

Chapter 3:

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter 3: Issues & Opportunities

Chapter 3 includes presents a community vision, a profile of growth and development trends and an assessment of community strengths and weaknesses.

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GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Residential Growth Trends

Over the past three decades, Waunakee and Westport have been two of the fastest growing jurisdictions in the Madison metropolitan area. The residential neighborhoods in the Village and Town are among the most sought after in the region. The Village and Town have been particularly attractive areas for families with children because of the quality of the school system and the character of the residential neighborhoods, and community amenities.

While Waunakee and Westport are growing and diversifying, both are communities of predominantly single-family homes. Approximately 69% of the dwelling units in the Village and 54% in the Town are detached single-family homes, and 21% of the dwelling units in the Village and 34% in the Town are multi-family buildings with two or more units. According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS), approximately 75% of housing units in the Village and 73% in the Town are owner-occupied and 22% of the housing units in the Village and 21% in the Town are occupied by renters. As a matter of public policy, the Village has sought to increase the number of owner-occupied units to 75 percent of all dwelling units.

Business and Office Parks

Waunakee and Westport are continuing to evolve economically, offering a range of employment opportunities. The Waunakee Industrial Park, which was started in the 1970's, has been expanding toward Hogan Road. The Arboretum Office Park, which is located on the north side of Arboretum Drive, offers local businesses an alternative business setting with a high level of amenities and a professional office park setting.

The Town of Westport's North Mendota Energy and Technology Park is located at the intersection of HWY 113 and West River Road. It is adjacent to a substation and rail line, making it an ideal location for a data center, cold storage warehouse or large manufacturing facility. All 57 acres are currently available.

Downtown Central Business District

Downtown Waunakee has seen significant new investment over the past ten years, including....

Schools

Among the assets that have drawn new residents to the area are its schools. The Waunakee Community School District is completing a new intermediate school, part of a long-range plan to ensure that school facilities keep pace with Waunakee's and Westport's growth and development.

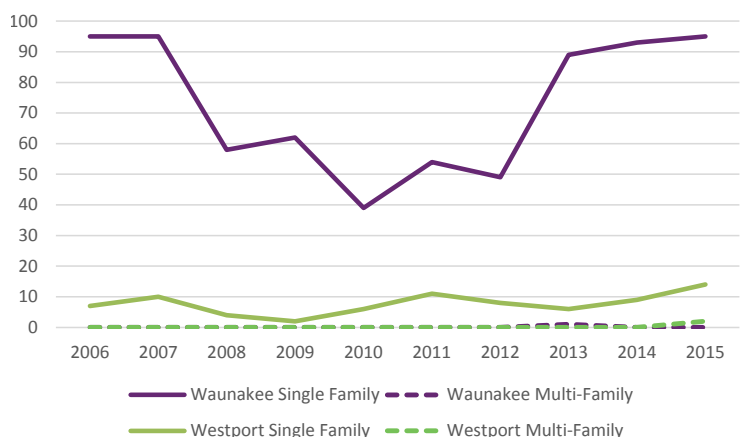
POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD & ECONOMIC TRENDS & FORECASTS

Population Growth Trends 1980-2010

Waunakee and Westport have both experienced relatively steady and strong rates of growth and development over the past 30 years. Waunakee's population increased 213% between 1980 and 2010 while Westport's increased by 44%. New-home construction has kept pace with this growth. During the past ten years, 729 single-family and one multi-family building were constructed in Waunakee. In Westport, 77 single-family homes and two multi-family units were constructed during the same period. Construction slowed (but did not stop) in both communities during the Great Recession, but in 2015 was back to pre-recession levels.

Figure 3.1 Construction Permits, 2006-2015

Source: Village of Waunakee, Town of Westport



Population Projections

Over the next several decades the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WI DOA) has projected that Waunakee's and Westport's populations will continue to increase, but at slower rates than they have over the past several decades. By the year 2040, the population of Waunakee is projected to be approximately 17,530 people, which represents an increase of 45% over the year 2010 population. By 2040, the population of Westport is projected to be approximately 4,745 people, which represents an increase of 20% over the year 2010 population.

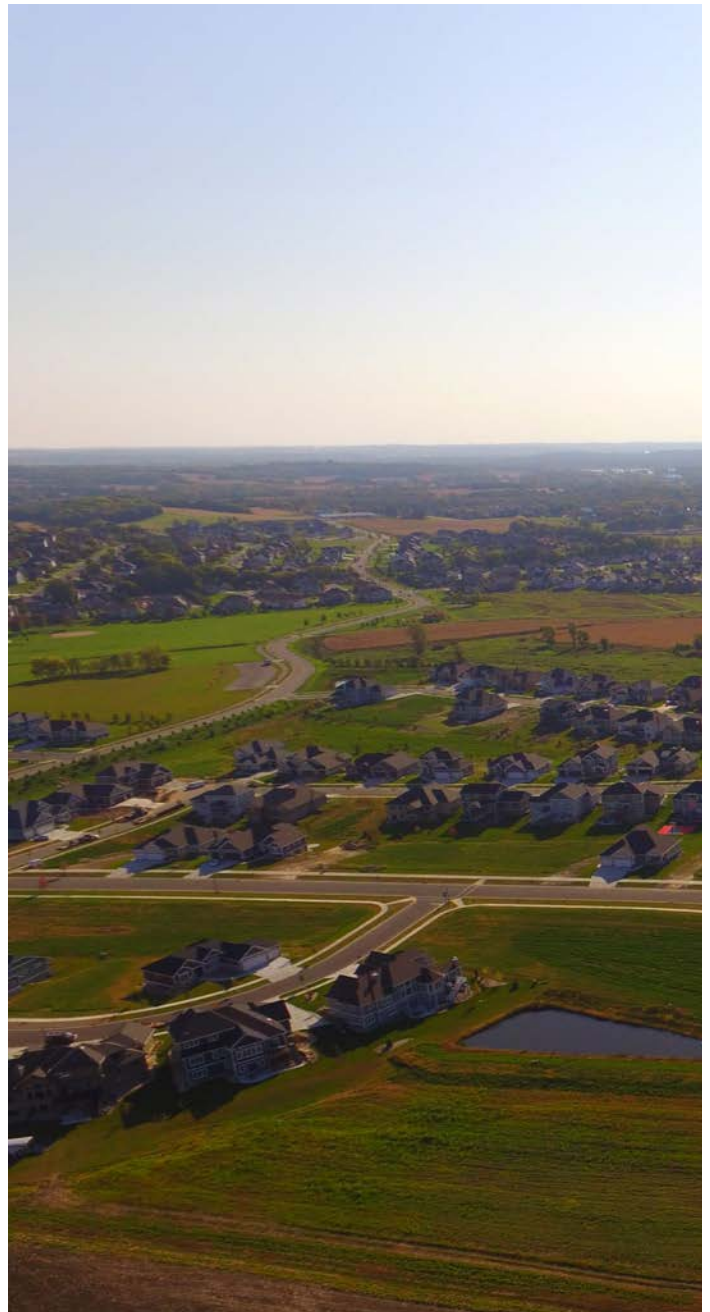
Household Trends & Forecasts

The number of persons per household has declined nationally and regionally due to smaller family sizes, increases in life expectancy (resulting in more single seniors) and increases in single-parent households. By 2040, the average number of persons per household in Waunakee is projected to decline to approximately 2.68 from 2.76 persons per household in 2010. By 2040, the average number of persons per household in Westport is projected to decline to approximately 2.13 from 2.20 persons per household in 2010. The difference between Waunakee's and Westport's persons per household is attributable to the age makeup of each communities' residents; Waunakee has a higher proportion of those under the age of 20, indicating a higher presence of families while Westport has a higher proportion of those 65 and older, indicating a higher presence of empty-nesters and a large senior and assisted living complex. As the populations in both communities continue to age, there will be additional need for more housing targeted toward the aging population.

Economic Trends

2010-2014 ACS estimates show that Waunakee's median household income was \$90,365 and Westport's was \$83,363. Both of these indicators have greatly surpassed the median household incomes in the County (\$62,303) and the State (\$52,738). The ACS data also suggests the number of persons below the poverty level has increased only slightly in Waunakee and Westport from 2000 to present with Waunakee increasing to 3.0% and Westport increasing to 3.4%. During the same period, the percentage of residents below poverty in Dane County and the State both increased to 13.3%.

A majority of workers in both Waunakee (80%) and Westport (68%) earn a private wage and salary. "Management, Professional & Related" occupations are held by approximately 50% of residents in both Waunakee and Westport. The largest occupation by industry in both Waunakee and Westport is "Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance."



COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The following community “strengths and weaknesses” reflect the outcomes of the online community survey conducted March 28 through May 1, 2016 and the public meeting held on April 19, 2016 at the Village Center:

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

- While there has been a significant amount of new development and growth, Waunakee and Westport have retained their “small-town atmosphere.” Residents appreciate the fact that there are strong identifiable neighborhoods, that many of the businesses are locally-owned, and that it is easy to get around the Village and Town.
- Residents appreciate the open space and farmland separating Waunakee from Madison, Middleton and DeForest, which helps to maintain community identity.
- The community has a high quality school system and there is close coordination between the Waunakee School District and local governments. There is a high level of community involvement in decision-making related to the school system.
- There is a strong sense of neighborhood in our communities. Residents identify with their neighborhoods and take pride in the neighborhood parks and the appearance of the neighborhoods.
- Waunakee and Westport are known as good communities in which to raise families and there is a strong sense of “family values.” Residents feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- Waunakee is a pedestrian-oriented community with a population that likes to walk, jog and use bicycle trails. Recent trail improvements have helped connect Village parks and school. Residents want to build on the foundation of trail connections that provide residents the opportunity to walk and bicycle to neighborhood facilities.
- Waunakee and Westport have a history of intergovernmental cooperation and coordination with each other and adjoining jurisdictions.

- Waunakee has retained natural areas and wildlife corridors within the Village and Westport has done the same in urbanized areas of the Town. Residents living near open space corridors appreciate the fact that they have access to green spaces. The Six Mile Creek corridor is recognized as an opportunity to preserve an open space corridor that extends throughout the Village and Town.
- Waunakee has a strong economic base with its business and office parks. Waunakee has preserved a large area for business, office and industrial expansion that is conveniently located with access to the regional highway system.
- There are no “big box” retailers.
- There are many opportunities to get involved in local decision-making and make a difference. The Village and Town each have a strong history of open and accessible government. Any residents who wants to become involved in Village or Town decision-making has an opportunity to do so.

COMMUNITY WEAKNESSES

- Waunakee suffers from poor traffic movement and traffic congestion. The problems with traffic stem, in part, from the fact that the only east-west through street is Main Street, which is also WIS 19 and 113. The only north-south through street is Century Avenue (CTH Q). Both of these highways carry a significant amount of through-traffic as well as local traffic. Traffic is particularly congested at peak rush hour periods when many of the intersections are backed-up.
- Because of the heavy traffic on Main Street and Century Avenue these roads serve as barriers for pedestrian movement. There is a need for safer pedestrian crossings on major arterial streets.
- There is a need for more play equipment for all ages in the Village parks. Some residents feel that their children have to walk too far to get to neighborhood playgrounds.
- Housing in Waunakee and Westport is expensive.

Some workers in local businesses and in the public sector are unable to find affordable housing in the community. There is a need for more affordable housing that is compatible with the incomes of employees in Waunakee and Westport businesses.

- Much of the spending for consumer goods by Waunakee and Westport residents is at stores and shopping centers outside the Village and Town. Some residents favor availability of a wider variety of stores and more competitively priced products and services in Waunakee and Westport.

Note: It should be noted that other residents appreciate the fact that the Village does not have any “big box” chain retailers.

- There is no public transit serving the Village or Town. Young people, people with disabilities and elderly residents must rely on para-transit or friends and family to do most of their shopping and meet their other needs. Businesses in the Business Park have noted the desire for transit options for their employees.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

From these strengths and weaknesses, the following key items can be generalized as priority issues and opportunities for Waunakee and Westport. These items guided the development of the goals, objectives, policies and programs found in Chapters 4 & 5:

Housing

- Housing for individuals with different income levels (e.g. starter homes, senior condos and apartments).

Economic Prosperity

- Additional well-paying jobs within Waunakee and Westport.
- Additional retail opportunities in Waunakee and Westport such as sit-down restaurants, grocery and general merchandise stores, as many currently travel outside of Waunakee and Westport to make retail and service purchases.

- A need for entrances to the Village of Waunakee to be a stronger “gateway” feature or sense of arrival.
- Preserving the “small town” atmosphere within Waunakee and Westport.

Agricultural, Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources

- Preserving farmland and open space.
- Preserving and enhancing historic downtown Waunakee and maintaining the character of the Town Center.

Transportation

- Traffic congestion in Waunakee and Westport and a desire for a bypass (i.e. North Mendota Parkway).
- Alternative transportation options (i.e. public transportation, bicycle lanes/paths) between Waunakee and Westport & Madison and Middleton.
- Additional trail development and the connection of existing trails/points of interest.

Land Use

- Protection of community separation between Waunakee and surrounding Cities and Villages.
- Waunakee and Westport are all part of one community - there is not a strong desire to draw clear distinctions between Village and Town residential areas.

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