and the mapping and implementation existing in the local plans.

The Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan, adopted by the County Board on December 3, 1981, is largely a compilation of town land use plans. After

town adoption, plans were adopted by the RPC, reviewed and recommended by the County Agriculture and Zoning Committee (now the Zoning and Land Regulation Committee), and adopted by the County Board.

State law (Chapter 91, Wis. Stats., the Farmland Preservation Law) grants counties the authority to develop farmland preservation plans, and counties have generally chosen to share this responsibility with towns. Towns, in fact, have no authority under the Farmland Preservation Law to adopt their own farmland preservation plans. However, in Dane County, as in others, the County decided planning should be a responsibility of the towns, with County approval.

Most towns in Dane County prepared land use plans between 1979 and 1981. These town plans were incorporated into the County Farmland Preservation Plan. The town plans generally include policies for approving rezonings and land divisions. Thirty of Dane County's 34 towns have adopted exclusive agricultural zoning which generally limits the uses of land in agricultural areas to agricultural production and dwelling units for the owner and employees of the farm. The law allows income tax credits for landowners who have land zoned for exclusive agricultural use. Any change to a nonagricultural use (e.g. homes) is reviewed as a rezoning request by the town and the County for consistency with the town's land use plan.

The intent of this plan is to maintain a generalized policy document framework. The county plan addresses large-scale regional issues, while local plans may be effective at handling in a individual zoning and development decisions. It is the role of the local plans to designate local areas planned for certain uses (residential, agriculture preservation, etc.) and the role of the County Plan to help set a regional framework.

The Dane County Comprehensive Plan will continue the cooperative relationship with local plans. The land use element maps in this document are either a mosaic of existing local plans (the town plans adopted into Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan) or conceptual regional areas that the county would like to implement with certain county policies.

EXISTING LAND USE DECISIONS

Currently, when considering a planning issue or zoning issue, the primary document Dane County uses to interpret an action or a change is the locally adopted plan that has been adopted as an amendment to the Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan. Previously that would have been the locally adopted Town Land Use Plan, more recently it has become the locally adopted Comprehensive Plan. Dane County has already adopted 9 Town Comprehensive Plans as amendments to the Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan with roughly another 8 or so on the way.

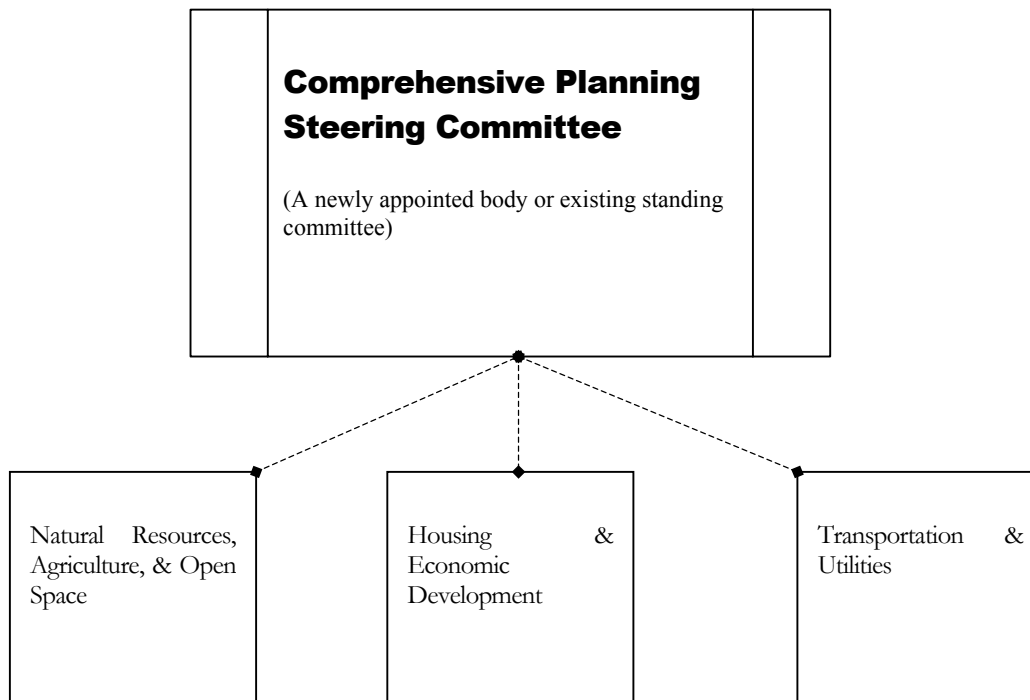
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COUNTYWIDE PLANS

As it stands, many of the other topic based (water quality plan, parks and open space plan) planning processes in Dane County are done for specific reasons. They are done so to be consistent with state or federal requirements and to be eligible for funding sources from those same agencies. One of the major points of this statutory effort is to create a reference volume to show citizens where these planning efforts are, which agency is doing them, and why they are doing them.

Additionally, each one of the plans provided both a starting point and a portion of the background information that went into this plan.

Planning Process

3 working groups, steering committee, etc.



Key Planning Issues

This is a list of central planning concepts that have helped Dane County achieve many of its varied overall goals.

URBAN SERVICE AREAS

Service areas are those areas in and around existing communities which are most suitable for urban development and capable of being provided with a full range of urban services. (Urban services are those additional public services normally provided or needed in urban areas, including public water supply and distribution systems, sanitary sewerage systems, higher levels of police and fire protection, solid waste collection, urban storm drainage systems, streets with curbs and gutters, street lighting, neighborhood facilities such as parks and schools, and urban transportation facilities such as sidewalks, taxi service and mass transit.)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS

Environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space in urban and urbanizing areas, that include environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and lands needed for open space and recreational use. They are based mainly on drainage ways and stream channels, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and other resource features, and are part of a countywide system of continuous open space corridors.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Dane County Parks and Open Space plan identifies the recreation and park land needs for the County for a five year time frame. In addition, the plan must be updated every five years in order to be eligible to apply for Department of Natural Resources State Stewardship funds.

Dane County Parks works closely with the DNR, local units of government, non-profit organizations and County residents to prepare this plan through a comprehensive public process.

For more information:

http://www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/plandev.asp#open_space_plans

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan, adopted by the County Board on December 3, 1981, marked the beginning of the county's participation in the state of Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program, [WI State Statute Ch. 91.51](#) which provides income tax credits to farm owners who keep their property in agricultural use. The Plan contains:

- an overview of the planning process;
- farmland preservation plan elements, and;

- a compilation of component town plans (either land use plans or comprehensive plans).

Required Planning Concepts

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING GOALS

The 14 Local Comprehensive Planning Goals connected with the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Grant Program are addressed throughout the Dane County Comprehensive Plan. Each will be located using the closeout form provided by the Division of Intergovernmental Relations.

SMART GROWTH AREAS

“Smart growth area” is statutorily defined as an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.

The most closely related regions in Dane County are that of the Urban Service Areas. Through the Build Programs and use of TIF funding, the Cities and Villages

