



Downtown  
BARABOO  
FARMERS  
MARKET  
Wednesday  
Saturday  
www.downtownbaraboo.com

BARABOO  
TOY SOLDIER  
SHOPPE MINIATURES

Amber Moon  
FLORAL  
& GIFTS

CORNER  
PROPERTIES  
Level Suites

RESILIENT



# Baraboo

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY PLANNING

Final Report  
October 2022





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC)**

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## PROLOGUE: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

There are three sections in the report that include an implementation matrix:

- Understanding the Baraboo Economy;
- Study Area #1: South Boulevard; and
- Study Area #2: Downtown.

Each matrix begins with an overarching theme—‘Business Mix,’ for example, or ‘Design and Aesthetic Guidelines’—and then continues by taking aspirational goals and applying them into specific strategies and tactics. Additional details including potential funding sources, responsible parties, and a timeline to implement are also included in the ‘Details’ column.

### **Funding**

Funding sources within each goal may consist of city staff time, city budget allocation, or potential funding opportunities, such as nonprofit grants or federal discretionary grants. The list is not comprehensive, and staff are advised to consider additional funding opportunities that may not be listed in each matrix.

### **Responsible Parties**

The tactics within in goal are assigned to a particular party within the community. Most of the parties listed represent municipal departments or divisions with a few exceptions (e.g. Downtown Baraboo, Inc.). Although private stakeholders are not specifically called out in the matrix (e.g. South Boulevard businesses), city staff are encouraged to consider how stakeholder participation can help complete tasks more efficiently and effectively.

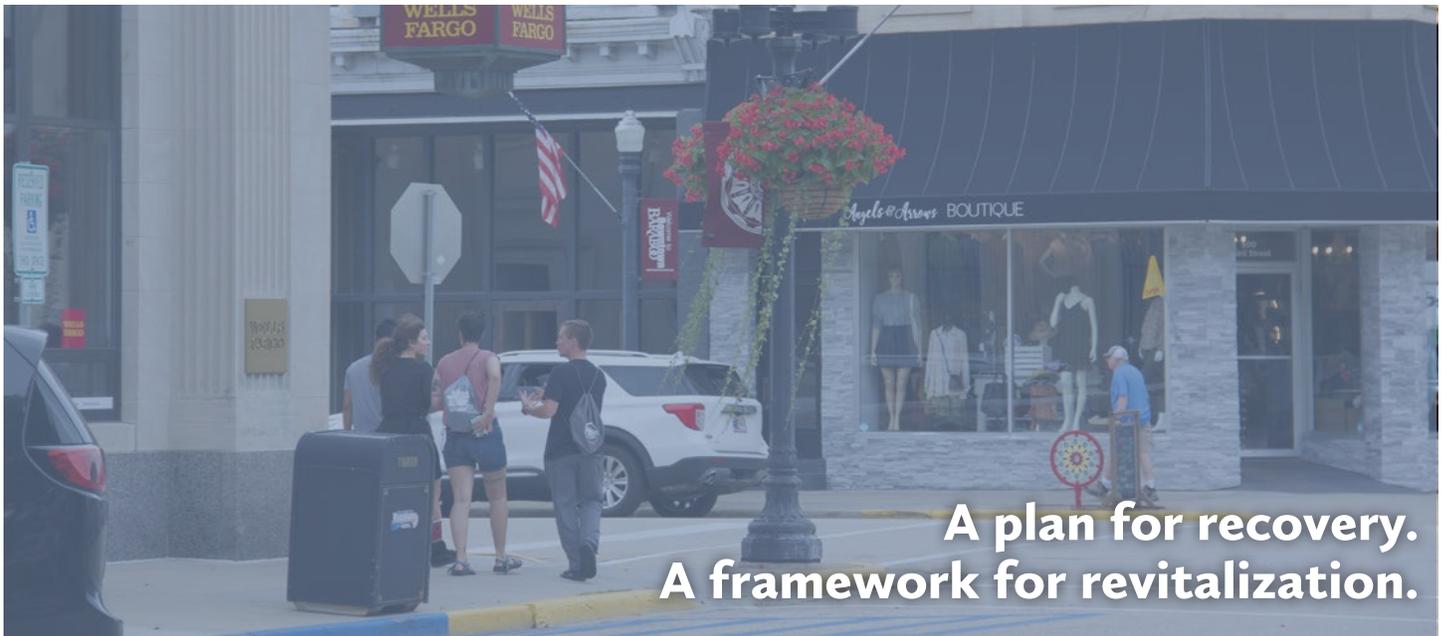
- AE - Alliant Energy
- BCC - Baraboo Chamber of Commerce
- BCA - Baraboo, City Administration
- BED - Baraboo, Economic Development
- BEDC - Baraboo Economic Development Commission
- BID - Business Improvement District
- CDA - Baraboo, Community Development Authority
- SCHS - Sauk County Historical Society
- BPW - Baraboo, Public Works
- BPC - Baraboo Plan Commission
- BSD - Baraboo School District
- DBI - Downtown Baraboo, Inc.
- GSTC - Great Sauk Trail Commission
- LCR - Local Commercial Realtors
- MADREP - Madison Region Economic Partnership
- SC - Sauk County
- SCDC - Sauk County Development Corporation
- WEDC - Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- WISDOT - Wisconsin Department of Transportation

### **Timeline**

This variable assigns a simple quarter and year to a particular tactic. These can be modified as staff time and funding allows.



# INTRODUCTION



**A plan for recovery.  
A framework for revitalization.**

## Project Overview and Purpose

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. The study also includes an economic risk assessment as well as recommendations to improve the community's economic resilience.

Both of these study areas include a number of redevelopment concepts offering fresh perspectives on both vacant lots and existing buildings.

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) served as the project's steering committee. This group of engaged residents led the project, reviewed progress throughout the process, and guided the direction of the consultant team.

## Project Approach

The project approach was presented and discussed with BEDC at the onset of the project. It was outlined that the project team would first understand the community needs through stakeholder input, then gain support from stakeholders for a community plan, and finally create an actionable, implementable plan that builds economic resilience. Upon commencement of the project, the project team:

- Referenced existing plan documents;
- Conducted interviews, surveys, focus groups, and open houses with stakeholders;
- Sourced data from primary and secondary sources;
- Reviewed best practices;
- Conducted site visits; and
- Held regular check-in meetings with the BEDC committee and City staff.

These actions resulted in the recommendations and information presented in the following sections.

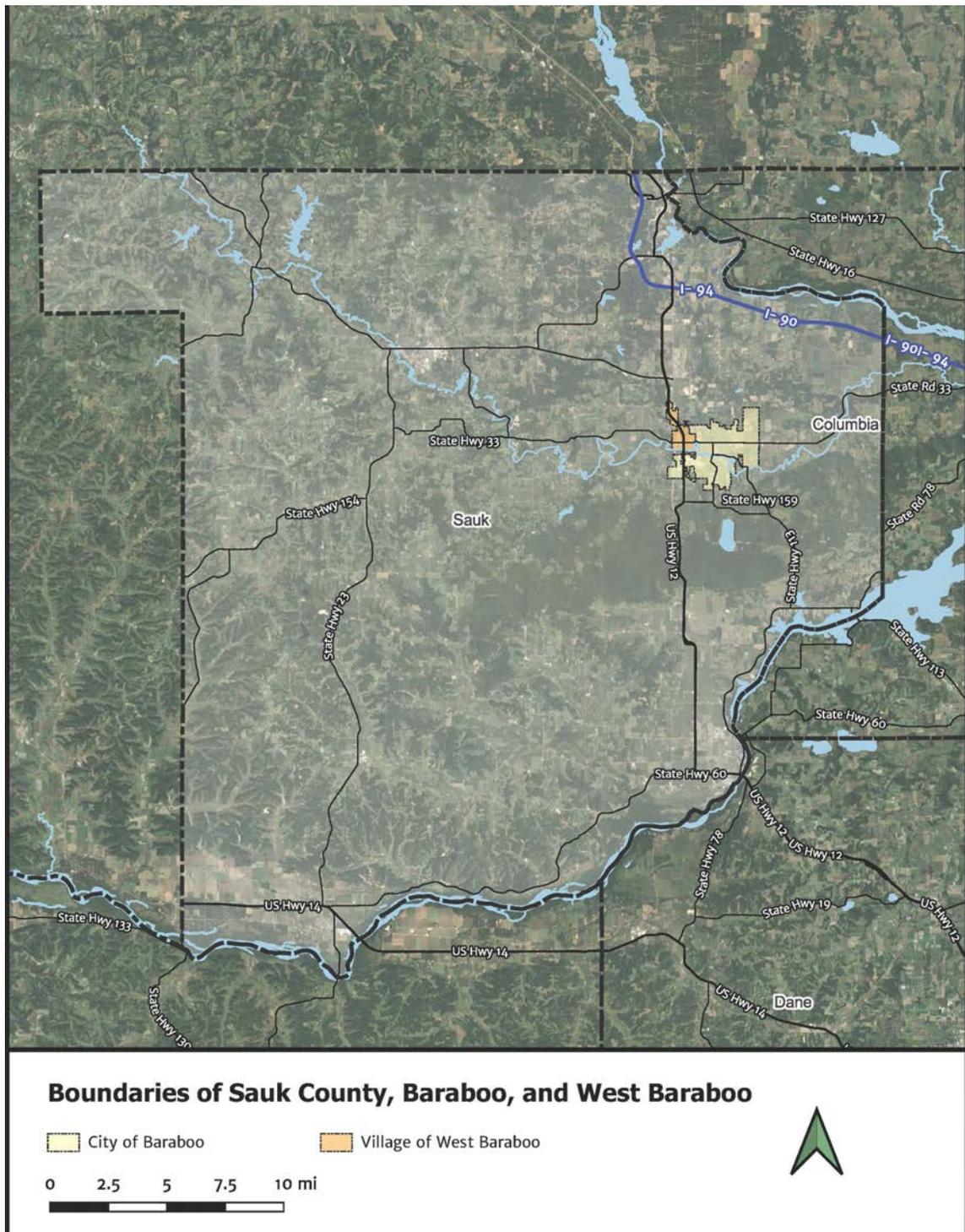


**“...in the context of economic development, economic resilience becomes inclusive of three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether.”**

-U.S. Economic Development Administration

In the context of economic development, resilience is the ability of a business, sector, or area to avoid, withstand, and recover from a major disruption to its economic base (U.S. Economic Development Administration). The topics within the study include economic resilience strategies, industry and workforce diversity, business mix, design and aesthetics, and much more. These topics are contextualized further in two study areas: The South Boulevard corridor, and downtown.

FIGURE 1.1: BOUNDARIES OF SAUK COUNTY, BARABOO, AND WEST BARABOO



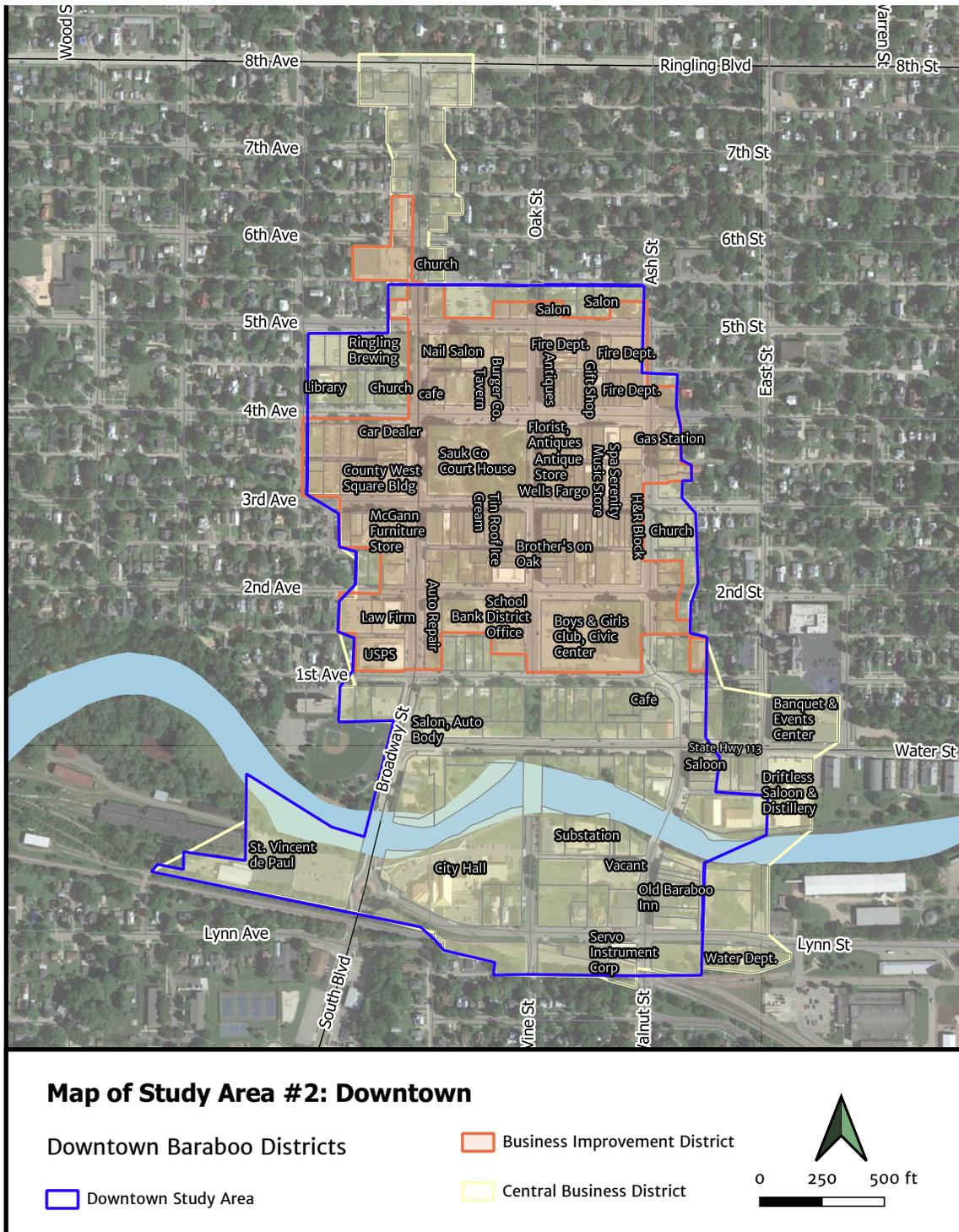
## Primary Study Area

The primary study area was the City of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo, however, due to their size, Sauk County (shown in Figure 1.1) served as a secondary study area for statistical validity purposes. The project also features an analysis of two study areas:

### Study Area 1: Southwest Baraboo, South Boulevard Corridor

The southwest quadrant of Baraboo is roughly bounded by South Blvd to the north, the Baraboo River to the east, Gall Road following the city boundary to the south, and US Highway 12 to the west. The project also includes an analysis of the South Boulevard corridor, a principal arterial running east-west through the city and serving as a key gateway into the community. The corridor analysis includes commercial and industrial land uses located north of South Blvd. as well.

**FIGURE 1.2: MAP OF STUDY AREA #2: DOWNTOWN**



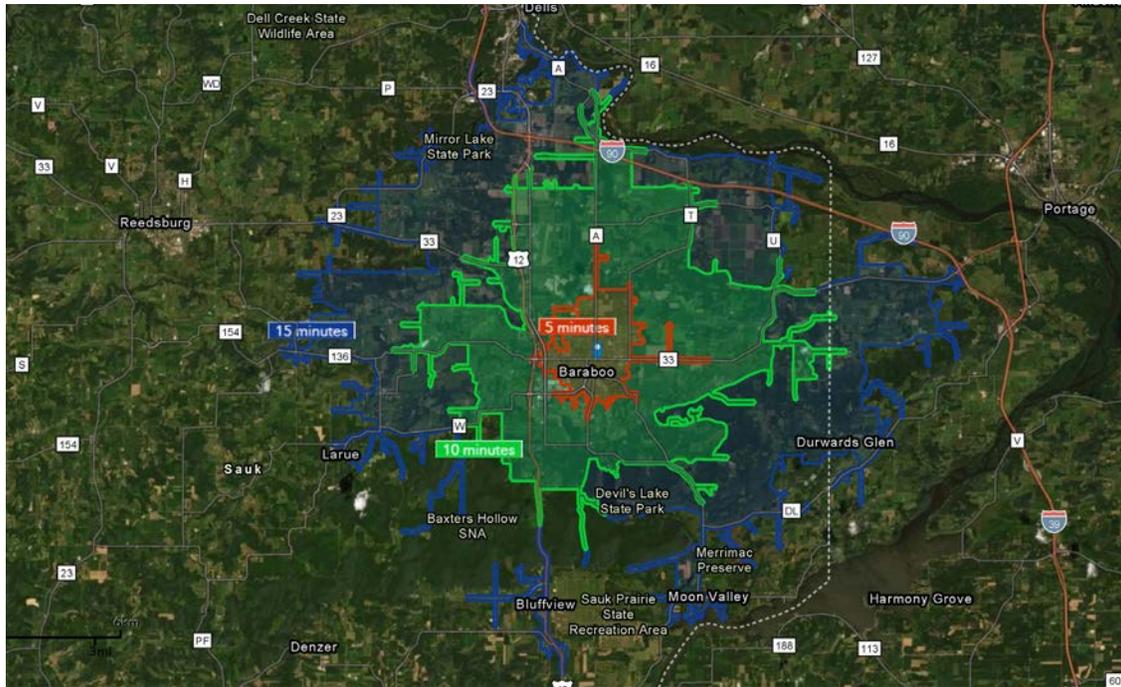
**Study Area 2: Downtown**

The downtown study area is bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Walnut Street and Ash Street to the east, Lynn Street to the south, and South Boulevard/Broadway Street to the west. These boundaries contrast with the boundaries of the Central Business District, Historic District, and the Downtown BID (Figure 1.2). The project team was mindful of the fact that other stakeholders and active developments exist adjacent to the downtown study area boundaries (e.g. Baraboo Public Library, Rapid River Apartments), and incorporated their presence and activity into the analysis.

## Local Trade Area and Destination Trade Area

The local trade area (Figure 1.3) includes commercial destinations that are within a 5-, 10-, and 15-minute drive time from downtown Baraboo. The destination trade area (Figure 1.4) for tourists includes destinations within a 30-, 45-, and 60-minute drive time from downtown Baraboo. The trade area time estimates assume that residents estimate their driving times and shopping times at a 1:4 ratio, or, put another way, the amount of time spent at their destination is four times longer than the time spent in travel. For example, a local consumer intending to shop for one hour at a commercial destination between downtown and South Boulevard would be willing to drive 15 minutes. Likewise, a tourist intending to recreate for four hours at a destination between Devil's Lake State Park and downtown Baraboo would be willing to drive up to one hour. Figure 1.5 shows the regional context in which Baraboo is located. Many destinations within the Baraboo area are accessible within a one-hour vehicle trip for travelers within these collar counties.

**FIGURE 1.3: LOCAL TRADE AREA MAP BY DRIVE TIME FROM DOWNTOWN BARABOO (SOURCE: ESRI)**



**FIGURE 1.4: DESTINATION TRADE AREA MAP (SOURCE: ESRI)**

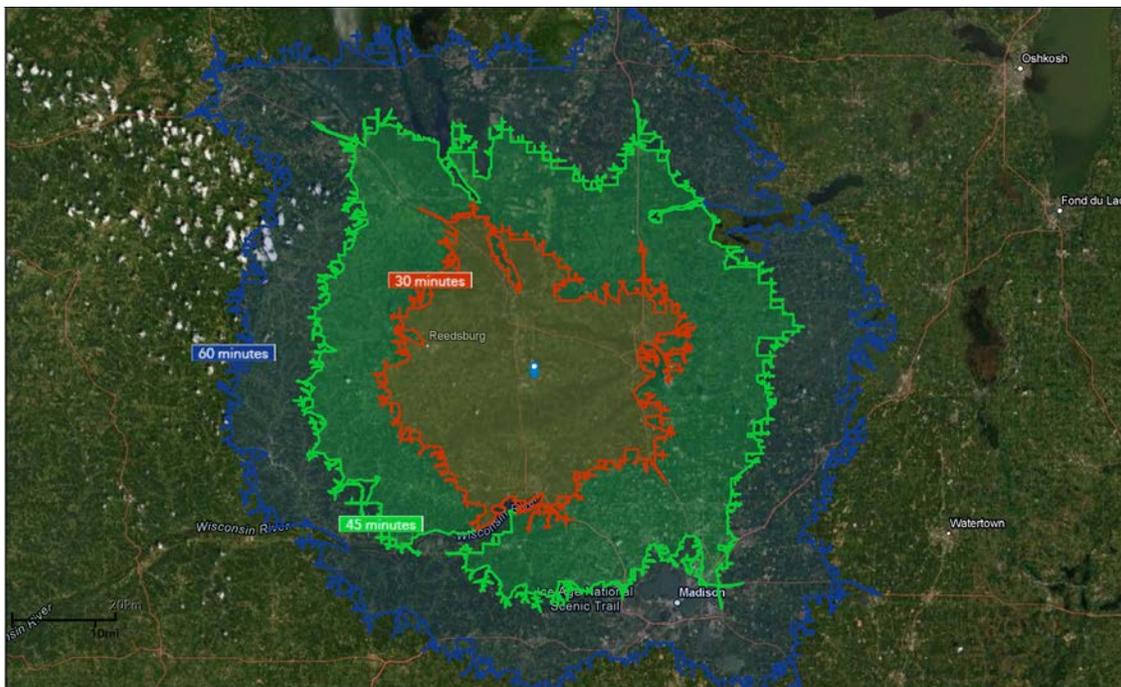
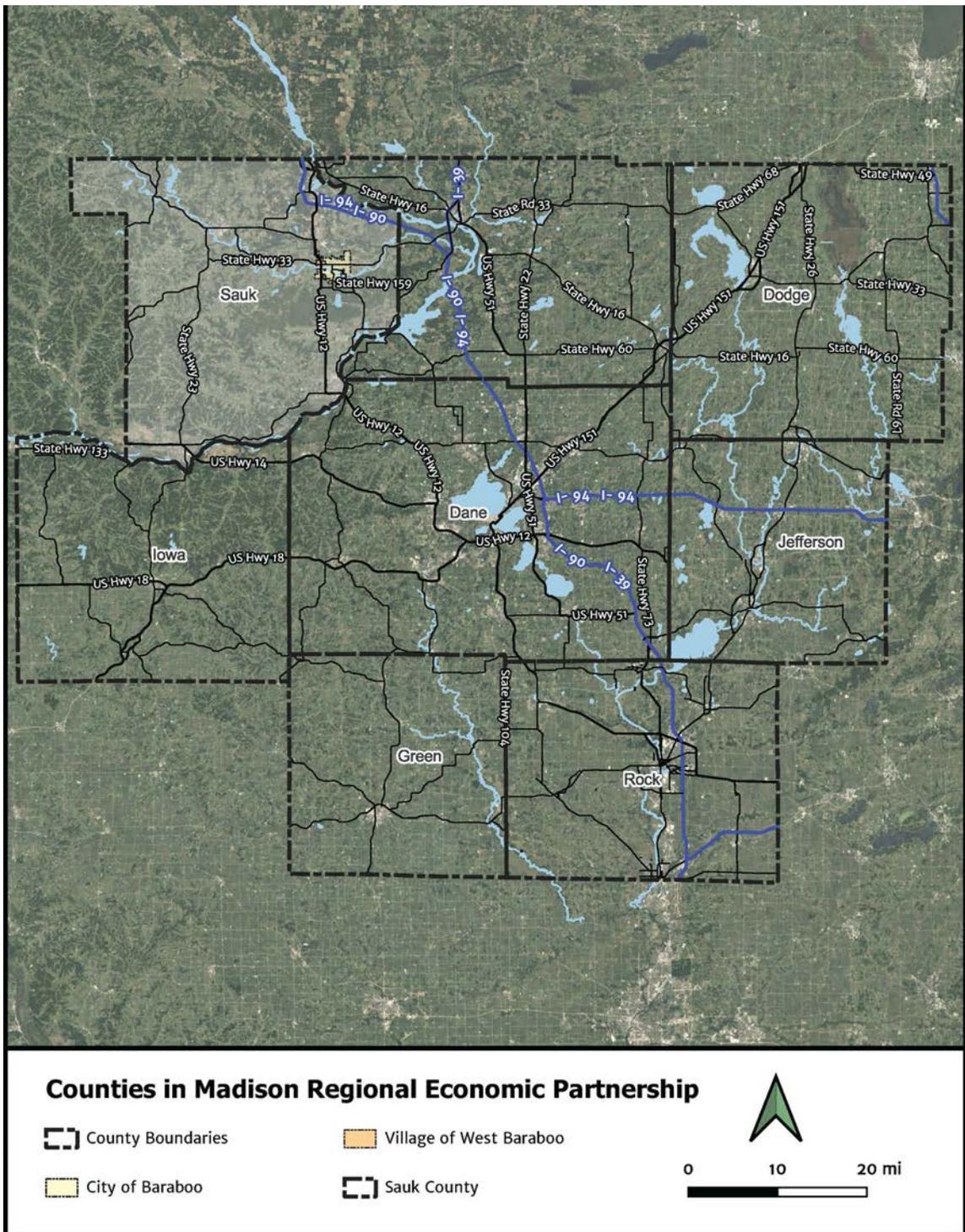


FIGURE 1.5: COUNTIES WITHIN THE MADISON REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## and SWOT analysis

### Introduction

Secondary data sources are instrumental for providing a baseline of information and projecting trends into the future. Hearing directly from residents and stakeholders in various professions provides a layer of authenticity and credibility. Plus, they provide a perspective of real life in Baraboo from the people who live and work there every day. Our team engaged a variety of methods to capture the local perspective of residents, service providers, elected officials, and business owners throughout the community.

### Methodology

The consultant team worked with BEDC to gather contact information for stakeholders. The team employed a community survey of residents, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. The community survey was posted on the city's web site, the library's web site, and was sent out in the school district's weekly newsletter, Thunderbird Thursday. The project team hosted two community open houses and spoke with local media on two occasions.

### Focus Groups

In all there were 11 focus groups conducted. Some of them were virtual and some were in person. Attendees were asked about their thoughts on what could be done to improve aesthetics and conditions on South Boulevard, how Downtown could be improved, how the City could offer more support for business resilience, and about bicycle and pedestrian access and safety throughout the community.

### Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with large employers and individuals representing other groups in the community, including Teel Plastics, Seneca Foods, Baraboo Tent & Awning, Flambeau Inc., UW Platteville/Baraboo Campus,

Powered Up Baraboo, Baraboo Area Homeless Shelter, the Village of West Baraboo, Log Cabin Restaurant, Servo, and others.

### Online Community Survey

An online survey was drafted and promoted on social media, through the newspaper, as a QR code published in the Chamber newsletter, and announced at a City Council meeting. It was also distributed through the Baraboo Public School District's weekly newsletter, Thunderbird Thursday. In all there were over 600 responses to the survey, and approximately 500 completed surveys were submitted.

### Community Open House Sessions

The consultant team hosted two community input sessions on April 21, 2022. One was held over the lunch hour at City Hall with approximately 25 attendees. The other was held in the early evening at the high school where approximately 13 people attended and provided input. There were several stations with questions or presentations boards with which the attendees could engage, ask questions, and provide feedback.

**"During the pandemic, everyone paid greater attention to our local economy. The city updated their communication channels more frequently, especially for downtown businesses. They told us which businesses are doing curbside pick-up so we could support them. I have to commend them on that."**

-Focus Group Participant

## Summary of Public Input

Several stakeholder groups were interviewed, either individually or in focus groups (virtually and in person). Questions were asked related to economic resilience and how the community fared through the pandemic, South Boulevard and how to improve the aesthetics of that entrance to the community, downtown and what would be beneficial to include in the future of downtown, and transportation for pedestrians and bicyclists. Also asked of interviewees was how the community could improve visibility of downtown to visitors to Devils Lake State Park.

Comments from interviews and focus groups are summarized by focus area throughout the remainder of the report. A summary of the public engagement reach is shown in Figure 2.1, below.



FIGURE 2.1: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS



## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a planning technique that is used to help an organization understand four components impacting organizational effectiveness: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (sometimes referred to as ‘challenges’). Strengths and weaknesses are considered internal factors that are more easily controllable from within; opportunities and threats are considered external factors that an organization cannot easily control and for which they must plan and prepare.

The project team considered the SWOT Analysis to be an important exercise for both economic resiliency planning in particular. SWOT Analyses are typically used not only to ascertain the effectiveness of an organization but also to ensure that they remain competitive and responsive, traits of which are essential for withstanding systemic economic shocks.

A SWOT Analysis for this project was conducted in May and June of 2022. The SWOT was segmented into three geographic areas: The City of Baraboo as a whole, downtown, and South Boulevard. As such, Chapters 3-5 include an excerpt from the SWOT of the respective geographic area. The community input gathered from focus groups, interviews, and open houses significantly influenced the SWOT analysis, as was secondary data pulled from ESRI and other sources. The SWOT Analysis was presented to the Baraboo Economic Development Commission on June 2, 2022 as well as the Baraboo City Council on June 28, 2022. To ensure accuracy and gain consensus, members provided input which helped shape the final SWOT as presented in this report.

# UNDERSTANDING

## the Baraboo Economy

### Introduction

Assessing the local economy enables community stakeholders to identify current or potential challenges, the regional context in which it exists, the competitive advantages of the community, and the local assets and potential liabilities that will affect economic development. It also provides the opportunity to set benchmarks on which to monitor performance.

### Goals

The steering committee outlined the following goals for the overall economic development resiliency of Baraboo and West Baraboo:

**1**

Support and expand industrial, retail, and service sectors.

**2**

Identify and pursue development and redevelopment opportunities.

**3**

Create opportunities and attractive environments for a talented workforce.

**4**

Grow sustainably while planning for future growth.

**5**

Strengthen local economic, technical, and financial support to mitigate risks of potential economic disruption(s).

**6**

Connect Baraboo businesses through a network and provide business continuity services.

**7**

Communicate with constituents in a timely manner through the use of technology platforms.

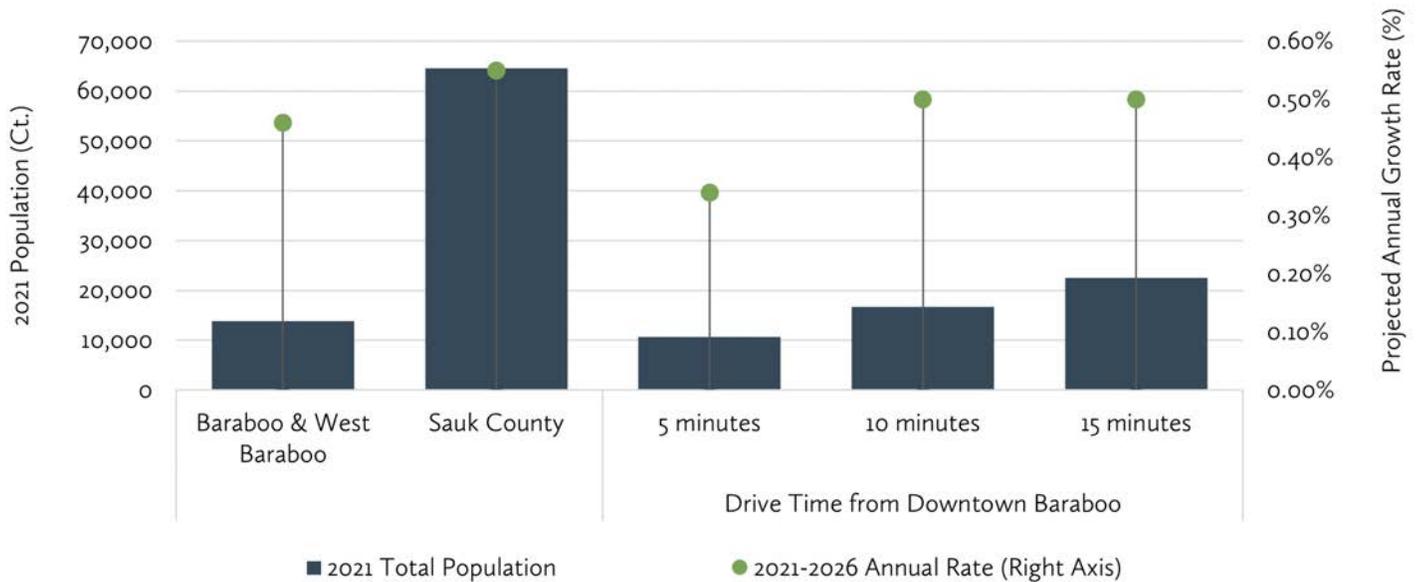
## Economic Inventory

This section utilizes secondary data sources to analyze a number of community variables, including characteristics of the local and regional population, household data, labor force characteristics, and income and employment trends by industry.

### Population and Household Characteristics

ESRI estimates that in 2021 the combined population of the City of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo was 13,884 and is projected to grow by 0.46% annually through 2026. These two communities account for approximately 21.5% of the population of the county. ESRI estimates that Sauk County’s population was 64,529 in 2021 and is projected to grow by 0.55% annually through 2026. Based on the chart below it appears that most of this growth will occur in the area approximately 10-15 minutes from downtown Baraboo.

**FIGURE 3.1: ESTIMATED TOTAL 2021 POPULATION AND GROWTH RATE**



Data Source: ESRI Community Profile.

The population growth projection estimates in Figure 3.1 do not include recent commitments between the City of Baraboo, developers, and contractors to build over 1,000 housing units (Redevelopment Resources, June 2022). These developments are planned or are already in progress. Decision-makers from both municipalities and the Baraboo School District, among other entities, are encouraged to consider how these recent events may increase the growth projections beyond what is stated in this report.

### Workforce Characteristics

#### Commute or Local?

The term “bedroom communities” refers to a large metropolitan area that attracts people who commute for employment during the daytime hours and then return home to their respective community at night. Given their proximity to Madison and surrounding suburbs, Baraboo and West Baraboo may be perceived as being bedroom communities; however, this is not the case. As Figure 2 shows, Baraboo and West Baraboo have approximately 300 more people coming into the communities for work than leaving to work elsewhere.

**FIGURE 3.2: VEHICLE INFLOW-OUTFLOW MAP**

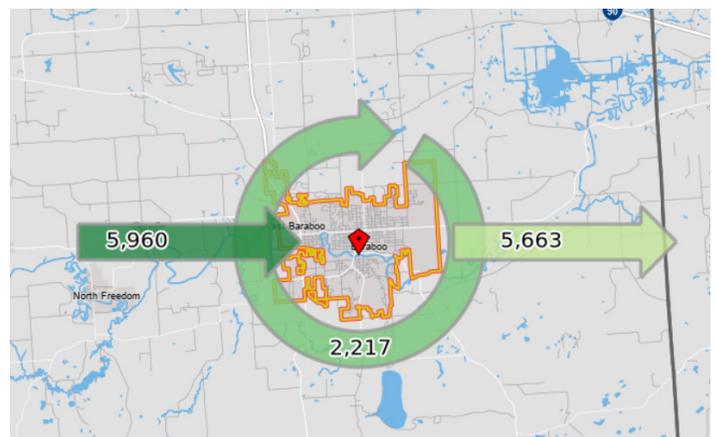
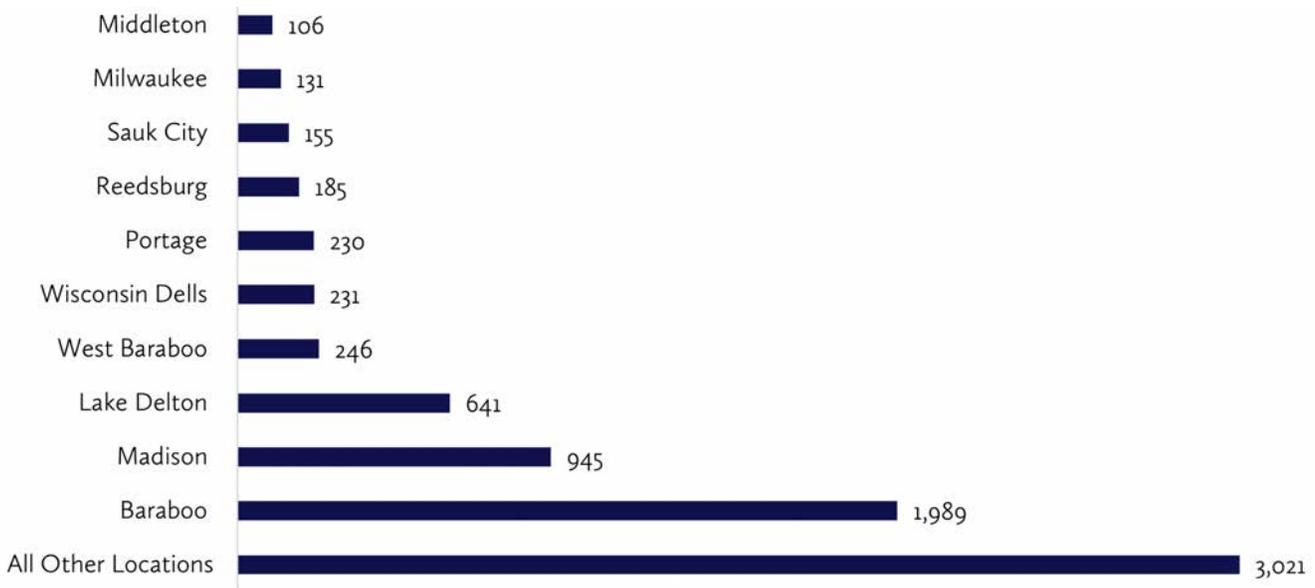


Figure 3.3 below illustrates the commuting destinations of residents for work. Figure 3.4 illustrates where the home destinations of people who are employed within the cities of Baraboo and West Baraboo.

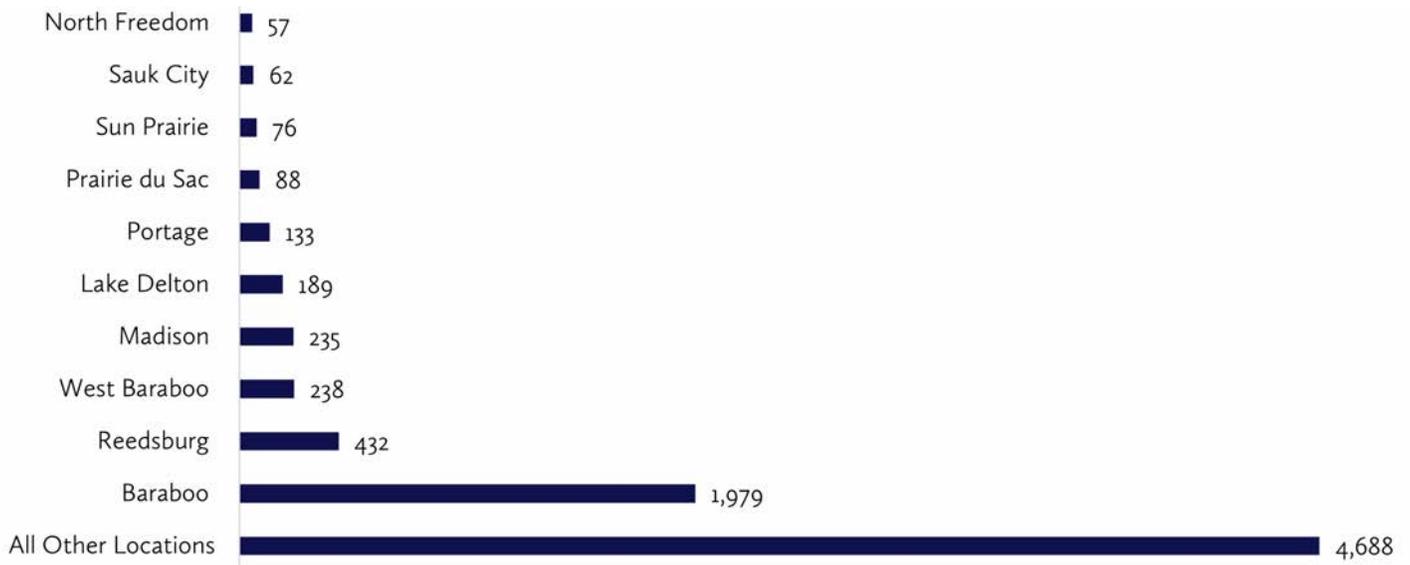
**FIGURE 3.3: TOP 10 JOB DESTINATIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF BARABOO & WEST BARABOO (2019)**



Data Note: There were 7,880 total jobs held by Baraboo & West Baraboo residents in 2019.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2019)

**FIGURE 3.4: TOP 10 HOME DESTINATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES OF BARABOO & WEST BARABOO (2019)**



Data Note: There were 8,177 total jobs in Baraboo & West Baraboo in 2019.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2019)

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 include the most recent available secondary data as of 2019. Commuting patterns have undoubtedly changed in the Baraboo region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, not least due to the flexibility of employers to allow employees to work from home. 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates show that the number of home-based workers comprised 10% of eligible workers in Sauk County, or 3,341 out of 33,800 workers. This is a notable increase over the average of 5% of eligible workers in prior years.

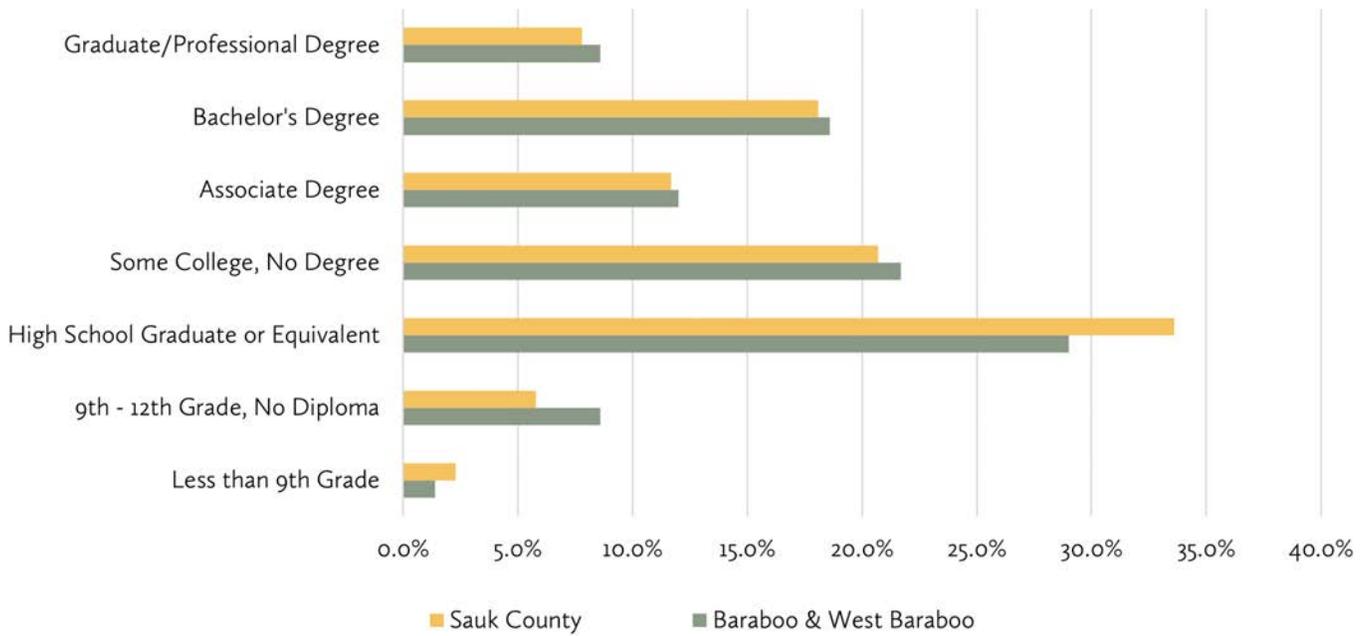
The reasons employees chose not to reside in the area was not part of the scope of this project.

### Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is an indication of the skill level of the local labor market, income potential and spending potential. Since most of the employees of Baraboo and West Baraboo reside in Sauk County, the project team compared those two geographies.

As a proportion of total populations, Baraboo and West Baraboo have a higher percentage of every level of educational attainment with the exception of “Less than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade” and “High School Graduate or Equivalent” as Figure 3.5 demonstrates.

**FIGURE 3.5: POPULATION 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2021)**

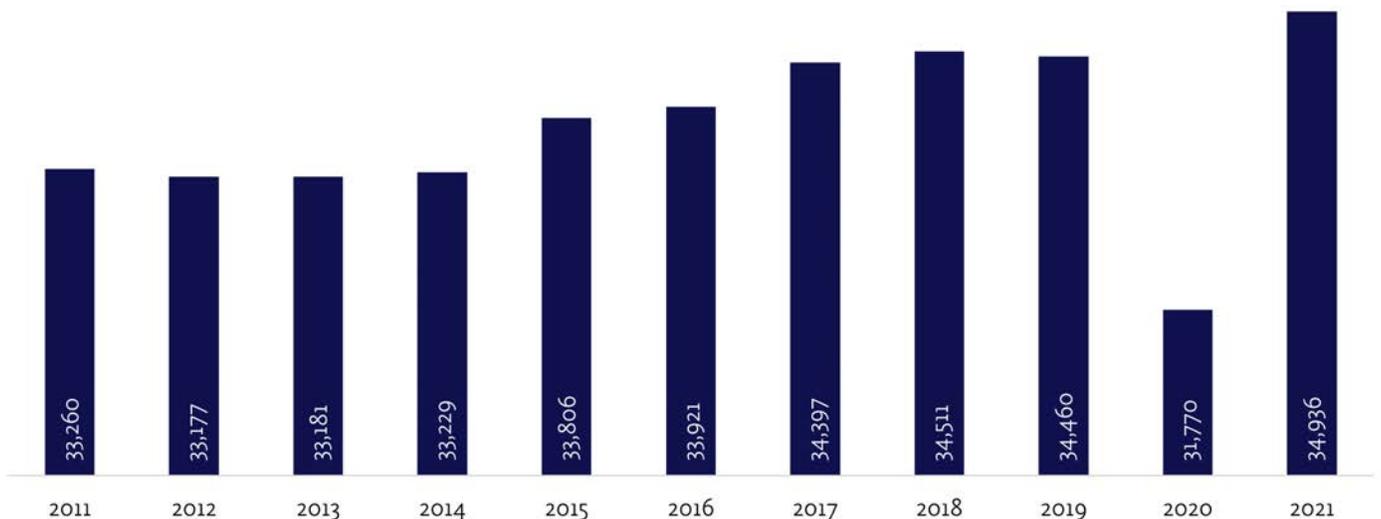


Data Source: ESRI Community Profile.

### Employment Trends

Figure 3.6 shows the number of employed persons in Sauk County annually from 2011-2021. The average employment numbers since 2011 have been approximately 33,700 persons.

**FIGURE 3.6: SAUK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT (2011-2021)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

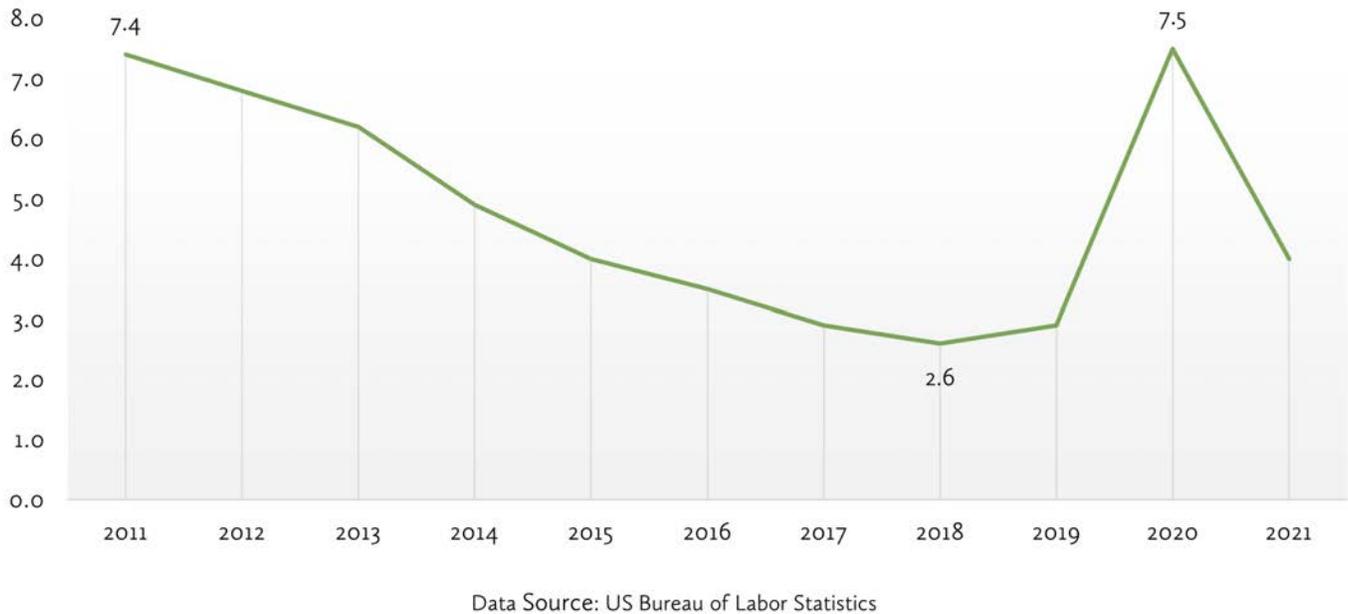
Employment growth was fairly flat between 2011 and 2014 but grew substantially in 2015 and 2017. Employment declined significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rebounded in 2021 with the addition of 476 jobs.

**FIGURE 3.7: SAUK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT GAINS/LOSSES (2011-2021)**

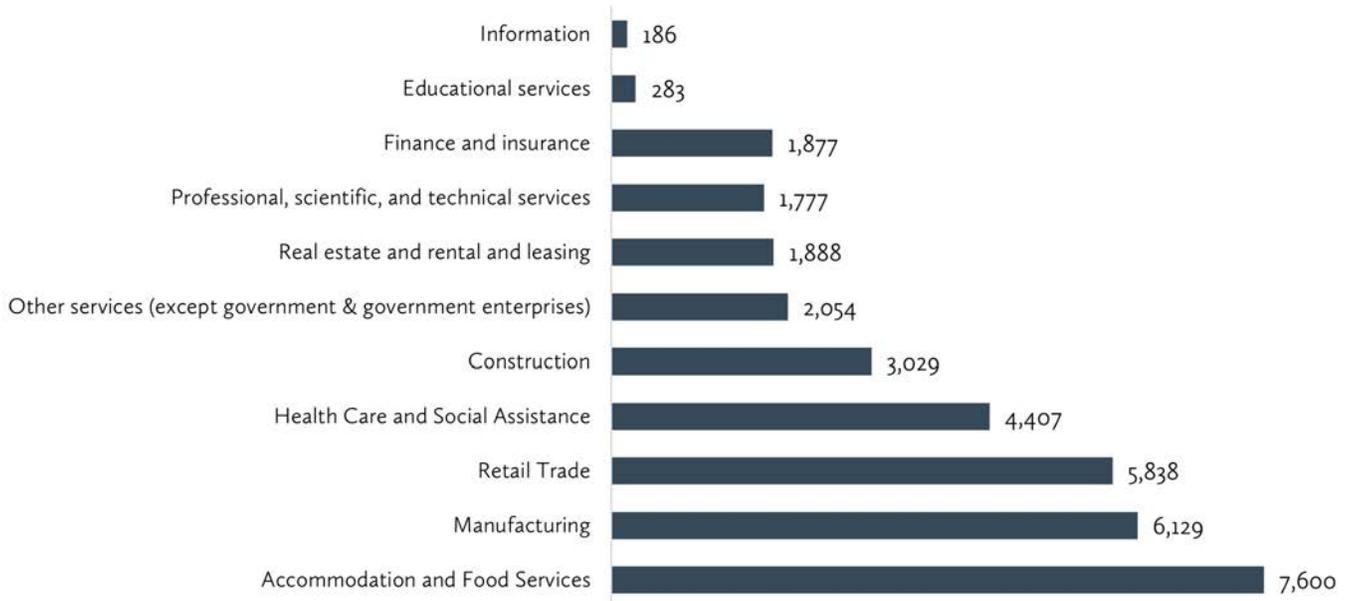


The unemployment rate is not back to pre-pandemic levels, but that could be an indication of an increase in labor force participants actively looking for employment opportunities that had previously left the labor force. Our assessment is that this is a good sign for Sauk County. The record low of 2.6% created tight labor conditions. The slightly higher unemployment rate indicates an available labor force for potential business attraction or expansion which Baraboo could strategically capture.

**FIGURE 3.8: SAUK COUNTY ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2011-2021)**



**FIGURE 3.9: SAUK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry.

Note: Data for the following industries was not available in order to avoid disclosure of confidential information: Forestry, fishing, and related activities; Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; Utilities; Transportation and warehousing, Utilities.

The top five private sector nonfarm industries in Sauk County as of 2019 are:

1. Accommodation and Food Services
2. Manufacturing
3. Retail Trade
4. Health care and social assistance
5. Construction

Combined, these industries account for 61% of the total disclosed employment in the county.

Due to the major economic disruption of COVID-19 in 2020, the project team is using 2019 as the benchmark year. Industry data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis is not yet available for 2021. Data should become available at the end of 2022 or early 2023.

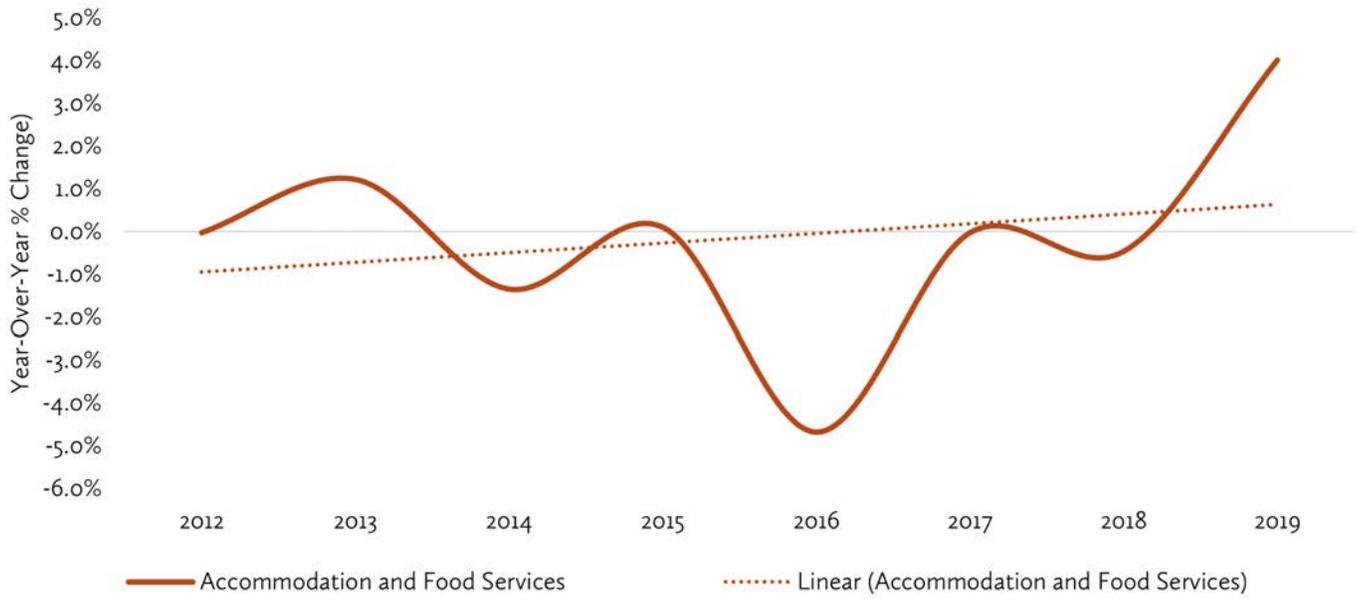


The retail environment in downtown Baraboo is strong.



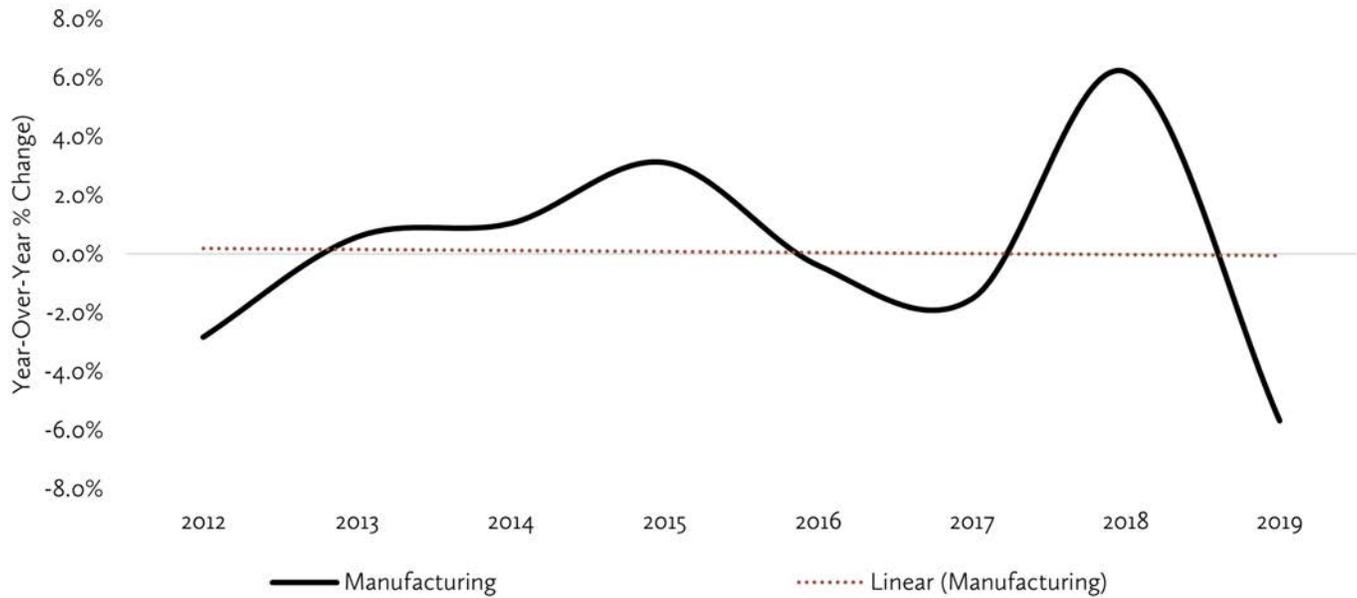
Nearly all local manufacturers have open positions they struggle to fill.

**FIGURE 3.10: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE (2012-2019)**



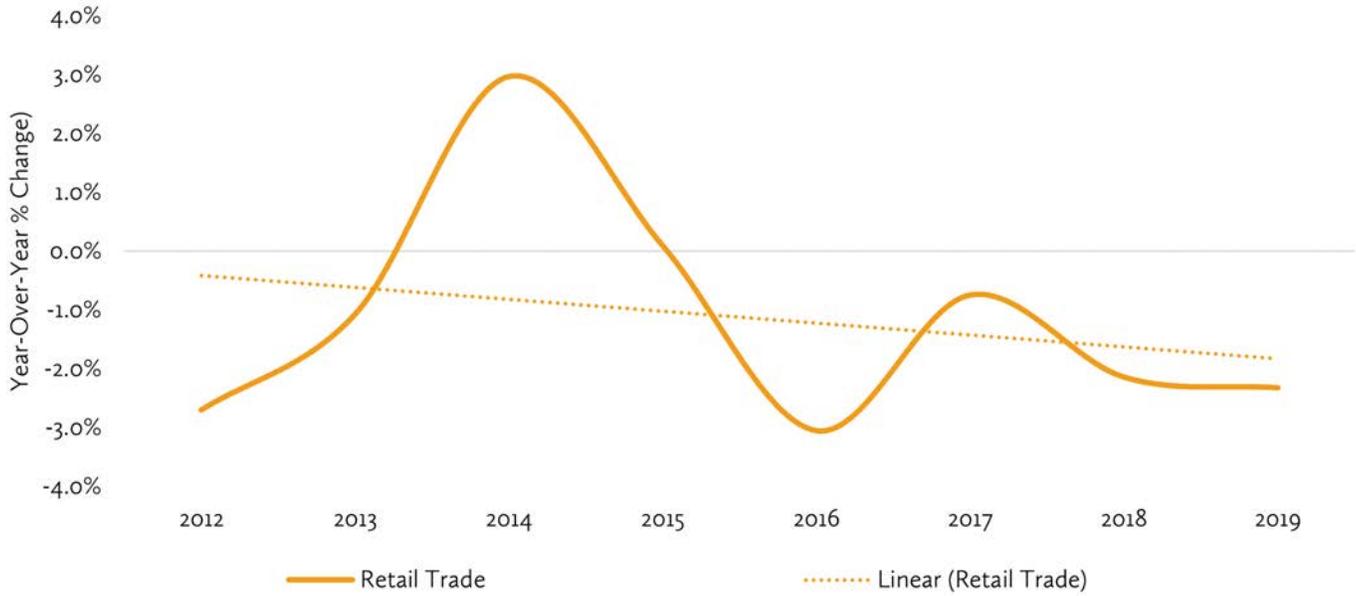
Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.11: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN MANUFACTURING (2012-2019)**



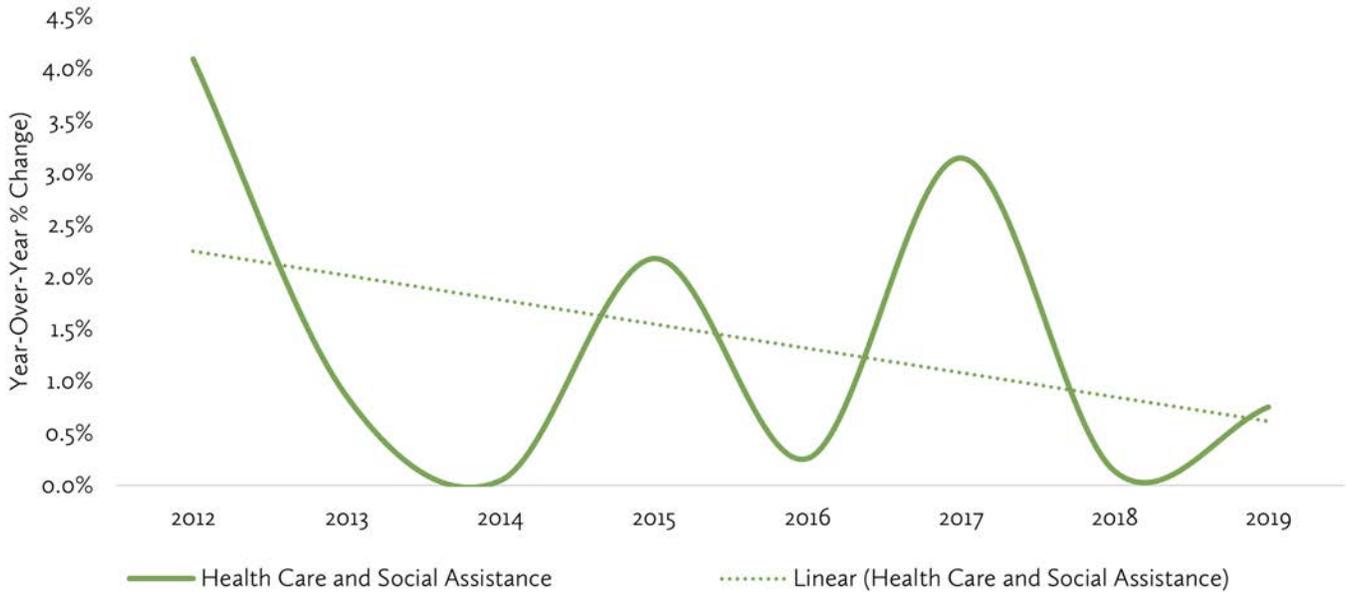
Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.12: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN RETAIL(2012-2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.13: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (2012-2019)**



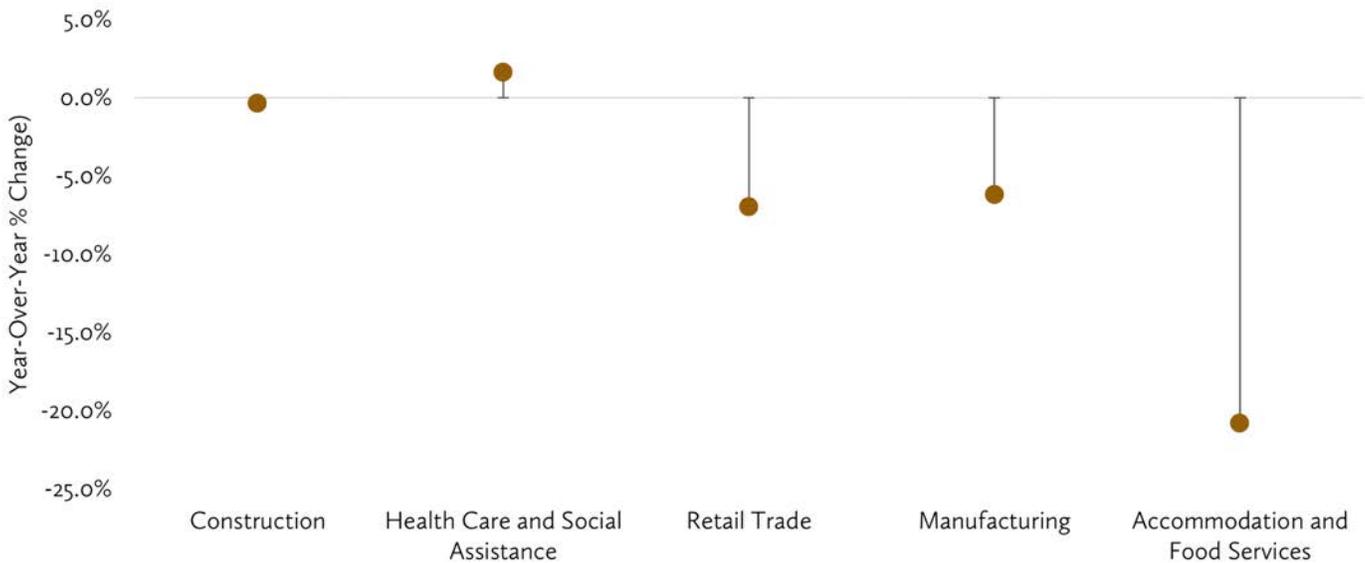
Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.14: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN CONSTRUCTION (2012-2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.15: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (2020)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry, Redevelopment Resources.

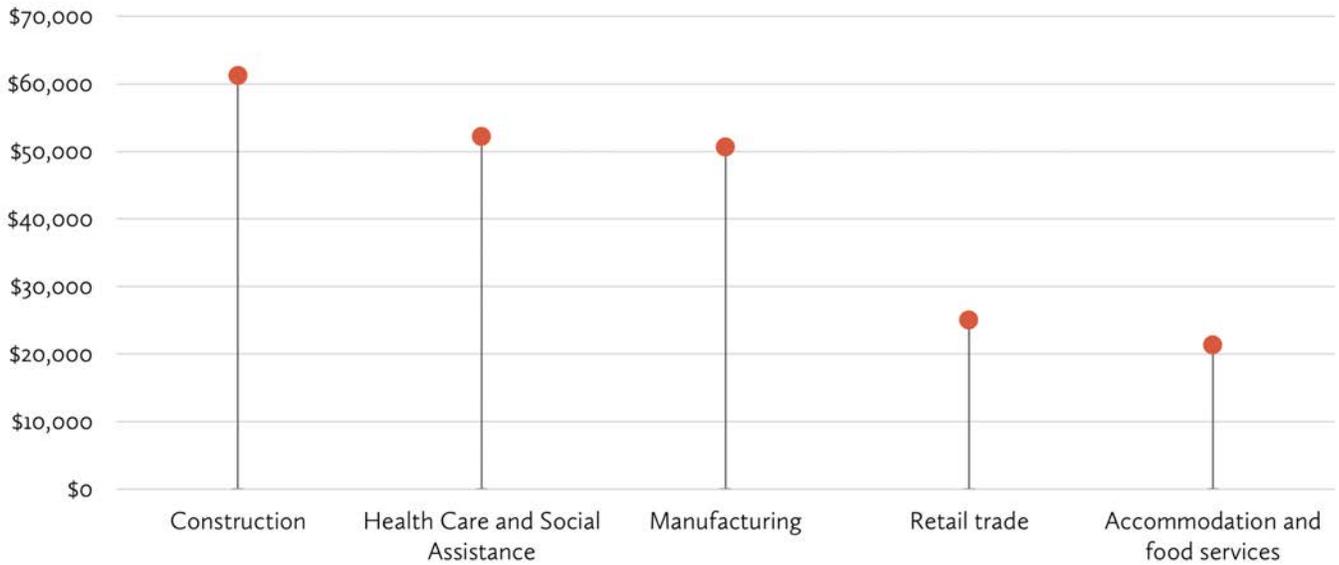
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2012-2019), the Accommodation and Food Services industry as well as the Construction industry had positive employment growth trends in Sauk County. Manufacturing was stable, however, employment in both Retail and Health Care and Social Assistance industries had been shrinking.

The pandemic hit the Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade hardest due to travel restrictions, limitations on the number of people permitted to gather in a space, and other variables. The temporary government shutdown and supply chain issues impacted construction and manufacturing as well. In Sauk County, Health Care and Social Assistance was the only industry to grow its employment base in 2020.

## Income

With an understanding of the industries that support the local employment base, we shifted our focus to the income potential of employees within each of those industries. The two largest industries in the area are also the two lowest paying industries.

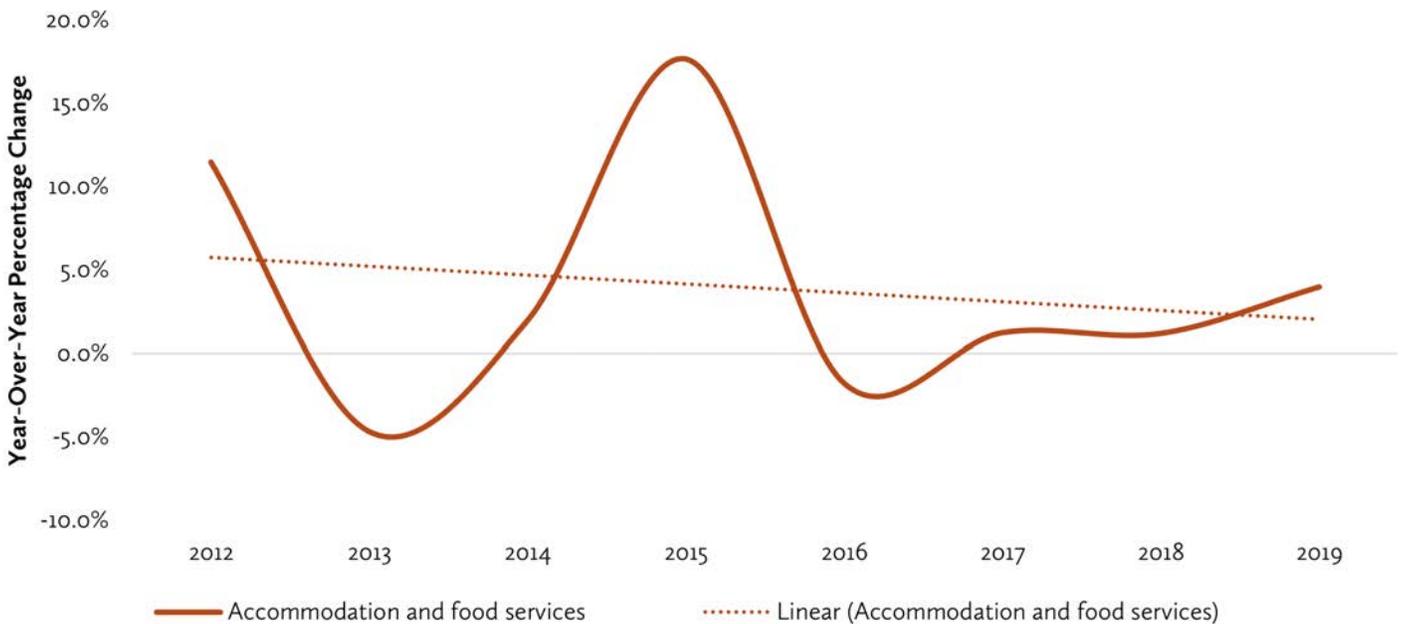
**FIGURE 3.16: SAUK COUNTY AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY BY TOP 5 PRIVATE INDUSTRIES (2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

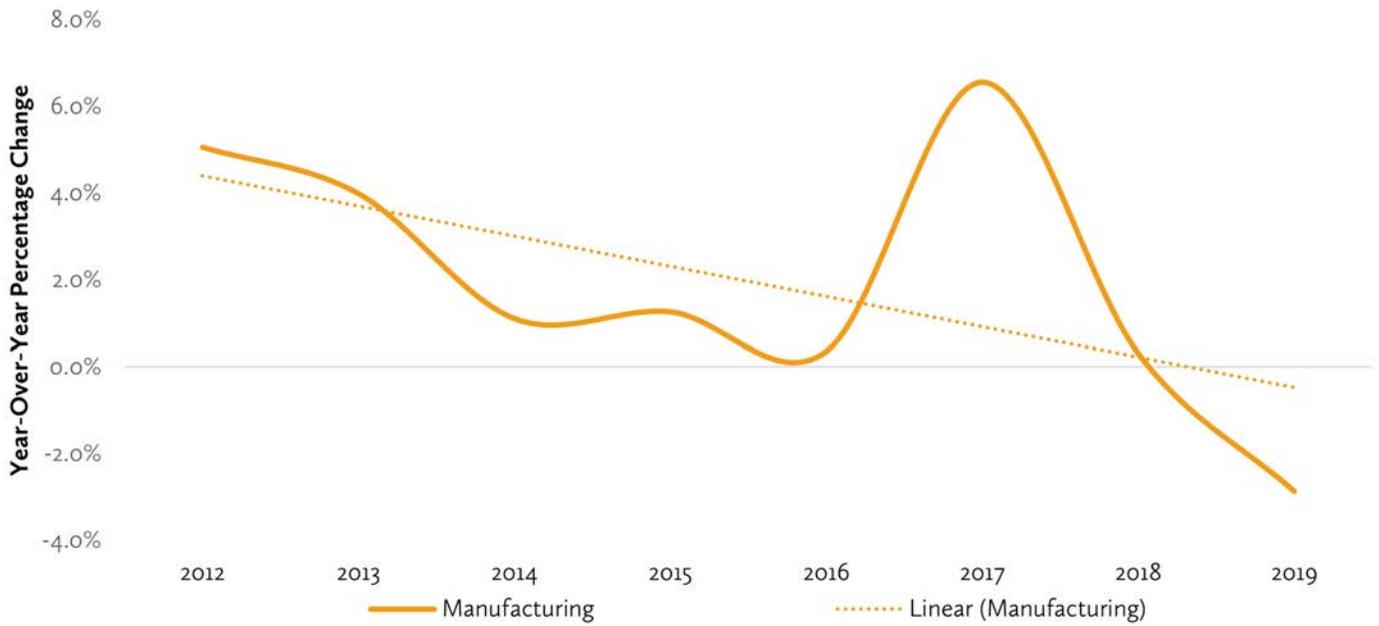
Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance industries were the only two industries in the county to have positive growth trends in annual pay prior to the pandemic. In 2020, Manufacturing was the only industry to not experience positive growth in annual pay.

**FIGURE 3.17: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY FOR ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY (2012-2019)**



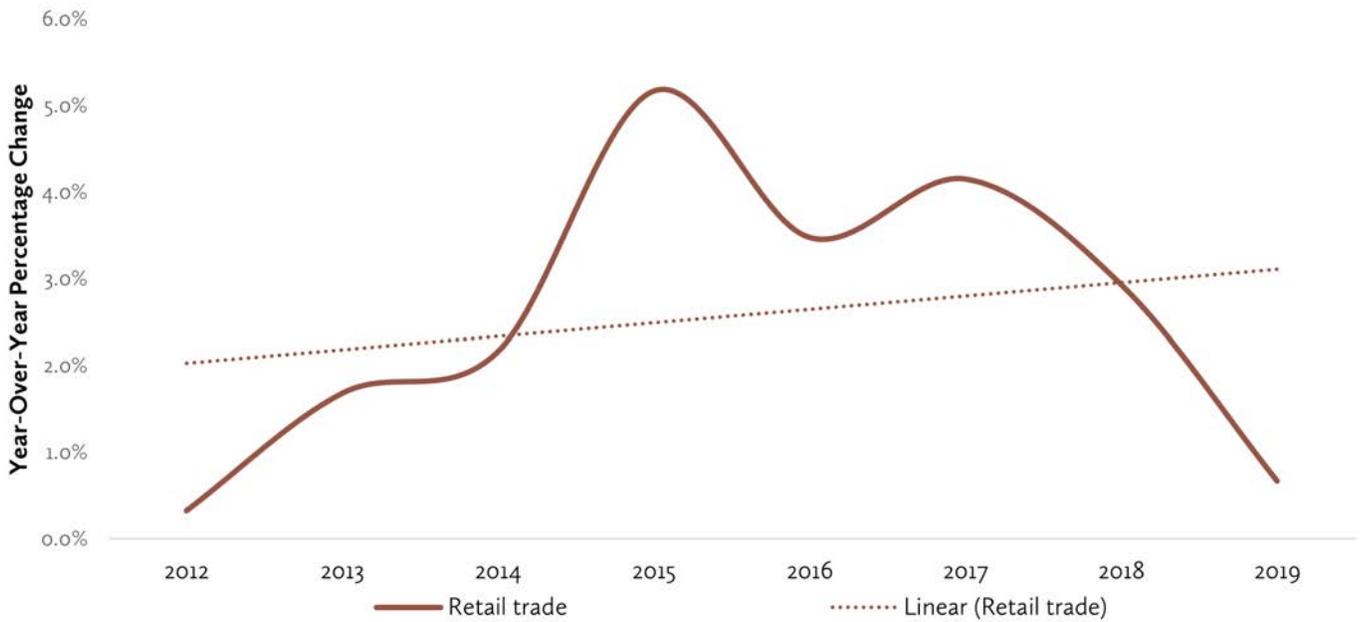
Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.18: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY FOR MANUFACTURING (2012-2019)**



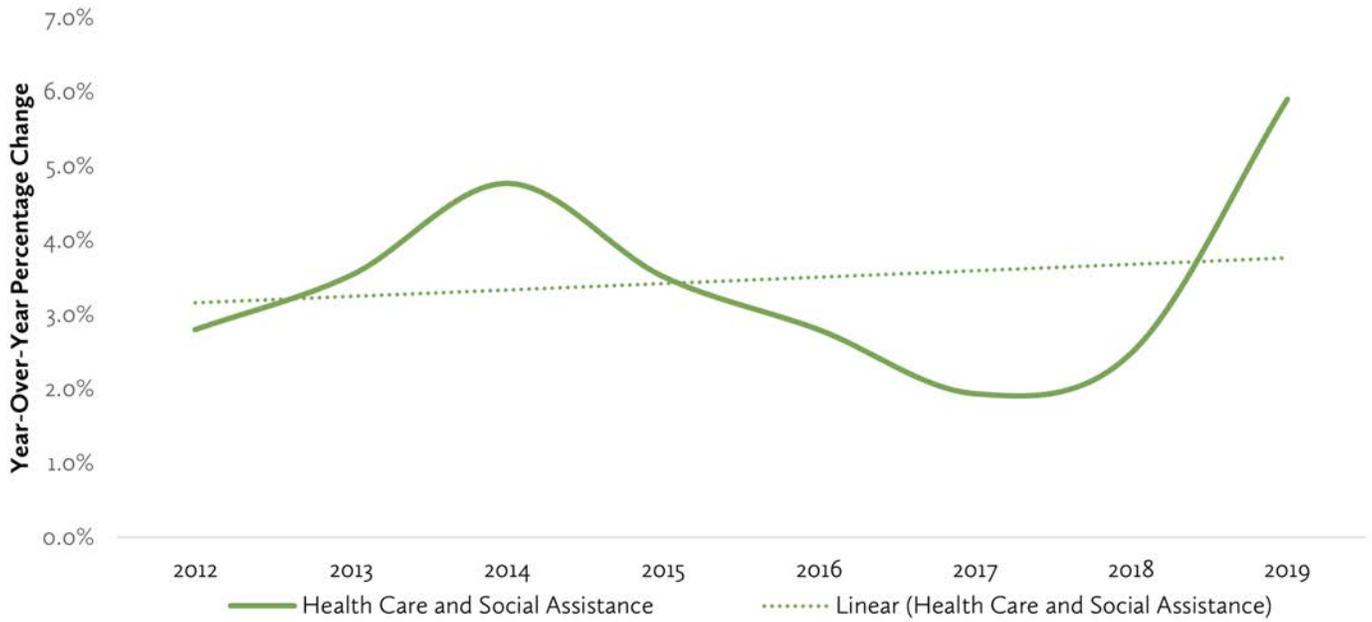
Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.19: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY FOR RETAIL TRADE (2012-2019)**



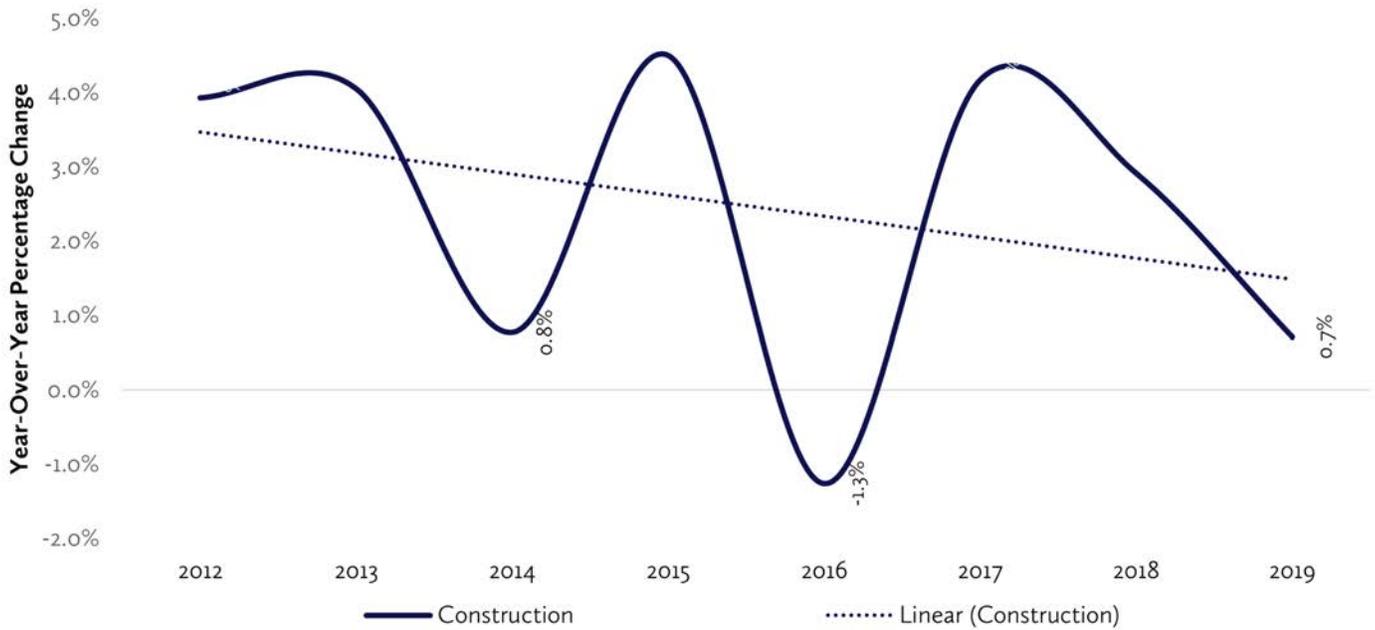
Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.20: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY FOR HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (2012-2019)**



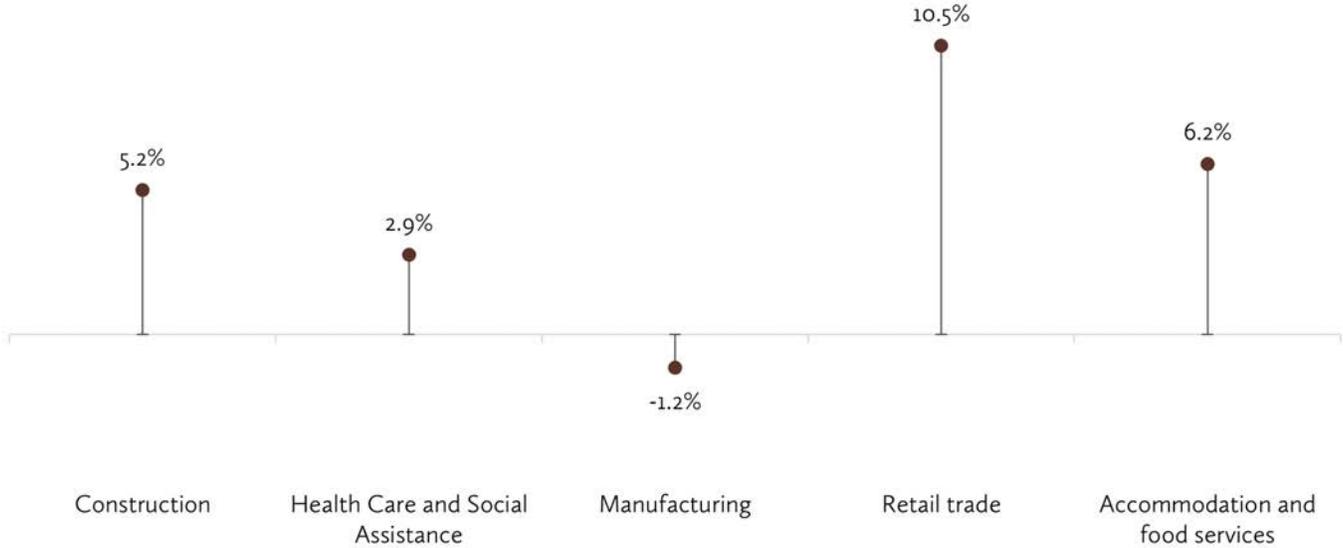
Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.21: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY FOR CONSTRUCTION (2012-2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

**FIGURE 3.22: SAUK COUNTY PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY BY INDUSTRY (2011-2019)**



Data Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Redevelopment Resources.

## What We Heard + SWOT Analysis

### Survey Summary

To understand how the community was feeling about the overall economy in Baraboo and to “take the temperature” of the community, the project team started the community survey with a few general questions that allowed a broad range of input. Nearly 500 responses were collected from the community survey, a very strong response rate for the size of the community. One of the first questions asked was “What makes Baraboo special?”. The word clouds below represent the words that occurred the most throughout the responses, including ‘People’, ‘Small Town Feel’, ‘Natural Resources’, and ‘Community’. Along with the questions that allowed for open-ended input, we also included a quality-of-life question that allowed respondents to rate Baraboo on a scale of 0-100. Of the 500 responses, the average rating was 77, with 34 respondents giving Baraboo a ‘100’ score for quality of life.

**FIGURE 3.23: WORD CLOUD RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION, "WHAT MAKES BARABOO SPECIAL?"**



Another important question in this section of the survey was “How do you find out about events going on in Baraboo?”. Respondents were given 11 choices (City Website, social media, Community or Religious Organization, School Communications, Downtown Baraboo, Inc., Local Newspaper, Radio, Television, Word of Mouth, None of the Above, and Other) and were asked to select all that apply. A staggering 84% of respondents said that social media is how they find out about events in Baraboo. The next

closest option was word of mouth with 57% of respondents. Television was the lowest, with only 5%.

To wrap up this section, the survey asked about the topics that respondents felt were most important for the city to address. The three most selected topics for the city to address were Vibrant and Sustainable Economy (46.8%), Sense of Place (45.4%), and Housing Needs (41.8%). The next question was open-ended and asked respondents "what would you change about Baraboo?" A word cloud of responses is shown in Figure 3.24. The survey also attempted to gauge the support level of respondents for city government using public funds or resources to facilitate business or housing in the community. The majority of survey respondents were either neutral or supportive of Housing Development and Attracting Business.

**FIGURE 3.24: WORD CLOUD RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION, "WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT BARABOO?"**



### Interview Takeaways

Interviewees generally feel positive about the community. They like living in Baraboo and having access to all the area has to offer in terms of natural resources. Residents like the smaller town feel of the community with easy access to Madison. Generally, residents do not want Baraboo to become a tourist attraction like Wisconsin Dells, but they do want to maximize opportunities for leveraging the visitors who come to Devil's Lake State Park. Capitalizing on this tourism aspect would allow the community to attract and maintain support for more restaurants, more attractions, and more shopping options.

From a social services standpoint, interviewees believe that their community is positively assisting disadvantaged community members. Service providers shared with interviewers, however, that there is a lack of affordable housing, transitional housing, and accessible transportation to mental health and substance abuse resources, the latter of which are predominantly located in Madison.

Large employers shared that their number one challenge is finding workers and that the lack of housing options affordable to their workforce contributes greatly to that challenge. Quality childcare is the second largest challenge these employers are facing.



One of several focus groups conducted on January 27, 2022.



One of two open houses held on April 21, 2022.

## SWOT Analysis: Baraboo

Strengths	Weaknesses
Natural Resources History Communication Networks Business Climate Operations and Logistics Workforce Development Partnerships	Housing Supply and Affordability Broadband Transportation Infrastructure Workforce Development Communication and Marketing
Opportunities	Challenges
Strengthen Workforce Development Partnerships Capturing UW-Sauk Students in Talent Pipeline More Service and Retail to East Side Capture Retail Leakage Centralize Communications with Public	Labor Supply & Availability Declining UW-Sauk Enrollment Construction Costs City/County Relationship

### Regional Connectivity

Human capital, physical infrastructure, and natural assets are not restricted to jurisdictional boundaries. It is important to understand the connections and reach that Baraboo has within the region as a means to leverage existing services and revenue potential for travelers and tourists.

#### Regional Service Providers

The Baraboo Economic Development Commission (BEDC) is an appointed sub-unit of city government. BEDC representatives may include community members from the City of Baraboo and the Village of West Baraboo as well as surrounding Towns. BEDC's duties include surveying industrial needs, promoting available sites and advantages to locating in the city, cooperation with the Sauk Co. Development Corporation, and to make recommendations to Baraboo City Council for the continuing improvement of the economic and industrial climate in the city.

Located in Sauk County, BEDC has access to resources from the [Sauk County Development Corporation](#) (SCDC). The mission of SCDC is "to promote and retain the diverse economic vitality of Sauk County and its individual communities." They offer pre-venture counseling for prospective entrepreneurs and broker relationships between entrepreneurs and their regional partners.

Sauk County is also part of an eight-county service territory of [Madison Regional Economic Partnership](#) (MadREP) which coordinates nearly 60 partner organizations in the region towards economic development initiatives including medical care providers, research and higher education institutions, advanced manufacturing, and tourism sectors. MadREP's five-year strategic plan, Advance Now 2.0, is in its third year of implementation which has included initiatives such as

brand management and marketing, business recruitment and attraction, attracting Foreign Direct Investment, and talent recruitment and retention.

#### Transportation

Interstate 39/90/94 is less than 10 miles from the City of Baraboo via US Highway 12. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts estimate nearly 40,000 vehicles travel this section of interstate. It also provides access to Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Chicago, and the state of Wisconsin within a four-hour drive time.

The AADT for the section of US Highway 12 between Interstate 39/90/94 and County Highway C ranges from 13,000 to 18,000 vehicles. This section provides access to Devil's Lake State Park. Business US Highway 12 and State Highway 33 also see comparable traffic counts with approximately 12,000-13,000 vehicles per day.

Wisconsin's state-wide trail system includes portions of three trails located in Sauk County: The Ice Age Trail, the 400 State Trail, and the Great Sauk Trail. The Ice Age Trail includes trail sections located in Devil's Lake State Park (described below) and runs alongside the Baraboo River through the city. The 400 State Trail is located north of Baraboo in Reedsburg. The Great Sauk Trail is located in Sauk City and terminates south of Devil's Lake State Park. Plans to connect the Great Sauk Trail with the 400 State Trail are ongoing at the time of this report.

## Tourism

Recreation- and nature-based tourism is a significant draw to the Baraboo region. This includes both State Natural Areas such as Parfrey's Glen and Pewitt's Nest as well as Devil's Lake State Park, the largest and most popular park in Wisconsin. The over 10,000-acre park attracts approximately 3.6 million visitors per year, with features including hiking trails, picnic areas, swimming beaches, paddling, and a 500-foot bluff overlooking a 360-acre lake. Park staff provide year-round naturalist programs to complement the natural amenities the park provides. A portion of the 1000-mile Ice Age Trail is also part of the park. The name, Devil's Lake, is derived from the Ho-Chunk name, "De Wakacak", which means Spirit Lake.

Less than 15 miles north in the Wisconsin Dells (Dells) is the "Water Park Capital of the World" with America's largest outdoor water park (Noah's Ark), the country's largest indoor/outdoor combination waterpark (The Wilderness Resort) and the state's largest indoor waterpark (Kalahari Resorts & Conventions). The Dells sees nearly 4 million visitors with a direct impact on the local economy of nearly \$1.3 billion according to a recent economic impact study for 2021 (Wisconsin Dells Economic Impact Summary, 2021).

## Summary

BEDC has the opportunity to leverage existing assets, such as 3-4 million tourists annually to the area and regional partners with an international audience, to promote the community not only as a destination, but also a strategic location for investment. Baraboo is the regional economic engine that provides employment in primary industries, as well as providing goods and services to a regional residential base. The following strategies and tactics provide ways to continue to grow the local economy in order to serve the regional economy.



The Ice Age Trail, Downtown Baraboo.



Devil's Lake State Park (Photo by Jonathan J. Castellon on Unsplash)



Wisconsin Dells (Photo by Steven Van Elk on Unsplash)

## Implementation Matrix

<b>Baraboo-Wide Theme #1: Business Mix</b>			
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>1.1: Support and expand the strong industrial cluster.</b>	Ensure there is ample industrial land for expansions and new businesses.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify new industrial land and take steps to secure with options including FROR agreements, annexation, or business relocation assistance if needed.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>1.2: Expand retail and service options on the east side.</b>	Catalog list of potential business types to serve residents' needs on the east side.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Contact prospects with sites in mind.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>1.3: Minimize retail leakage.</b>	Identify leakage areas and develop list of businesses that would fill the gap.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Actively attract these businesses by attending events such as International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) events with key marketable sites.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>1.4: Market available buildings and site locations.</b>	Maintain an accurate database of available buildings and sites easily accessed from the city website.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Work with Alliant Energy (AE) to get free access to Location One Information Systems (LOIS), a site location marketing tool, to embed into the City website. Alternatively, work with WEDC to explore options in marketing specific properties on city's website as a filter to their site location tool.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, AE, WEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Commercial brokers and realtors will have an active list of available buildings and sites. Inform them of the initiative to market the properties on the website and request marketing materials for publication. Build relationships with local and regional brokerage community and periodically, confirm the list is accurate.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, LCR <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
		<b>TACTIC 3</b> Collaborate with county and regional efforts to market spaces in Baraboo to site selector and new employers.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, MADREP, SC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #2: Development & Redevelopment Opportunities

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>2.1: Actively pursue development/redevelopment city-wide.</b>	Identify 5-7 priority (re) development sites.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> List strategies to market, incentivize, acquire, or otherwise transition sites.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023
<b>2.2: Ensure city is identifying sites to meet different types of development needs.</b>	Align sites with goals for housing, commercial, or industrial development.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Plot sites on a map of "development opportunities" by type.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #3: Industrial Cluster

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>3.1: Build stronger workforce development opportunities.</b>	Partner with BSD and local employers, and recruit local business participants.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Plan business tours each semester.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BSD <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>3.2: Create an environment attractive to workers.</b>	Develop adequate housing supply to attract additional workforce.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify workforce housing opportunities, market them to developers, and promote to employers.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>3.3: Create and implement a Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) program.</b>	Inventory and survey local businesses on an annual basis.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Staff to survey business community annually to identify red flags and determine methods to address with partner organizations.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #4: Communication Protocols

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>4.1: Reach all constituents with clear messaging.</b>	Develop clear line of communication between public bodies and residents.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Promote with clear language on multiple formats/media simultaneously.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
<b>4.2: Utilize technology to communicate whenever possible.</b>	Identify strategic communication partners.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Share messages with other entities to increase reach.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #5: Expansion/Annexation Planning

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>5.1: Grow sustainably while planning for future growth.</b>	Identify residential, commercial, and industrial growth options for 5/10/20 years.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Include growth plans in comprehensive planning documents.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
	Consider infill development and redevelopment of functionally obsolete properties.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify and plan for redevelopment of strategic property.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #6: Economic Risk

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>6.1: Strengthen local economic supports.</b>	Put safeguards in place to minimize economic risk.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify and publish sources of capital for small business growth, development, and disaster recovery. While information about BEDC, its mission, and the Revolving Loan Fund is available on the city's website, it is buried in either links to other documents or links from other partner organizations.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
	Create a business support network.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify list of professional support and catalog in accessible database, promote to businesses.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BEDC, DBI <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
	Create an executive roundtable.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Meet quarterly to discuss high-level business topics, facilitated by City Administrator.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BCA, DBI <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
	Practice disaster planning/preparedness.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Meet annually with businesses as a group to discuss disaster planning/preparedness.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023

## Baraboo-Wide Theme #7: Business Continuity Planning

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>7.1: Provide business continuity services to local businesses.</b>	Create resource list for Baraboo businesses.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Develop database of service providers, contractors, and suppliers by sector.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
<b>7.2: Connect Baraboo businesses.</b>	Inform businesses about local and regional resources.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Work with Sauk County EDC to connect businesses to each other to share resource ideas.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, SCEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Metrics

The following list of metrics is presented to offer ideas on ways the City can track progress toward implementing the recommendations identified above. This list is not all encompassing, but it is recommended that the City track and report on a number of the metrics identified here.

- Vacancy rate (commercial, retail and industrial property)
- Absorption rate (commercial, retail and industrial property)
- New commercial business contacts
- Acres of new industrial property available
- Property lists updated regularly
- Number of new businesses
- Number of new housing units
- Number and channels (media mix) of messages sent
- Interaction from public on social media
- Attendance at quarterly executive roundtable
- Growth in property taxes over time
- Growth in investment (by private sector) over time
- Number of participants in disaster planning exercises

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# STUDY AREA #2

## South Blvd. Corridor

### Introduction

The South Boulevard corridor is an integral component of the city’s economic engine. With its proximity to US Highway 12, the variety of businesses within the corridor capture both local and regional consumer demand as well as visitor traffic. Commercial and industrial businesses alike have generated a significant amount of freight traffic along South Boulevard. Prior to its reconstruction which began in 2014, WisDOT determined that 44 percent of all truck traffic in Sauk County used this major arterial for a portion of their trip (Pinion 2022).

City staff and BEDC members have expressed the need to develop realistic goals that will contribute to the long-term productivity and sustainability of the corridor. Stakeholders shared valuable insights and offered suggestions for improving the corridor, such as diversifying the business mix, creating a cohesive identity, and enriching the relationship between businesses and schools as a talent attraction endeavor. This section provides a detailed account of the existing conditions which characterize the corridor while providing actionable recommendations shaped by a variety of community members.

### Goals

Theme	Goals
Business Mix	Develop a diverse, multi-sector business cluster within the corridor.
	Attract and retain talent to meet a variety of business needs.
	Enhance the school-to-business pipeline to develop and retain home-grown talent.
Transportation Corridor	Develop and maintain a key gateway into Baraboo that supports adjacent land uses and helps grow the economy.
	Develop a ‘Safe Systems’ approach to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities throughout the corridor, regardless of mode.
Design and Aesthetic Guidelines	Create a cohesive, distinctive, and aesthetically pleasing identity to the corridor.

## What We Heard + SWOT Analysis + Open Houses

### Survey Summary

The community survey included a section of questions specifically related to activity on South Blvd. The word cloud (Figure 4.1) shows the most occurring responses to the question, “What is your first impression of South Boulevard?” The next, most logical, question for respondents was whether they conduct any business on South Blvd. Of the 481 respondents, 78% answered ‘yes’ to this question.

Respondents who answered “yes” were then taken to a specific set of questions. These questions asked what businesses they patronize on South Blvd, how frequently, and what additional businesses they would like to see. Overwhelmingly, Farm & Fleet was the most popular location that respondents shared on the survey. Kwik Trip, Barabrew Liquors, DEZ Tactical Arms, Quintd’s Town Lounge, and Walmart were also very popular responses. A combined 85% of respondents either said once a month or once a week in response to how frequently they were patronizing South Blvd.

The question of additional types of businesses respondents would like to see on South Blvd resulted in a few responses: Professional Offices, Higher Density Housing, Advanced Manufacturing, Hospitality Industry related businesses, and Other. Respondents could select all that applied. 50% of respondents selected Hospitality Industry related businesses. Professional Offices was the next most selected response with 34%. Advanced Manufacturing (17%) and Higher Density Housing (16%) were the least popular responses.

Respondents who answered “no” to conducting business on

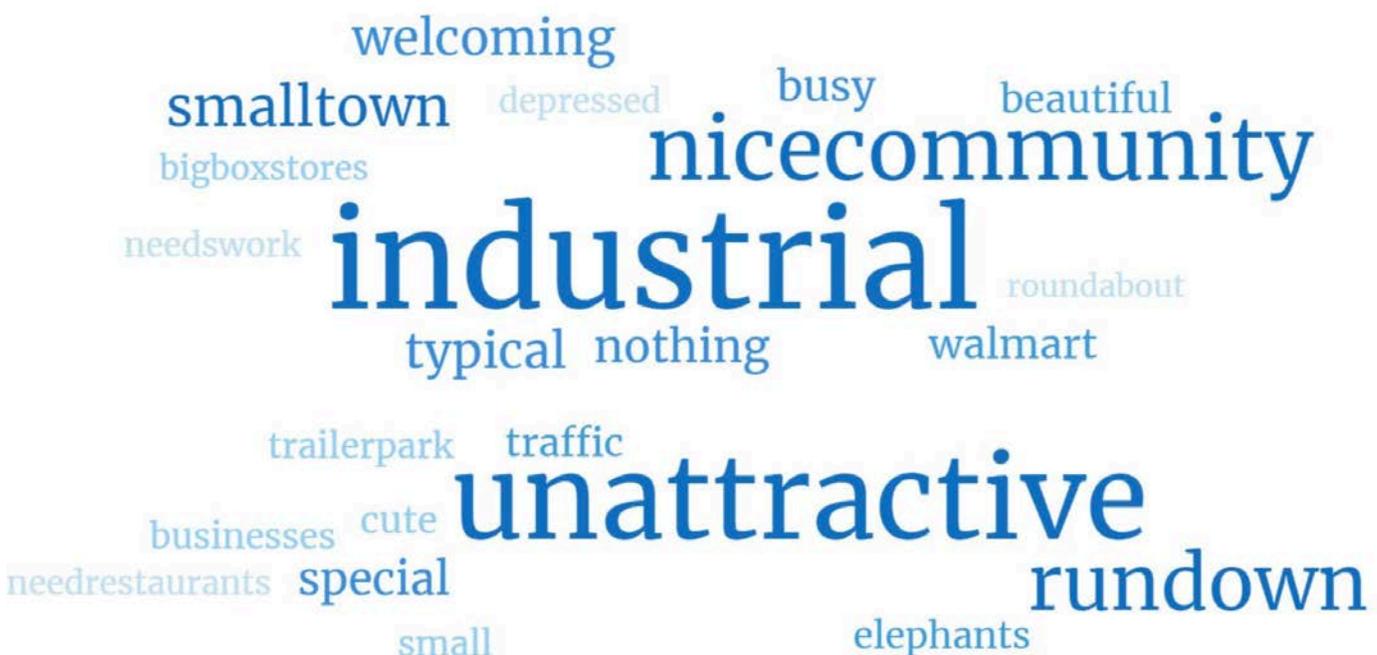
South Blvd were not asked what businesses they patronize on South Blvd, of course, but were still asked what businesses they would like to see. In addition, they were asked what prevented them from shopping on South Blvd. The most common answer to what prevented people from shopping on South Blvd was that there was nothing that they needed there. Some other responses that popped up multiple times was parking concerns and walkability. Hospitality Industry related businesses topped the responses of what businesses they would like to see with 46.53% of respondents. Professional Offices (35%) and Higher Density Housing (23%) were the second and third most popular responses. It is worth noting that only 22% of the total respondents said that they didn’t do business on South Blvd, so these percentages represent a much smaller portion of respondents than described above.

### Interview Takeaways

Interviewees were asked what the city could do to improve the aesthetics on South Boulevard, and what, if anything, could be done to make the corridor more inviting and welcoming. Responses here included the following:

- Residents and businesses were interested in more streetscaping (e.g. trees, public art, green space) along South Boulevard. Some people like the elephants (such as the ones placed at Myron Park) and want more like that, but others do not.
- Interviewees noted that the corridor and the buildings along the Boulevard are not attractive, and there should be building standards in place that are enforced. One person stated that there should be no more steel panel-clad buildings allowed in the corridor. One person noted

FIGURE 4.1: WORD CLOUD RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION, “WHAT IS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF SOUTH BOULEVARD?”



that South Boulevard should be redeveloped much like East Washington St. in Madison has been.

- Regarding pedestrian and bicycle mobility, interviewees also noted there are no marked bicycle lanes on South Boulevard and there should be. The existing edge markings were described as ‘confusing’; one individual called it a ‘swerve lane’, as they have observed motorists weaving around stopped or turning vehicles to continue forward. Some people expressed dedicating sections of the edge markings for vehicle parking, while others desired a dedicated bicycle lane. There is a sidewalk along South Boulevard, but it is not used often by pedestrians.
- There should be more conspicuous and attractive wayfinding to direct visitors to downtown and Devil’s Lake State Park. This would serve as an upgrade over the current sign which is located on the eastbound travel lane near Walmart.

The project team conducted focus groups with employers as well. Employers along South Blvd and elsewhere throughout the corridor reported a desire for a greater link with the Baraboo Public School System as a means to cultivate potential new workforce. By exposing students to local employment opportunities, employers believe there will be a direct positive impact on their ability to recruit new employees to work in local establishments.

Baraboo employers reported having a relationship with other area schools but would appreciate a deeper ongoing relationship with the school system in Baraboo. The City can facilitate this relationship through connecting and networking the appropriate people at the school district with Human Resources and other leadership at local companies.

### **Community Open Houses**

The project team conducted two open house-style events on April 22, 2022. Participants were invited to better understand the project by visiting a series of stations, one of which visualized various scenarios for South Boulevard in order to solicit stakeholder feedback. The scenarios included cross-sections of the roadway and adjacent land uses in both their existing state and proposed state, the latter of which included ideas for enhanced community branding, landscaping, and mobility. Below is a selection of stakeholder responses from both open houses:

- Participants were in favor of adding landscaping along South Boulevard as a means to break up large asphalt-covered areas and further delineate the roadway from the parking lots.
- Participants supported the idea of adding trees along the terrace as space permits. An example offered was the addition of trees along Myron Park.
- Participants thought the addition of banner signs and pedestrian-oriented lights was beneficial, especially closer to the South Parkway roundabout and downtown.



A view of the edge markings on South Boulevard.



The addition of down-lit streetlights along South Boulevard could be optimized further with banner signage.



During the April 21 2022 open houses, participants were asked to share input on a variety of proposed improvements for South Boulevard.

- Participants were in favor of replacing the edge markings, citing that they are confusing and are used by motorists to swerve around stopped traffic. When given the option of replacing the edge markings with dedicated parking or cycling facilities, most people found the former to be practical—especially between South Parkway and Waldo Street where lot sizes are smaller—and the latter to be admirable but unsafe given the traffic volumes on South Boulevard.

## SWOT Analysis: South Boulevard

Strengths	Weaknesses`
Meets consumer needs regionally Efficient at moving people in and out Reconstructed roadway Employment base	Lacks identity Unattractive properties Auto-oriented, not bike/ped/transit friendly Zoning mix (retail, mfg, residential, service)
Opportunities	Challenges
Improve building design standards Add streetscaping and art (murals, scripture) Branding/wayfinding to downtown, DLSP Improve bicycle facilities	Recent WisDOT reconstruction Limited space between sidewalk and street Perceived/real business parking concerns Utility poles

### Business Mix

The South Boulevard corridor is largely comprised of commercial and industrial destinations, the size and scale of which illustrate the city’s development pattern over the last few decades. There are similar land uses and highway-oriented commercial destinations at the western gateway of South Boulevard and the eastern gateway of Highway 33; however, South Boulevard’s proximity to Highway 12 is a significant factor contributing to the presence of larger-scale commercial chains and large employment industrial companies within this corridor.

#### Commercial Businesses

The majority of commercial businesses in the corridor are zoned B-3 (‘Highway Oriented Business District’). In terms of building size and land use, the largest businesses consist of:

- Retail and restaurant chain stores with a nationwide presence (e.g. Dollar Tree, Kwik-Trip); and
- ‘Big-Box’ retail chain department stores and home improvement stores (e.g. Farm and Fleet, Wal-Mart, Menards).

The majority of these large-scale commercial businesses were constructed near or around the intersection of South Boulevard and Highway 136, the latter of which was formerly used as US Highway 12. The B-3 zoning designation frames this intersection and lines the majority of the corridor with the following exceptions:

- The former Honey Boy site at the northwest corner of South Boulevard and Highway 136 (This is zoned MH-P for a Manufactured Home Park District, and would need to be rezoned to accommodate the concept proposed in Site 2 below); and
- Land to the south of South Boulevard between Industrial Court and Moore Street, which consists of county-owned land and city-owned land that is

occupied and zoned MH-P as well.

Moving east of Moore Street, there are a wide range of businesses within the B-3 district including retail, light office, contractors, supply and materials stores, and auto and truck repair shops. These businesses are occupying small, one-story buildings on smaller parcels than their commercial counterparts to the west. It is likely that these businesses are serving a more local or select regional consumer base compared to the commercial chain stores on the city’s edge.

#### Industrial Businesses

Most of the industrial businesses in the corridor are zoned I-1 (‘Industrial – Enclosed Storage’). In terms of building size and land use, the largest businesses consist of:

- Manufacturing and fabrication (e.g. Teel Plastics, Flambeau);
- Wholesale product distribution (e.g. Sysco, Seneca); and
- Warehousing and storage.

These businesses are located northeast of the South Boulevard/Highway 136 intersection and are set back behind the B-3 zoned businesses, with Sysco being the exemption.

The corridor also includes industrial businesses that are zoned I-4 (Planned Industrial/Business). The business mix within this district consists of contemporary professional office space, most notably the Teel Plastics corporate headquarters (1060 Teel Court), and light manufacturing. Additional businesses such as Pizza Ranch and Fairfield Inn & Suites are located within this district as well.

The commercial and industrial businesses in the South Boulevard corridor produces a significant amount of truck traffic while generating business from both local and regional consumers.



## Transportation Corridor

South Boulevard is an arterial roadway that plays an integral role in the movement of people and freight within southwest Baraboo and throughout the region. Like its counterpart to the east, Highway 33, South Boulevard is a key east-west gateway into the Baraboo community and connects local and regional motorists to a variety of commercial and industrial destinations.

South Boulevard is functionally classified as a Principal Arterial and falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Baraboo. It is bounded by Lynn Street to the east and Highway 136 to the west. County Road W continues west of Highway 136 and falls under the jurisdiction of Sauk County. The existing conditions and recommendations in the section of the report focus primarily on South Boulevard. It should be noted, however, that public comments summarized in the ‘What We Heard + SWOT Analysis’ may use the term ‘South Boulevard’ to describe both the county-owned and city-owned portions of the roadway.

The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is a useful metric for understanding traffic volumes along a given section of a roadway. The latest AADT estimates are as follows (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2021):

- 10,000 (South Boulevard between Lynn Avenue & South Parkway Street);
- 12,200 (South Boulevard between Hitchcock & Moore); and
- 13,600 (CTH W between USH 12 & Industrial Court).

The AADT estimates are not broken down by vehicle and truck classification, such as passenger vehicles or freight trucks. WisDOT Southwest Region officials stated that truck traffic counts in 2021 were not readily available and may not be considered as valid, reliable data due to ongoing

### SOUTH BOULEVARD AT A GLANCE

- **Functional Class: Principal Arterial**
- **Jurisdiction: City of Baraboo**
- **Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT): Ranges from 10,000 vehicles/day to the east, up to 13,600 vehicles/day to the west**

-Wisconsin Department of Transportation

construction in the area and the effects of the pandemic on traffic counts (Schelfout 2022).

South Boulevard was reconstructed by WisDOT in 2014. The project included the reconstruction of 6,100 feet of roadway from Highway 136 to Lynn Avenue includes two 10’ travel lanes and two 10’ edge markings that are designed to be an on-street bike lane as well as on-street vehicle parking. Additional features between the curb and adjacent parcels include a grass terrace, sidewalks, and LED down-lit streetlights which alternate north-to-south depending on available right of way (Getsinger 2013).

The project team paid special attention to pedestrian and bicycle mobility and considered future corridor enhancements that would increase the safety and accessibility of the community’s non-motorized users.

### Pedestrian Mobility

The addition of sidewalks along both sides of South Boulevard is a welcome addition to the community. Given

the proximity of South Boulevard to a number of residential neighborhoods, people on foot can access a variety of destinations in a reasonable amount of time. The corridor is highway-oriented by design, of course, which makes it all the more important for city officials to enhance safety at key places where pedestrians and motorists share space. These opportunities are detailed in the Strategies and Tactics sub-section, and include:

- The installation of Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) or High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signals at unsignalized crossings. Notably, the crosswalk at Hitchcock and Waldo Streets could use an additional visual cue beyond the static signage currently in place.
- The application of ladder striping as an upgrade to the existing simple striped crosswalks. There is ample precedent on this treatment upon arterial roadways.

### **Bicycle Mobility**

The practice of installing edge markings along arterial roadways for a variety of purposes has precedent in Wisconsin. Notably, the report does not refer to the edge markings as ‘bike lanes’ primarily because they are intended to serve a variety of functions. The WisDOT Bicycle Facility Design Handbook states that

“wide outside lanes have numerous benefits in addition to providing space for bicyclists and motorists to share. They improve roadway capacity by reducing conflicts between motorists traveling straight and those turning into or out of driveways and cross streets. And they provide space for temporary storage of snow and disabled motor vehicles.”

Stakeholders shared that the edge markings are “confusing” and “unsafe”, and mentioned the importance of dedicated cycling facilities to enhance accessibility in the corridor. This could be accomplished in a couple of ways, including:

- The creation of a separated off-street multi-use path. This would consist of a 10’ path constructed on one side of the street. A multi-use path is a more comfortable and convenient facilitate than the current edge markings, which offers no separation from the freight traffic that also utilizes this roadway. Whereas on-street markings are typically used by more experienced and confident cyclists, the separation from motor vehicles typifying an off-street facility is more inviting for riders of all ages and abilities. It is unlikely that WisDOT would be a funding partner for a project of that size, especially given the recent reconstruction of South Boulevard. However, federal discretionary grants such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) are viable funding sources that can cover up to 80% of the costs for such a project.
- The creation of a Bicycle Boulevard along residential streets. Bicycle boulevards are a low-cost, quick-build method that can improve connectivity between South Boulevard and residential neighborhoods to the east. A bicycle boulevard is typically deployed on local streets with low traffic volumes (i.e. under 1,000 vehicles per day) and are designed to prioritize bicycle mobility (e.g. bicycles having the ability to take the full lane). The city’s enhancement of local streets such as Lynn and Sauk Avenues to a ‘Bicycle Boulevard’ status would be a cost-effective alternative to consider in the interim period while an off-street multi-use path is considered.

Finally, it is important to note the role that freight traffic has played in the reconstruction of South Boulevard. The primary funding source for the project was the State of Wisconsin Surface Transportation Program – Freight (STP) initiative, which distributes federal funding for projects that improve freight connectivity (Pinion 2022). Prior to reconstruction, WisDOT determined that 44 percent of all truck traffic in Sauk County used South Boulevard for a portion of their trip. Although the latest traffic counts do not include an estimate of truck traffic, the continued presence and expansion of commercial establishments suggest that truck traffic remains significant in the corridor.



An example of a HAWK signal (Crafton Tull).



An example of a Bicycle Boulevard (City of Lincoln, NE).

## Design and Aesthetic Guidelines

For many visitors entering Baraboo from US Highway 12, the South Boulevard corridor is their first impression of the community. The addition of community branding, wayfinding, and landscaping treatments would not only be complementary to the recent reconstruction of South Boulevard and the planned reconstruction of County Road W but would also enhance that all-important visitor experience.

City officials have expressed a desire to apply design features in the corridor that cohere with the Eastside corridor study and the forthcoming reconstruction of Highway 33. Towards that end, the project team gathered valuable input from stakeholders which has centered around the following themes:

- Convey sustainability: People visit Baraboo to enjoy our parks, preserves, and natural areas. These destinations are timeless; they do not go out of style and, when managed and cared for, they can last for generations. Nature-based icons, native plantings, and solar-powered lighting were among the many ideas stakeholders shared as ways to convey to visitors that the community takes sustainability seriously.
- Promote proximity to downtown: For many community members, downtown is a critical party of the city's identity. And for good reason: A walkable, historic, mixed-use, and well-programmed downtown like Downtown Baraboo is a place where you can create memorable experiences. At the same time, stakeholders were concerned that visitors may not consider downtown in their trip planning, or even get confused that the South Boulevard corridor is all that Baraboo has to offer. Wayfinding and signage were viewed as treatments that could not only help visitors get downtown but could also encourage visitors to augment their nature-based experiences with complementary trips around downtown, such as a walk on the Ice Age Trail.

Each of these themes conveys a unique and authentic sense of place for visitors. It communicates to visitors, "You won't find these destinations anywhere else." Further, each of these themes boasts repeatability: Visitors can return, again and again, because one trip could not possibly capture the breadth and depth of a given place.

From a visitor perspective, the South Boulevard corridor should be viewed as a critical first step in a visitor's 'life cycle', so to speak. The corridor is marked with commercial stores that are visitor's first step into the community: A stop at Walmart, for example, or a refuel at Kwik-Trip. Such trips have become a critical element of the economic activity in the corridor in particular and Baraboo in general. From a destination marketing perspective, however, the next step in the life cycle is one of utmost importance: Are visitors destined to a place in the community that will give them a one-of-a-kind experience? And, regardless of a 'yes' or 'no' response to that question, how can we use community branding tactics to ensure that visitors will be compelled

to come back? The following sub-sections offer some suggestions.

### Community Branding

Visitors exiting from US Highway 12 and heading east into Baraboo are treated with prominent views of the Baraboo valley. The viewsheds from the corridor entrance are worth highlighting, and the creation of gateway signage can complement the natural first impression visitors receive.

The frontage on County Road W between US Highway 12 and Highway 136 offers an ideal space for gateway signage, particularly at the southwest end. This could be done in tandem with County Road W reconstruction or done separately, as it is not located in the right of way. The design of the gateway monument signage (Figure x.x) incorporates natural stone features which hearken to the rocks that are associated with Devil's Lake State Park. Deploying natural materials in gateway signage would also align with materials and recommendations found in the following documents:

- The East Side Corridor Plan
- The Sauk County Brand Marketing Strategy

However, it is important for city staff and key stakeholders to review existing branding elements and consider a unified, cohesive approach to applying future branding elements, not least the gateway signage on South Boulevard. While natural features such as the Devil's Doorway icon in the City of Baraboo logo is a familiar branding element in the community, others may find the elephant statues pay tribute to the Ringling Brothers history and tell a different story about the community. While there is plenty of room for multiple agencies and organizations to applying distinct branding elements, of course, it is important to establish a primary-yet-complementary brand so as to avoid confusion on behalf of visitors.

### Wayfinding/Signage

Currently the South Boulevard corridor includes wayfinding signage at the following locations:

Eastbound travel lane:

- Located south of the South Boulevard/South Parkway roundabout
- A sign directing visitors to Devil's Lake State Park west of the South Boulevard/Highway 136 intersection.

Westbound travel lane:

- Located north of the South Boulevard/South Parkway roundabout

The signage near the roundabout consists of a series of the familiar Devil's Doorway icon associated with the City of Baraboo as well as destinations that are paired with a directional logo. The signage near the South Boulevard/Highway 136 intersection is a conventional 'Recreational Area

**FIGURE 4.2: ILLUSTRATION OF GATEWAY SIGNAGE INTO BARABOO FROM US HIGHWAY 12, LOOKING EAST**



or Cultural Interest’ sign, with white text on a standard brown background. This particular section of the corridor—from US Highway 12 to County Road 136—is an ideal location for pairing wayfinding signage with gateway signage akin to the signage near the roundabout. Additionally, the installation of wayfinding signage between Highway 136 and South Parkway would be helpful, as this section of the corridor currently lacks signage. Any changes to the primary brand (as discussed in ‘Community Branding’, above) should be reflected in the wayfinding signage as well.

The down-lit streetlights located on either side of South Boulevard present an opportunity to add pole banner signs. Although the streetlights do not line the roadway consistently on both sides, the narrow right of way compared to a conventional arterial and the subsequent placement of the lights facilitate high visibility of the signs. The signs could be piloted on South Boulevard between Lynn Street and South Parkway. This could be done in tandem with any downtown-specific branding initiatives and include sponsorship opportunities. Additional iterations could continue east as funding and will progresses.

### **Landscaping**

The addition of ornamental flowers, shrubs, and grasses can convey the above-noted theme of sustainability in the community. Pairing landscaping with the aforementioned gateway sign existing/planned wayfinding signs can be viewed as small ‘wins’, which is encouraged. Further, installing hanging baskets on the streetlights would be a welcome pairing with the banner signs propose above. While

continued maintenance of relatively small plots could be accomplished by adjacent business owners, maintenance of hanging baskets would warrant a discussion between the city and the Baraboo Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department.

There are currently no landscaping requirements for business along the corridor. Given the prospect for new commercial and industrial developments, it is important for the city to update their zoning code to include landscaping criteria, especially for businesses with frontage or proximity to South Boulevard or County Road W. For existing businesses, many of which have surface parking lots between their building(s) and the right of way, the rehabilitation or repair of their parking lot (e.g. resurfacing) could be paired with the updated landscaping requirements. The city could consider a matching grant program to assist business owners and tenants with the beautification initiatives.

### **Building Design**

While a large number of properties in the corridor are industrial in use and, as such, are not frequented by the general public, the creation of building design standards can help ensure that future industrial projects are both attractive yet functional while contributing to a more cohesive corridor. It is recommended that the city establish a building design manual for commercial and industrial buildings, with guidelines concerning building massing, scale, and orientation, material standards, facade and roof articulation, front entrance establishment, and more. This would be especially salient on new construction buildings with frontage on South Boulevard.

# Property Analysis/Key Site Identification

FIGURE 4.3: KEY SITE IDENTIFICATION, SOUTH BOULEVARD





## Site Concepts

### **Site 10: US Highway 12 and County Road W**

The reconstruction of South Boulevard/County Road W has expanded commercial development and redevelopment opportunities, not least on vacant or underutilized sites. US Highway 12 and South Boulevard offer a unique viewshed of the Baraboo valley as well as buildings off South Boulevard. The stature and character of the buildings can work together with a variety of design tactics listed in this report to enhance the beauty of the corridor and contribute to an improved sense of place.

The concept image visually outlines the opportunity for a multi-story office/light industrial building. The height of the building contributes to this intersection as a gateway into Baraboo while offering building occupants exceptional vistas of the surrounding area and the valley, particularly to the east. The building design has the opportunity to accent the natural features of the area while capitalizing on the highway visibility. With Teel Plastics as a strong anchor in this section and the addition of the new hotel of similar stature, a multi-story building occupied by an office or light industrial user would complement the area.

**FIGURE 4.4: SITE 10 PLAN VIEW**



**FIGURE 4.5: SITE 10 PERSPECTIVE VIEW, CONCEPT**



### **Site 9: Former Honey-Boy Site**

The former Honey Boy site is constrained by adjacent land uses on three of its four sides, limiting the potential future build-out of the site. Given its proximity to Highway 12 and frontage off County Rd W, the site is best suited for a highway commercial use consistent with adjacent B-3 zoning uses. Four commercial strip buildings fit well onto the site, with a parking lot surrounding the buildings. The

concept shown is conceptual rather than prescriptive, with multiple variations and layouts possible. The design allows for integration of a couple businesses that might desire drive-through services for their business.

Additional access to the site could be provided by the extension of the drive aisle from the parking lot that serves the Baraboo Mini Mall to the east. Similarly, an access point could be created off Commerce Ave. to access from the west.

**FIGURE 4.6: SITE 9 EXISTING CONDITIONS**



**FIGURE 4.7: SITE 9 PERSPECTIVE VIEW, CONCEPT**



## Site 2: Pocket Neighborhood

The greenfield sites to the south of South Boulevard offer opportunities for economic growth. While some of the sites are within city limits, others fall within jurisdiction of the Town of Baraboo. The City of Baraboo should consider annexation of property in order to physically connect existing land uses as well as to ensure orderly development of the area just south of South Boulevard.

The site just north of Oak Park Place and Waldo Street is a small lot with a combination of single-family residential and agricultural use, with a sizeable, wooded area that splits the parcel. The site also has significant grade to it, making it more challenging to develop a large footprint building or parking lot. In an effort to increase the usability of the lot, maintain its

natural features and terrain, and serve the growing demand for residential units in the area, a concept was designed for a pocket neighborhood.

A pocket neighborhood is characterized by smaller footprint homes (generally in the 1000-1400 square foot range) with a central community area consisting of both outdoor gathering and play spaces and a community building for larger events. Parking is oriented towards the periphery of the site to increase walkability to/from houses and the central community area.

At this site, approximately 20 new homes could be accommodated with a connecting internal drive that not only connects the homes to each other but also connects the newly developed area over to Oak Park Place.

**FIGURE 4.8: SITE 2 EXISTING PERSPECTIVE, LOOKING SOUTHEAST**



**FIGURE 4.9: SITE 2 PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE, CONCEPT, LOOKING SOUTHEAST**



**FIGURE 4.10: SITE 2 PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE, CONCEPT VIEW OF SHARED COMMUNITY SPACE**



**FIGURE 4.11: SITE 2 PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE, CONCEPT VIEW FROM RESIDENTIAL FRONT ENTRY**



## Implementation Matrix

South Boulevard Theme #1: Business Mix			
Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>1.1: Develop a diverse, multi-sector business cluster within the corridor</b>	Group like uses and transition blighted properties.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify potentially blighted sites and meet with+ owners to encourage improvements or transition property to another use	<b>FUNDING</b> Code enforcement fees, revolving loan fund <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Group professional office (near MSA Professional Services) and service related further east	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BEDC <b>TIMELINE</b> As opportunities arise
		<b>TACTIC 3</b> Seek higher and better uses when properties transition ownership	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> As opportunities arise
<b>1.2: Attract and retain talent to meet a variety of business needs</b>	Be aware of and work to meet business needs related to talent.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Meet with large employers annually to understand their talent retention needs, brainstorm solutions, implement	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, SCDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 annually
<b>1.3: Enhance the school-to-business pipeline to develop and retain home-grown talent</b>	BPS to forge better connections with local employers.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Facilitate business/BPS connections (counselors, tech ed, industrial arts, apprenticeship advisors, school to work counselors, etc)	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, SCDC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023 and ongoing

## South Boulevard Theme #2: Transportation Corridor

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>2.1: Develop and maintain a key gateway into Baraboo that supports adjacent land uses and helps grow the economy.</b>	Facilitate effective movement of freight traffic to support and attract industrial and commercial land uses.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Work with County on Cty Rd W reconstruction to ensure design reflects freight traffic projections for growing corridor.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, SC, WISDOT <b>TIMELINE</b> pending date
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Meet with industrial/commercial stakeholders to discuss current roadway striping, consider if a center turn lane would be more beneficial for freight traffic.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, SC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
<b>2.2: Develop a ‘Safe Systems’ approach to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities throughout the corridor, regardless of mode.</b>	Facilitate safe, efficient movement of students walking to and from school.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Calculate a walkshed of the student body that lives within a 0.5-1 mi radius of Behrman Elementary.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BSD <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Develop a Walking Or Biking School Bus program.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BSD <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023 develop, Q2 2023 implement
		<b>TACTIC 3</b> Install RRFBs at South Boulevard/South Parkway roundabout	<b>FUNDING</b> Safe Routes to School (SRTS) <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023 develop, Q2 2023 implement

## South Boulevard Theme #2: Transportation Corridor

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<p><b>2.2: Develop a ‘Safe Systems’ approach to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities throughout the corridor, regardless of mode.</b></p>	<p>Install amenities to enhance cyclist visibility and promote cyclist safety.</p>	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Provide separated multi-use path with clear delineation (on South Boulevard)</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> pending feasibility</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 2</b> (If above not feasible), add alternate networks adjacent to South Boulevard and enhance via signage, markings, ‘Bicycle Boulevards’, etc.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023 develop, Q2 2023 implement</p>
	<p>Install amenities to enhance pedestrian visibility and enhance pedestrian safety.</p>	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Install RRFBs or HAWK signals at unsignalized crossings in corridor, esp Hitchcock/Waldo</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 2</b> Create high-visibility ‘ladder’ striping at every crosswalk</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 3</b> Add Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) at each signalized intersection</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Local (city budget) <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>

## South Boulevard Theme #3: Design and Aesthetic Guidelines

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>3.1: Create a cohesive, distinctive, and aesthetically pleasing identity to the corridor</b>	Reflect Baraboo's brand at the South Boulevard gateway as well as key nodes.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Create committee to review existing branding elements and establish primary brand.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BCC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Work with stakeholders to develop concepts and construct gateway/monument.	<b>FUNDING</b> Donation by major employer <b>PARTIES</b> BCC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023
	Use existing infrastructure and green space to deliver low-cost, high-impact improvements.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Add branded/themed banners and hanging baskets to streetlamps, starting between Lynn and S. Parkway.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BCC, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023
	Reinforce the natural character of the region through landscaping.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Review and update landscape ordinance.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Work with business owners adjacent to S. Blvd. to add landscaping buffer as parking lots are resurfaced.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BCD, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023
		<b>TACTIC 3</b> Plant trees along the terrace next to Myron Park (Sub-Area 1).	<b>FUNDING</b> 2023 Budget <b>PARTIES</b> BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023
	Support more community art.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Consider murals and sculptures to enhance visual appeal of S. Blvd.	<b>FUNDING</b> private support <b>PARTIES</b> BCC, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023

## Metrics

The following list of metrics is presented to offer ideas on ways the City can track progress toward implementing the recommendations identified above. This list is not all encompassing, but it is recommended that the City track and report on a number of the metrics identified here.

- Number of students who walk to school within ½ mile
- Number of students who are not eligible for bus transportation based on proximity
- Number of participants in the to-be-designed walk or bike train program
- Number of amenities installed to enhance bike/ped safety
- Number of safety-related incidents since installing enhanced safety measures

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# STUDY AREA #2

## Historic Downtown

### Introduction

Downtown Baraboo is one of the strengths of the community, offering an active retail and service area within its core square and adjacent side streets. With the historic Sauk County Courthouse as its center, the surrounding historic buildings framing three of its four sides are generally well-maintained and occupied. The streetscape is well-manicured, funded by the Business Improvement District (BID) which supports the flower planters and branded banners and bike racks.

Despite its strong downtown core, the adjacent areas to the south and nearing the river were a focus for this study to improve the connectivity to downtown from key destinations. Still considered part of the downtown, these areas to the south fall outside of the core area and are characterized by increasing vacancies, less-maintained buildings, gaps between destinations, and a more auto-centric development pattern.

Key assets that exist just south of the downtown that hold potential for spearheading adjacent development include the Baraboo River, Circus World Museum, and the gateway streets from Devil's Lake State Park.

### Goals

Theme	Goals
<b>Business Mix</b>	Create a diverse nightlife atmosphere that complements the daytime business activity downtown. Recruit destination development for both residents and tourists. Minimize retail leakage.
<b>Downtown Connectivity</b>	Increase connectivity to and from Devil's Lake State Park. Increase connectivity to and from Baraboo River and south of River. Provide safe, comfortable, and convenient parking amenities in and around downtown. Promote active transportation opportunities.
<b>Design and Aesthetic Guidelines</b>	Create a cohesive, distinctive, and aesthetically pleasing identity to downtown. Preserve the historic, small-town character of downtown. Embrace the natural, physical surroundings of downtown.

## What We Heard + SWOT Analysis

### Survey Summary

The project team included a section specifically related to Downtown Baraboo that was similar to the South Blvd portion of the community survey. 89% of respondents said 'yes' to the question "Do you shop in Downtown Baraboo?", and 11% of respondents said 'no'. Based on their answer to the previous question, survey participants were directed to different follow-up questions. Both sets of respondents were asked what additional businesses they would like to see in Downtown Baraboo. The word cloud below represents the responses that occurred the most.

Respondents that said they did shop downtown were asked how frequently they do so. 87% said they shop downtown at least once a month, with 34% of that group saying at least once a week.

Respondents that said they do not shop downtown were asked what prevented them from doing so. They were given multiple choices (Competitive Prices, Selection, Delivery Options, and Other). 48% said Selection was what prevented them from shopping downtown. 27% said Competitive Prices. "Other" was a popular response with 41%, and this included several different reasons. The most popular "other" responses were ATV Access, Store Hours (not open long enough), and Parking.

### Interview Takeaways

Interviewees enjoy downtown Baraboo and are very proud of the density of businesses, and options for shopping and dining. However, the wish list for more is long. Here is what was heard during interviews and focus groups regarding what would make downtown Baraboo more complete.

Interviewees reported a desire for more residential density downtown. They also requested that alleys be activated and that the city would provide public restrooms. People would like to have a more direct connection from downtown to the riverfront. This would include easier access to the map identifying connections to downtown from the Ice Age Trail. This map exists now and should be posted on multiple websites so more people can have ready access to it. People requested more nightlife and small venues for live music. They would also like to see more public art in downtown Baraboo. Walnut and Ash Streets and more property along the river should be redeveloped. The historic district designation should be leveraged more with signage and information.

Customer parking versus shop owner/operator parking was brought up several times. One suggestion was to have owners and employees park somewhere other than right in front of the stores so that parking is available for customers. Interviewees requested EV charging stations and bike share stations.

Interviewees requested a variety of new retail, restaurant, and hospitality-oriented businesses downtown, including a boutique grocery store, boutique hotel, clothing and shoes stores, a hardware store, bike shop, something for kids to do after school, more fine dining options, ethnic restaurants,

FIGURE 5.1: WORD CLOUD RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION, "WHAT OTHER BUSINESS TYPES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DOWNTOWN?"



## SWOT Analysis: Downtown Baraboo

Strengths	Weaknesses
Redevelopment Opportunities Strong Local Retailers Identity Downtown Baraboo, Inc., and BID Government Offices Mix of Retail & Services	Lack of Public Amenities (restrooms) Blighted Property on Periphery Wayfinding between Downtown and DLSP Lack of night life/ activity after hours Lack of downtown hotel
Opportunities	Challenges
Great Sauk Trail Add EV Charging Stations Bring More Housing Downtown Increase Nightlife Recruit More Convenience Retail Create Space for Young People Enhance Connectivity to River	Perceived/Real Parking Concerns Attracting Visitors from Devil's Lake State Park

### Business Mix

The activity in the core downtown area is abundant with a mix of offerings: multiple restaurants and bars, a spa, salons, a health food store, theater, music store, banks, insurance offices, bookstore, bakery, gift stores, and many others. Most buildings have a first-floor retailer or service occupant and there are few vacancies within the core downtown.

The Courthouse is a significant employer, adding daily foot traffic during the weekdays. According to Downtown Baraboo, Inc., there are over 160 businesses within the downtown district and over 700 people are employed downtown.

Multiple engaging events also occur within this core downtown area, including:

- Fairs on the Square
- Sunday Market
- Brew Ha Ha
- Baraboo Mystery Weekend
- Wine Walk & Shop
- Maxwell Street Days
- Made in Baraboo Market
- Christmas Light Parade
- Concerts on the Square

Each of these events are led by volunteer organizations such as Downtown Baraboo, Inc (DBI) and partially funded through the Business Improvement District (BID). The BID also functions to enhance the downtown, providing funding

for the planters, banners, and streetscape improvements. Additional funding for events is also provided through fundraisers, sponsorships, and membership dues. The combination of event organizing and aesthetic improvements sets downtown up as a dynamic place to do business and to seek out opportunities to shop, visit, eat, and enjoy the activity happening within this area. The BID boundaries are shown in Figure 5.3.



Stakeholder feedback during community open house, April 21, 2022.

### Downtown Connectivity

Throughout the country, downtown districts act as the hub of activity for civic, business, and entertainment purposes for visitors and residents alike. Downtown Baraboo is no different. While immediately adjacent and nearby areas are attracting significant numbers of people, there is a gap in connectivity between these areas and the core downtown area. This plan seeks to address those gaps.



## **Baraboo Riverfront**

From community conversations, review of previous plans, and field observations, a key interest area for connection is the Baraboo Riverfront. This is a strong asset to the Baraboo community both as a natural resource, a recreational amenity, and a driver of economic development. The 2006 Baraboo Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan and 2007 Baraboo Riverfront Design Guidelines are worthy resources that outline key connectivity points and approaches to development/redevelopment. The 2016 Baraboo River Corridor Plan emphasizes the role the river plays within the watershed and the potential it has for enhancing the communities through which it runs. The section of the river which runs through the City of Baraboo is unique in that it offers multiple rapids for users to enjoy. The demolition of the dams in 2011 has provided a sizeable, navigable stretch to enjoy by kayak or canoe.

Those who enjoy fishing, kayaking, and canoeing the Baraboo River are also potential visitors and an audience to capture, bringing them to the waterfront area and into the downtown. Similarly, Baraboo residents expressed their own great enjoyment of this asset and view it as a means to grow family-friendly recreational uses by having offerings near the riverfront that complement the river, such as outdoor dining, recreational equipment rentals and sales, and park spaces with an inlet/outlet for kayaks and canoes.

A stronger connection from the downtown core area to the riverfront should be a focus of economic development in order to build strength within the existing core and expand it to the adjacent area to the south. It would supplement the visitors' experience and enhance quality of life for Baraboo residents to enjoy a more robust experience between this natural amenity and complementary uses.

## **Devil's Lake State Park**

Devil's Lake State Park (DLSP) boasts around 3.6 million visitors per year, reaching attendance levels that near popular National Parks (Mayo 2020). The park offers several recreational opportunities for visitors including hiking, camping, climbing, swimming, as well as picnic and beach areas to gather. With downtown Baraboo just 2.5 miles away from the north entrance to DLSP at Shore Road., there remains significant opportunity to draw visitors from DLSP to the other great assets that Downtown Baraboo offers as well as the riverfront area just south of downtown.

A number of vacant, developable lots with frontage on County Rd. DL and on Highway 113 still remain. A strategic approach to the development of these lots could aid in drawing people from the park further into Baraboo and into the downtown area. The lack of development at this point allows time for strategic planning to attract desirable businesses such as food and beverage, a small hotel or cottage rentals, retailers, a trolley service, and services that cater to the park-goer (bicycle and camping gear rental, etc.). Available property should be inventoried, discussions should



A view of the rapids on the Baraboo River, looking east.



Devil's Lake State Park (Photo by Ian Scargill on Unsplash)



South Boulevard from Industrial Court, looking east.

be held with property owners, and a redevelopment corridor planning process should take place.

Through strategically placed signage, marketing, and a focus on developing complementary uses along these corridors to/from DLSP and downtown, additional visibility can be gained for downtown Baraboo as well as for the park and natural amenities the surrounding area has to offer.



### **South Boulevard**

South Boulevard acts as the southwest gateway from Highway 12 not only into Baraboo but also into the downtown area. Its variety of businesses and industrial uses offers convenience shopping as well as employment centers. The above section outlines the characteristics of this gateway and recommendations for its further development and improvement. These improvements will aid downtown and riverfront development and redevelopment efforts.

### **Design and Aesthetic Guidelines**

The aesthetic quality of Downtown Baraboo is largely defined by its historic architecture, walkable blocks, and the rolling hills of the area. These characteristics are unique to Baraboo and are the elements that set the community apart from others. It is evident that significant investment and effort has been made toward the maintenance of public space and the renovation of many of the downtown buildings.

The small-town character that defines downtown is worthy of preserving. The existing character can be further advanced by continuation of building investment in the downtown area in a way that continues to support a walkable, dynamic environment. Those efforts may be in the form of renovating existing building stock or through the new construction of context-sensitive developments. New construction should honor the scale and stature of the surrounding buildings, while offering a new product that elicits community pride while filling the gap in the market.

Another notable trait of Downtown Baraboo in particular is the variation in topography that provides unique viewsheds of the community. For example, a view from the valley of the river looking up toward higher elevation provides interesting

perspectives of notable buildings that contribute to ‘mini-skylines’. Similarly, a position from higher ground provides views into the valley and across the river to observe buildings and natural features that may otherwise be obscured from other viewpoints. Views and perspectives will continue to shift as new development and natural features change. The community may determine as part of their design guidelines that certain vistas may be worthy of safeguarding for the public, whether that be through height limitations on buildings or by incorporating public uses into otherwise private development in order to share that community benefit.

The investments made via the Business Improvement District for planters, bike racks, banners, signage, and trash cans also greatly enhances the downtown. The extension of these investments to the area south of downtown and along the riverfront would expand the scope of the downtown area and aid to improve the aesthetics of this area.

The 2007 Baraboo Riverfront Design Guidelines planning document contains helpful information including approaches for new construction, renovation of existing historic buildings, and orientation of buildings to suit enhanced riverfront development. For reference, key takeaways from this document include guidelines for:

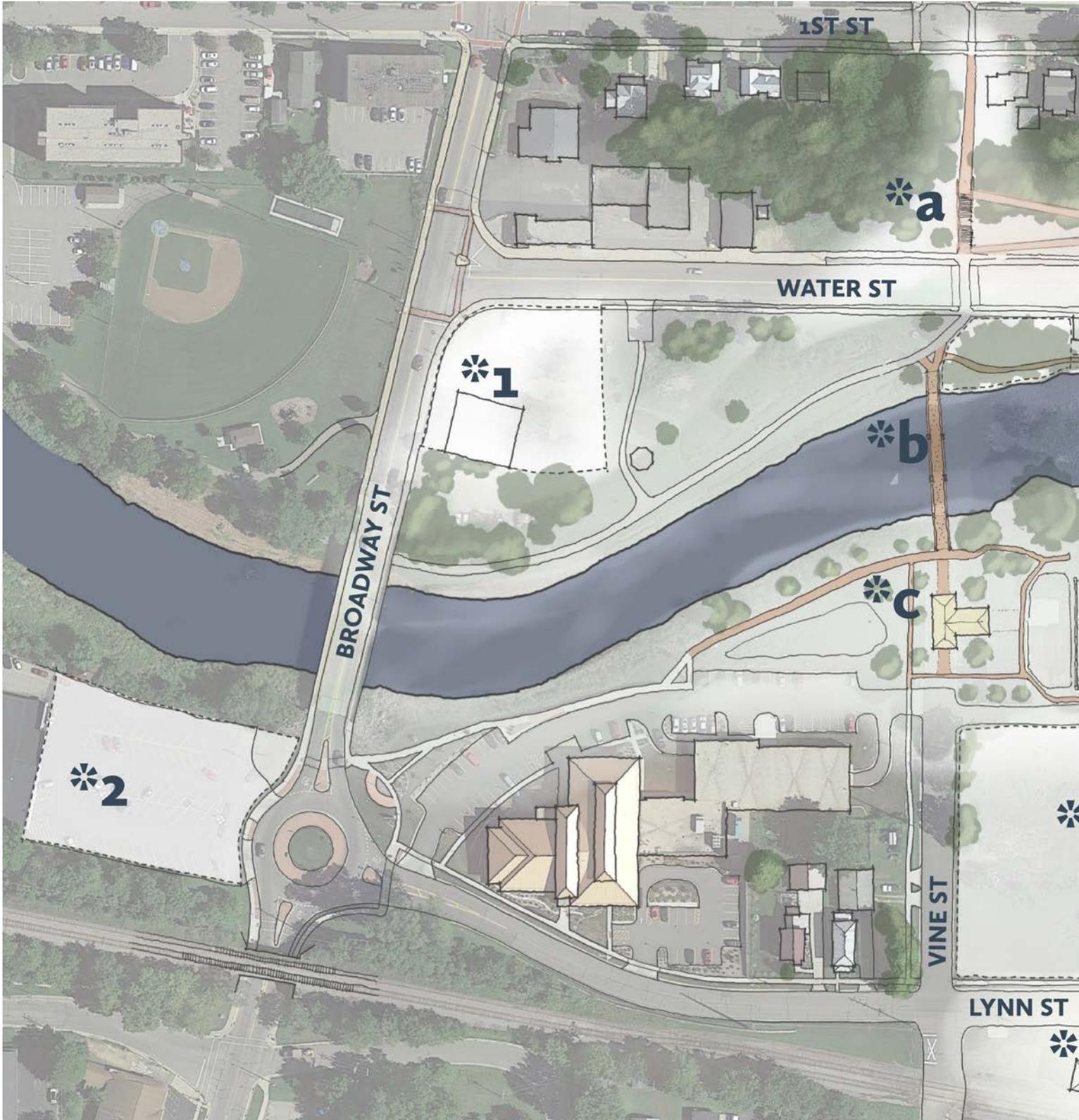
- River orientation
- Street orientation
- Integration with existing neighborhoods
- Sustainable development

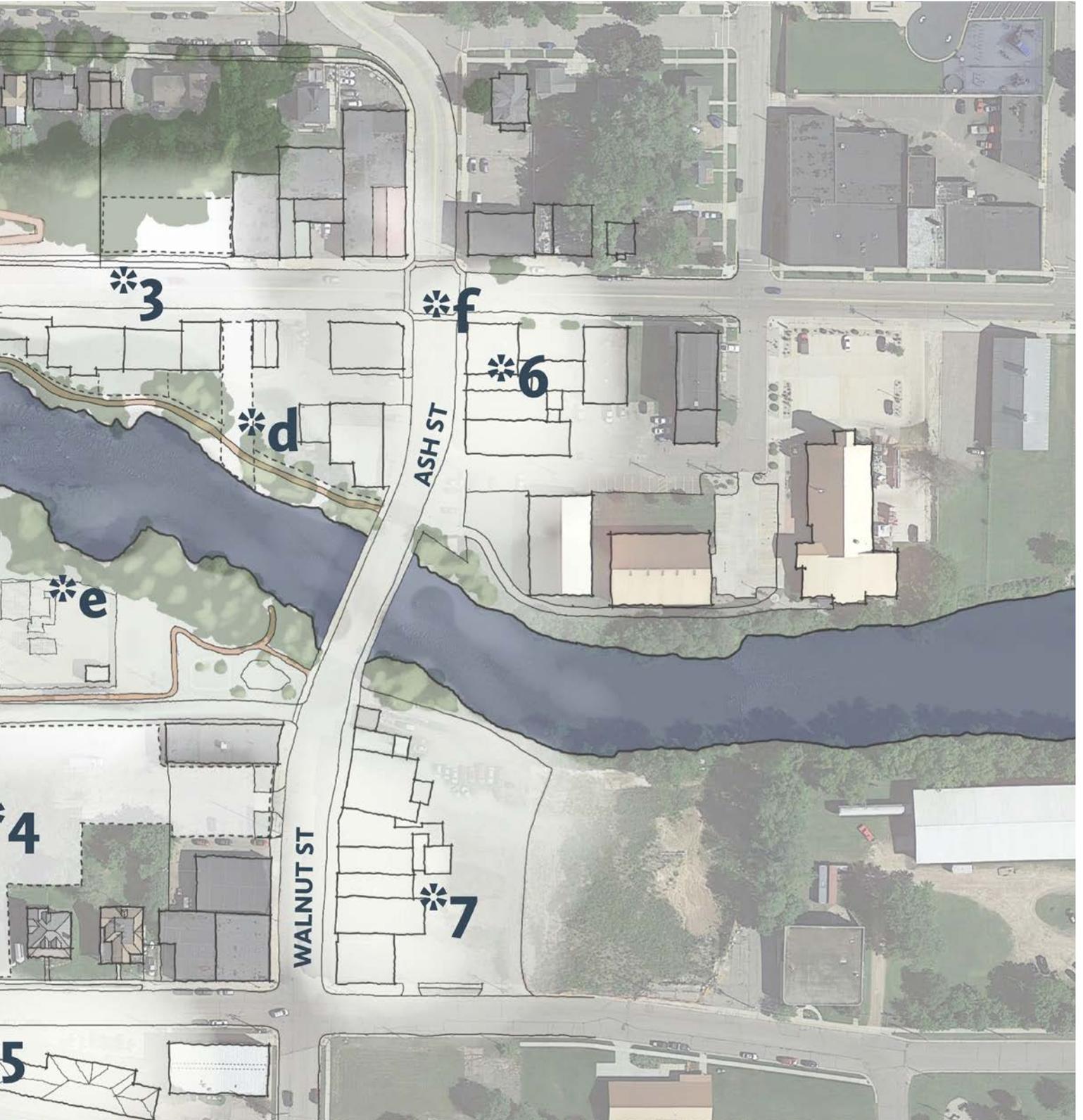
The plan document also includes a helpful reference checklist to ensure proposed development incorporates the guidelines. This checklist would be helpful for city staff reviewing development as well as for the developer as they begin their design process.

## Property Analysis/Key Site Identification

Key opportunity sites were identified by the Project Team as well as through stakeholder meetings and open house conversations. Some sites are occupied with businesses or services that are contributors to the Baraboo economy and residents. The recommendation is to consider optimization of the sites while engaging in conversation with these private property and business owners for potential relocation, or re-incorporation into a more optimized site.

**FIGURE 5.3: KEY SITE IDENTIFICATION, DOWNTOWN BARABOO**





## Opportunity Sites



### **#1: NAPA**

This site was identified because it is a strong corner with a significant presence from the riverwalk as well as the western gateway into downtown. The overgrowth of trees, gravel lot, and under-maintained façade are factors that diminish the aesthetic quality of the site and building. The site has great potential to connect with the riverwalk, be a welcoming corner into the downtown area, and further activate Water Street.



### **#2: St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store**

This site does not currently optimize its river frontage. The site has a large swatch of paved parking lot adjacent to the river, and riverfront views are obscured by overgrowth of trees. A higher and better use might incorporate the thrift store as a first-floor tenant while building additional residential units or office floors above. This mixed-use building could provide a variety of uses with great downtown views. The riverfront would be better promoted through this redevelopment; inclusion of a riverfront path at this site offers a connection to the riverfront path on the east side of South Boulevard as well as over to the north side of the river.



### **#3: Water Street**

The properties along Water St. are currently under-utilized. At the south side, the one and two-story properties could offer riverfront views, incorporation of outdoor dining, and picturesque event space. At the north end of Water St. rooftop patios could offer opportunities. As this area is proximate to downtown, it is more appropriate that these properties comply the aesthetics of the downtown area. The riverfront pathway may become a key link in a future Great Sauk Trail and these properties will be a visible 'front door' to the downtown area.



### **#4: Vacant City-Owned Lots**

These City-owned lots offers a prime opportunity for additional mixed-use development, adding foot traffic, roof tops, and activity to this area of downtown/riverfront. The grade of the site may provide relatively easy construction of lower-level parking to accommodate the site's use and perhaps surrounding parking needs.



### **#5: Historic Depot**

The historic depot is an architecturally rich piece of Baraboo's history that when redeveloped can offer a look back in time while offering beautiful event space. While this site was not originally on the opportunity sites list, it was added after the open house sessions where stakeholders overwhelmingly supported its redevelopment and re-use.



### **#6 & 7: Ash and Walnut Streets**

Please reference the Site Concepts (Figures 5.4-5.6) for further details on the redevelopment opportunities of these historic buildings.

## Public Space Improvements



### **A: Downtown Connection**

An additional connection to downtown from the river can be made by taking advantage of the historic bridge abutment that still remains on Water St. This unique piece of history can be incorporated to create a ramped bridge connecting up to 1st St. Look out areas can be provided to offer unique views of the river valley and surrounding area.



### **B: Bike/Ped Bridge**

The addition of a bike/pedestrian bridge across the Baraboo River would provide additional mobility as well as provide interaction with the river. The bridge would provide an up-close way for people to interact with the river and cross it without the concern of vehicle traffic.



### **C: Park + Pavilion**

City plans include the addition of park space on the south side of the river. A shaded pavilion space offers opportunities for residents to further access and enjoy the riverfront.



### **D: Riverside Dining**

Private property abutting the river offers opportunities for unique outdoor dining. While this improvement falls within the control of private owners, City policy can help support the installation of these outdoor spaces.



### **E: Park + Recreation**

City plans include this additional park space along the river as a means to provide greater access and recreational space while transitioning the space from its current industrial use.



### **F: Aesthetic Improvements**

Planters, banners, and trash cans liven the streetscape. Currently, the core downtown area boasts these aesthetic improvements and could enhance this area south of downtown as well.



## Site Concepts

### Walnut & Lynn Streets

Walnut Street is characterized by its historic buildings and its span across the Baraboo River to become Ash Street. The two concepts below aim to respect the historic nature of the buildings while building greater opportunity and activity at the street level and the riverfront.

#### **Concept 1 (Figure 5.4)**

This concept includes the renovation of the existing historic buildings on Walnut Street, focusing on the east side of the street where the majority of the historic fabric remains.

Many of the buildings on Walnut Street suffer from vacancy, partial occupancy, and deferred maintenance. Exceptions to this include the Old Baraboo Inn, which occupies the first floor of the corner building. In the past few decades, the buildings have been altered in ways that are not compatible with their original construction and degrade the historic fabric of the building. This includes windows that have been replaced with smaller, vinyl windows that do not expand to fill the original window opening, storefronts and transoms covered with wood plank material, storefronts that have been bricked in, and cornices that have been removed or covered with metal awnings. These alterations contribute to a street face that feels closed off, empty, and unmaintained.

The concept rendering shows the full renovation of the original buildings with new windows that match historic profiles filling the original window opening, new storefronts that replicate historic proportions and treatment, replacement of cornices where applicable, and paint removed from exterior brick. These two-story mercantile style buildings lend themselves to first floor retail or office and second floor residential. If possible, an economy of scale could be achieved by one owner renovating the mass of buildings adjacent to each other in order to take advantage of shared access, elevator expenses, and efficiency in purchase of construction materials.

Within the public space of the street, benches, planters, and street trees have been added to encourage street activity. Additional bicycle and pedestrian features have been added including a mid-block crossing to encourage slower traffic and safe crossing, and a bike lane on the east side of the street, while shifting parking to parallel parking instead of the current angled parking.

The Walnut/Ash corridor is a good candidate for listing as a District on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation would bring with it an important tool for redevelopment of the buildings in the form of State (20%) and Federal (20%) Historic Tax Credits. That means for a \$5 million project, 40% of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures, or \$2 million could be in the form of a tax credit on income tax liability, assisting with the financing of the project. Note that when pursuing Historic Tax Credits that the Standards for Rehabilitation as set by the Secretary of the Interior must be

followed; however, these are not overly onerous requirements and help ensure the longevity of the building.

### Concept 2 (Figure 5.5)

In this second concept, the vacant site area at the east side of the existing buildings is infilled with a 5-story building that would provide additional density to the site. This building would sit behind the five southernmost buildings on the block. The first floor of the new building that fronts Lynn Street could further activate the area with a storefront for retail or office use. The central area of the new building could accommodate an interior parking garage on the first floor for the new development and the renovated existing historic buildings. The northernmost section of the first floor that creates an L-shape with the “Bumps” building is a prime opportunity for outdoor patio seating with beautiful sights and sounds of the Baraboo River rushing nearby.

The rear side of the existing buildings could tie in with the new building in order to take advantage of shared use of elevator and access to/from the interior parking garage. The concept keeps the existing floorplates for the most part, while tying them in to the larger development.

If the second concept were to be pursued, where a larger scale 5-story building were to abut and combine the historic parcels, this would not follow the Standards for Rehabilitation and disqualify the project from utilizing the Historic Tax Credits. A positive trade-off from losing access to this financing source is the ability to build additional square footage that would increase the critical mass and efficiency of the floorplates.

### Ash & Water Streets (Figure 5.6)

Ash Street is the northern continuation of Walnut Street and shares many of the same characteristics that define Walnut Street as described above. The existing, primarily two-story mercantile style buildings have been altered from their original design and have experienced disinvestment. This area boasts more occupancy, with just two or three seemingly vacant storefronts. The existing activity and occupancy are assets to build upon.

The concept image shows replacement of windows to fill the original window openings and opening of the storefronts by adding glass and replicating historic storefront proportions. The one-story building on the east side of the street adjacent to the river has great potential for contributing to the corridor with the addition of a glass storefront and a rooftop outdoor seating area with pergola, providing great views of the Baraboo River and the historic corridor.

The streetscape improvements include the addition of planters, trash cans, and benches. Additional pedestrian and bicycle-friendly amenities are included such as more defined crosswalks, a bike lane, and bike racks.

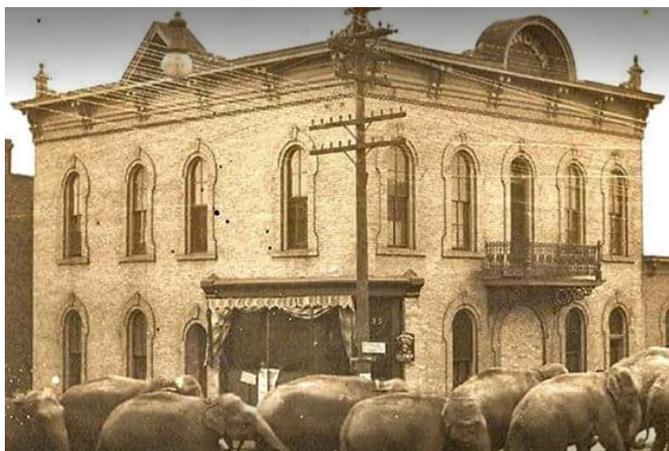
Along with the Walnut Street buildings to the south, this area could be included in a potential National Register Historic



Ash and Water Street, looking Southeast.



Walnut Street, looking north.



An archival image of the Old Baraboo Inn at the corner of Walnut and Lynn Streets.

District which would allow current or prospective developers to access the State and Federal Historic Tax Credits to assist in financing the improvements.

FIGURE 5.4: WALNUT STREET CONCEPT, VERSION 1





FIGURE 5.5: WALNUT STREET CONCEPT, VERSION 2





FIGURE 5.6: ASH AND WATER STREET CONCEPT





## Implementation Matrix

Downtown Theme #1: Business Mix			
Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
1.1: Create a 24-hour atmosphere	Attract hotel & event space	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify key sites for hotel/event locations. Ideal locations would include walkability to downtown amenities, to the river, and likely require an on-site parking garage to accommodate visitors.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Bolster partnerships between city events and community organizations. Not all nightlife must be a private enterprise. Consider city-sponsored, family-friendly events that occur quarterly.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, DBI <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
	Activate downtown alleys	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify and program 1-2 priority alleys or sections of alleys. Select areas based on ease of entry and lowest barriers to perform a trial.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, DBI, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Build city-business partnerships, identifying obstacles currently inhibiting such activity.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, DBI <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
		<b>TACTIC 3</b> Tie alley activation with other adjacent downtown streets.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, DBI <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022
	Increase residential living opportunities in downtown area	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Foster redevelopment of upper-level units in existing buildings.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time, possible TIF <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
		<b>TACTIC 2</b> Recruit developers to build new high-density multi-family in downtown area.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time, possible TIF <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BCC <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing

## Downtown Theme #1: Business Mix (Continued)

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>1.2: Build destination amenities for residents and tourists</b>	Construct downtown public restrooms	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Develop RFP for design and cost estimating of a new structure or retrofitting existing empty storefront.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time, AARP Grant, TIF <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
	Develop central location downtown for wayfinding/ business information	<b>TACTIC 2</b> Create small plaza area dedicated to business information, upcoming events, and local attractions. Keep updated.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time, AARP Grant, TIF <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023
<b>1.3: Minimize retail leakage</b>	Identify potential retail opportunities indicated through community input, including grocery, hardware, and clothing.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Actively recruit these businesses after developing a list of regional prospects, matching with key marketable sites. Utilize leakage report to reinforce demand.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022

## Downtown Theme #2: Downtown Connectivity

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>2.1: Increase connectivity to/from Devil's Lake State Park (DLSP)</b>	Increased signage and awareness near DLSP promoting Baraboo.	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Develop short-term task force to determine best location and branding/design. Incorporate branding/design elements from existing branding initiatives within the City for easy recognition and cohesion.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff Time, room tax <b>PARTIES</b> BCC, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
	Comfortable and clear bike access to/from DLSP, clear wayfinding signage	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify gaps in network; actively submit within 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time, room tax, TAP <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing
	Promote development of property along County Road DL and State Highway 113	<b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify property available for development and market to appropriate end users. Consider developing further concept imagery to promote desirable development, ensuring a shared vision.	<b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BCA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q4 2022

## Downtown Theme #2: Downtown Connectivity (Continued)

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>2.2: Increase connectivity to/from Baraboo River and south of River</b>	Development of vacant lots near river	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Market to reputable developers with clear indication of city's development guidelines/standards. Identify what city incentives are available. Where park plans exist along the river, use this development as a draw to private developers to offer it as an amenity to their building users.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BCA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
	(Re)development of Walnut Street and Ash Street	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Conduct financial feasibility analysis for various scenarios of redevelopment to identify gaps and hurdles. Utilize the concept images from this plan to assist in marketing to a developer.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time, consultant (via budget), Federal &amp; State Historic Tax Credits <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BCA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 2</b> Identify target properties and meet with owners to determine transition feasibility.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
	Increase outdoor dining, lingering opportunities	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Offer ease in city permitting to facilitate outdoor dining and outdoor displays. A simple process could include as-of-right geographic areas (i.e. if within the existing Business Improvement District), assistance with design of outdoor seating areas, offering rental materials for businesses to use on trial basis.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPC, DBI, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
	Expansion of Ice Age National Scenic Trail and Great Sauk Trail	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Continued coordination with SC and BPD. Consider easements where gap exists on private property. Promote the expansion through shared branding/marketing at regional and State-wide level.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time, TAP <b>PARTIES</b> SC, SCDC, BPD, GSTC, ED <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023, ongoing</p>

## Downtown Theme #2: Downtown Connectivity (Continued)

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<p><b>2.3: Provide safe, comfortable, and convenient parking amenities in and around downtown for auto and bike access.</b></p>	<p>Determine appropriate amount of parking to assist downtown businesses and events without compromising the public realm.</p>	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Conduct a downtown parking study.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> 2023-2024 budget <b>PARTIES</b> CDA, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023, Q1 2024</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 2</b> Pilot an employee parking zone. To offset the challenge of employees parking in areas designated for customers, encourage parking in off-street lots. Offer employee and/or business owner incentives to encourage behavior change.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 3</b> Pilot EV charging stations. Find a pioneer business owner willing to be an early adopter. Locate key locations; coordinate install to ensure orderly placement. Offer business owners moderate ways to offset risk if needed, in order to encourage early-adopters.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> TIF, Grants (e.g. RENEW WI) <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 4</b> Add more bike racks. Existing branded bike racks have a nice aesthetic offering; consider more of same or 'wave-style' racks that offer further parking capacity. Expand footprint of bike parking to Walnut/Ash St.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> TIF <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 5</b> Encourage development of safe transportation/shuttle service to/from downtown Baraboo from key locations on a regular schedule.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Room tax, private financial support <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, BCA, DBI, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q2 2023</p>
<p><b>2.4: Promote active and shared transportation opportunities.</b></p>	<p>Adopt a park-once strategy within downtown and including adjacent/nearby destinations.</p>	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Create community bike/scooter-share or develop RFP to recruit private shared mobility provider.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Room tax, private financial support, TAP <b>PARTIES</b> BPW, BID <b>TIMELINE</b> Q1 2023 (planning) Q2 2023 (implement)</p>

## Downtown Theme #3: Design & Aesthetic Guidelines

Goals	Strategies	Tactics	Details
<b>3.1: Create a cohesive, distinctive, and aesthetically pleasing identity to the downtown</b>	Expansion of banners, hanging baskets, and branded materials	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Coordinate with property owners outside of current BID to promote expansion; consider incentives to get them started (i.e. dues that ramp up). The existing amenities provided by the BID help set a distinctive identity, but there is room geographically for its expansion to incorporate areas that would benefit from connectivity to the downtown.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time, BID <b>PARTIES</b> BID, BPW <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>
<b>3.2: Preserve historic, small-town character.</b>	Development of local historic district that includes design guidelines for historic properties	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Partner with historical society to market value of local historic district designation. Utilize the opportunity to provide educational materials about historically appropriate design approaches to property owners.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> DBI, SCHS <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 2</b> Adopt local historic district overlay ordinance.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPC, BCD, SCHS <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>
		<p><b>TACTIC 3</b> Develop Historic Commission to review applications for appropriateness.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BCA, CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>
<b>3.3: Embrace natural physical surroundings.</b>	Ensure important viewsheds are maintained.	<p><b>TACTIC 1</b> Identify at-risk viewsheds, develop height limitations where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>FUNDING</b> Staff time <b>PARTIES</b> BPC, CDA <b>TIMELINE</b> Q3 2023</p>

## Metrics

The following list of metrics is presented to offer ideas on ways the City can track progress toward implementing the recommendations identified above. This list is not all encompassing, but it is recommended that the City track and report on a number of the metrics identified here.

- Number of alleys activated
- Number of upper story residential units rehabilitated and rented
- Number of new residential units added downtown
- Number of downtown retail/commercial prospects contacted annually
- Number of outdoor dining and display permits authorized
- Number of redevelopment sites identified and actively encouraged to redevelop
- Number of properties added to BID

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# ECONOMIC RISK

## Analysis and Assessment

### Introduction

Economic instability can be caused by a number of things. Historically, a few of the most likely culprits include:

- Changing commodity prices (especially oil, e.g., 1974 oil price shock, and current oil price fluctuations);
- Changing interest rates (rise in interest rates around 2005-07, and again in 2022);
- Change in confidence levels (e.g., worries after 9/11, or the COVID-19 Pandemic);
- Stock market crashes (e.g., 1929 Stock market crash);
- Black swan events (e.g., major natural disaster, pandemics); and
- Terrorist attack on financial systems, energy, or water supply.

As comforting as it might seem to believe Baraboo is immune to negative economic impacts from any of the above risks to economic instability, this is not the case. Understanding the risks and knowing what can be done to mitigate those risks is prudent planning for the city and any economic stakeholders in the community including employers, service providers, governmental bodies, and their elected officials.

From our research, employers in the city came through the pandemic in relatively fine fashion. There were anecdotal instances of challenging times, but overall, there was no significant, permanent damage done to businesses--large and small--as a result of state-mandated lockdowns or general uneasiness from the pandemic in Baraboo.

Businesses reported feeling a strong sense of support from city staff and community members during the events of the spring of 2020 and throughout the remainder of the year.

### Economic Risk Assessment

Risk assessment enables corporations, governments, and investors to assess the probability that an adverse event might negatively impact a business, economy, project, or investment. It is important to understand areas that could be strengthened or an area for improvement prior to an adverse event. It is not possible to predict what is going to happen, of course. But the more attention that can be placed on areas needing improvement can give the city the confidence to approach future risks as they present themselves.

A snapshot of Baraboo's risk readiness appears in Figure 6.1.

### Business Continuity Planning

The most important thing a community can do now to help their businesses during a disaster is to have established close relationships with their management. The city should understand the operation and critical needs of each primary employer in the community, and as many other businesses as feasible. The following list from the International Economic Development Council (2022) outlines the critical steps to operating a robust business retention program so that, should a disaster arise, the city can transition into business continuity as quickly as possible:

- Survey local businesses – keep a record of basic stats and needs, management contacts and other key pieces of information about the company (for example, do they have extreme circumstances around shutting down and starting back up operations in case of a power outage)
- Establish a business recovery center and hotline - Establish this now and publicize it regularly in case of an incident.
- Deliver business recovery workshops – Host annually during non-emergency times.

**FIGURE 6.1: ECONOMIC RISK ASSESSMENT, SNAPSHOT**

<b>Economic Risk Assessment</b>		
	<b>Solid</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>Communication Challenges and Outages</b>		x
Technological Failure	x	
Message Failure		x
Flow Failure		x
Organizational Capacity		x
Assessing Damage to Businesses and Economy	x	
Retention of Large and Small Businesses	x	
Financial and Technical Assistance for Small Businesses		x
Navigating and Accessing the Federal System	x	
Advance Planning		x
Redevelopment	x	
Private/Public Sector Collaboration		x
Public Sector (Agency) Collaboration		x
Goal-Setting in Light of Changing Circumstances		x
Operational and Strategic Thinking	x	x
Technical Assistance to Access and Understand Federal Resources	x	

- Communicate and provide outreach – Reach out quarterly now. During an emergency, listen for needs, and share information about resources and support.
- Provide short-term and long-term financial services – In a disaster, establish a grant program for emergent needs.
- Provide or facilitate access to short term/gap financing
- Facilitate access to long-term financing
- Facilitate access to federal financial resources

Establish a clear presence as an entity with resources, links to resources, and access to answers for businesses during a crisis. If the City of Baraboo’s part time, contracted Community Development Director can fill the role of primary contact and liaison with businesses during a crisis that is the appropriate place for this work to exist. City officials should also work with Sauk County Economic Development Corporation to coordinate activity and distribute workload. There may be duplication of services or shared tasks which should be clearly delineated in order to avoid inefficiencies of duplication.

## Communication Protocols

**"The most important role of a proactive communications effort is to introduce credible and accurate information. Uncertainty can hinder recovery efforts -- rumors and information gaps concerning how a downtown corridor will be rebuilt and protected, whether or not a major employer will leave town, and when key infrastructure assets will be restored can stymie rebuilding and reduce interest in investing in a community, for example. Communication strategies can equip the business community with the right information as they are making critical decisions."**

-2022 Leadership Toolkit Template, International Economic Development Council

1. First, a process for internal communication must be established. At a minimum:
  - Create a system for backing up key office files and data, along with a method for accessing that information in different crisis scenarios.
  - Update staff contact information including evening/weekend details.
  - Save contact information for businesses, media, government, and other relevant stakeholders.
2. Designate a communication team. The team should consist of a team leader and support team. The team leader should be responsible for the following:
  - Manage the release of information to the public and media
  - Know incident specific information, i.e., policy, science, and situation
  - Serve as the liaison to government agencies in the production of press releases, scheduling of news conferences, managing inquiries, and meetings
  - Organize/facilitate regular meetings with the business community to receive input about the

public response and communication messages

- Work with subject matter experts to create FAQs, fact sheets, and updates
- Compile information on possible emergency topics for release when necessary

The support team should:

- Manage all updates
- Maintain contacts
- Distribute press releases
- Monitor local and national news, as well as the public's response
- Manage and respond to inquiries from business community
- Organize and manage crisis response web site or information portal

3. Determine organizational roles for communicating

- Facilitate the flow of correct information to businesses
- Coordinate concerted outreach to reconnect with businesses and identify at-risk companies
- Build relationships with and maintain current contact information for economic recovery partners (regional, state, federal)
- Coordinate post-disaster media and recovery requests

4. Identify pre-existing plans, resources, and requirements

- County hazard mitigation plans
- Federal emergency support functions
- Tornado or flood protocols
- New plans resulting from pandemic recovery

5. Create a communication plan before a crisis – It is important to put time and planning into a communication strategy prior to a crisis, so there is a starting point and resources can be mobilized more quickly and efficiently. This entails identifying communication goals, identifying communication channels, identifying materials needed, and practice visualizing communication channels. There must be looped communication so that it is not a one-way dialogue. Ensure the city establishes a protocol for not only disseminating information but also receiving information from businesses during a crisis.

The plan should also include how the city will interact with media such as the newspaper, radio, and television outlets. And a strategy should be in place for utilizing social media and set up support team members so

messages are shared on multiple platforms, personal and municipal.

## Interview Takeaways

Interviewees were asked how the community fared through the pandemic, and what could be done to make a more resilient community. Here is what the consultant team heard:

Baraboo banded together well during the pandemic. Once businesses opened up, they were strongly supported. The city was great at helping out, particularly with restaurants needing takeout or pickup lanes identified and marked off. Local nonprofits thrived based on the generosity of the community. Many interviewees commented that the local economy did well due to local economic diversity.

Some challenges which were highlighted because of the pandemic include the shortage of employees, the shortage of quality childcare, and the shortage of affordable and moderately priced housing. Also, centralized communications would have been more helpful. However, others reported that businesses and downtown groups communicated more often about who and what was open and that was a really good thing.

Items to improve so the community can be even more resilient include business connections to the Baraboo Public School System, support for the local UW Campus, more support (incentives) for entrepreneurs, and attracting young families going into medical and bioscience careers.

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# APPENDIX

BARABOO CITY-WIDE SURVEY RESULTS, SELECTED RESPONSES (SURVEYMONKEY)

## Q1: Which group includes your age?

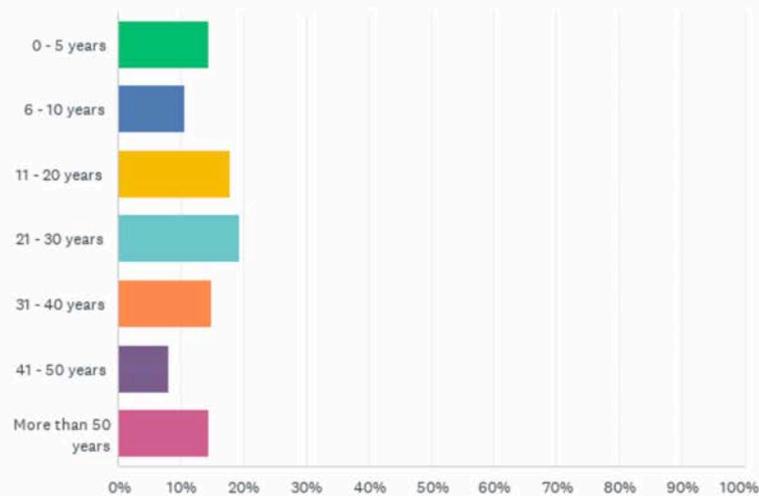
Answered: 618 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 - 18	0.49%	3
19 - 24	2.10%	13
25 - 34	14.08%	87
35 - 44	21.04%	130
45 - 54	22.01%	136
55 - 64	17.96%	111
65 - 74	17.15%	106
75 - 84	4.69%	29
85+	0.49%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>618</b>

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

## Q3: How long have you lived in the area? (add up total time if you left for a period of time)

Answered: 618 Skipped: 0



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

### Q3: How long have you lived in the area? (add up total time if you left for a period of time)

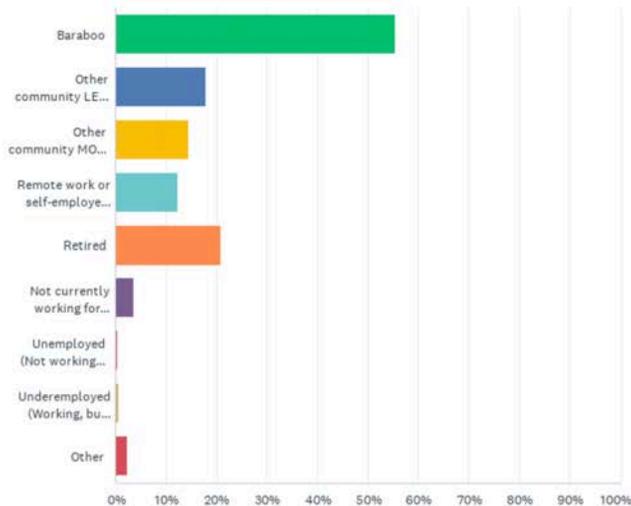
Answered: 618 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 - 5 years	14.40%	89
6 - 10 years	10.68%	66
11 - 20 years	17.96%	111
21 - 30 years	19.42%	120
31 - 40 years	14.89%	92
41 - 50 years	8.09%	50
More than 50 years	14.56%	90
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>618</b>

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### Q5: Where do you conduct most of your work? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 618 Skipped: 0



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q7: Using the following scale (1 = Poor, 100 = Excellent), how would you rate your quality of life living in Baraboo?**

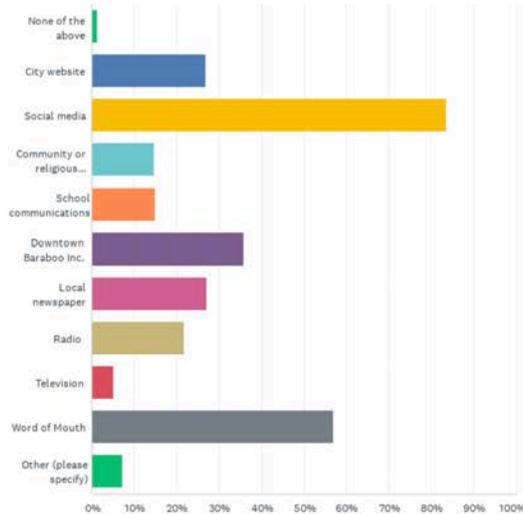
Answered: 500 Skipped: 118

ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	77	38,517	500
Total Respondents: 500			

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q10: How do you find out about events going on in Baraboo? (Choose all that apply.)**

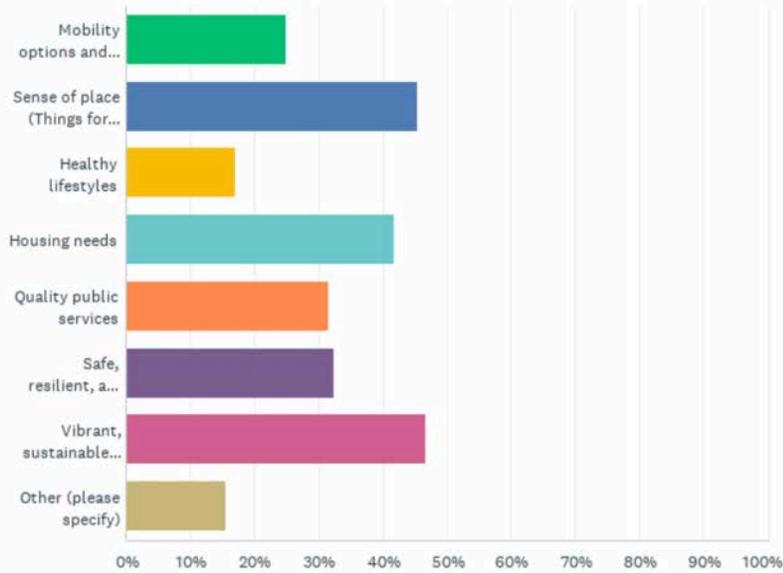
Answered: 500 Skipped: 118



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q11: What topics are most important for the City to address with this plan? (Choose up to 3.)**

Answered: 500 Skipped: 118



Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q11: What topics are most important for the City to address with this plan? (Choose up to 3.)**

Answered: 500 Skipped: 118

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Mobility options and connectivity	25.00%	125
Sense of place (Things for people/families to do, Community Events, etc.)	45.40%	227
Healthy lifestyles	17.00%	85
Housing needs	41.80%	209
Quality public services	31.60%	158
Safe, resilient, and prepared community	32.40%	162
Vibrant, sustainable economy	46.80%	234
Other (please specify)	15.60%	78
<b>Total Respondents: 500</b>		

Powered by SurveyMonkey

**Q12: Using the following scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "The City should allocate funds and resources toward supporting HOUSING development."**

Answered: 500 Skipped: 118

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	9.80% 49	14.20% 71	27.00% 135	32.40% 162	16.60% 83	500	3.32

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q13: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "The City should allocate funds and resources to attract more BUSINESSES."**

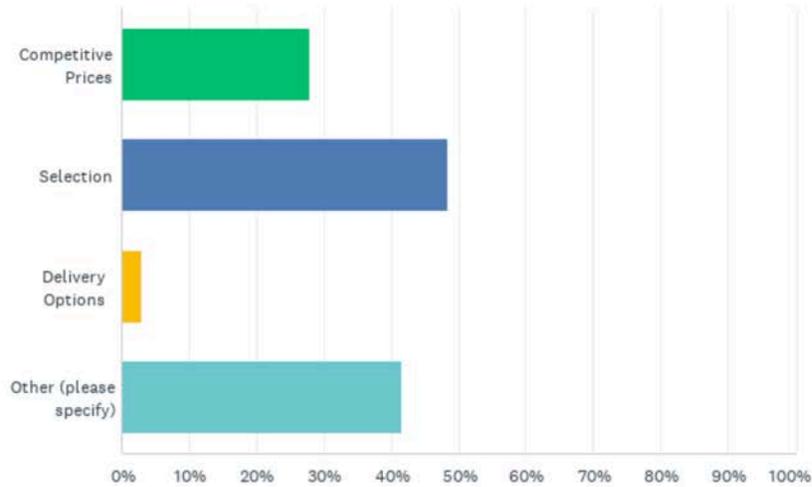
Answered: 500 Skipped: 118

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	5.40% 27	6.40% 32	25.00% 125	40.20% 201	23.00% 115	500	3.69

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

## Q18: What prevents you from shopping downtown?

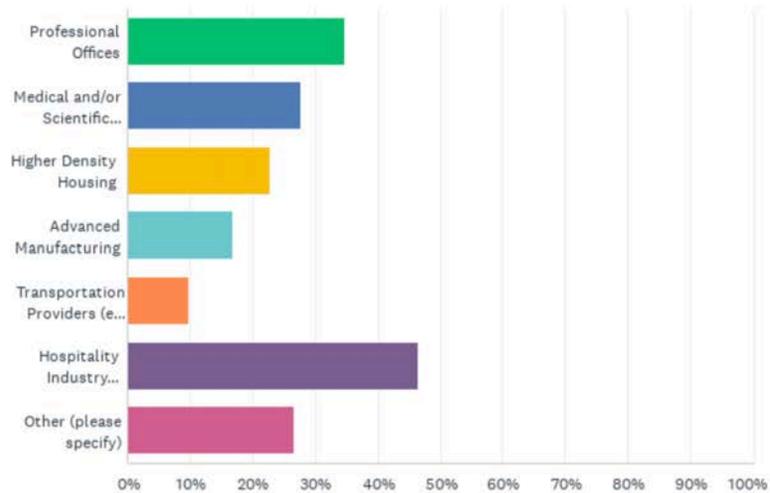
Answered: 486 Skipped: 132



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

## Q25: What type(s) of additional businesses would you like to see on South Boulevard? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 101 Skipped: 517



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## Q26: Do you feel you can easily get where you need to go within Baraboo?

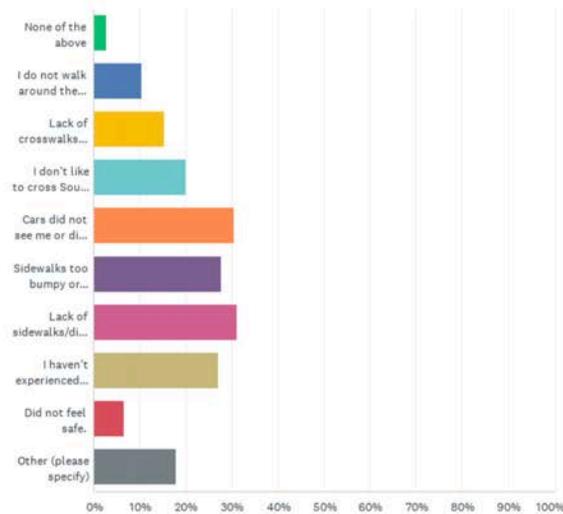
Answered: 471 Skipped: 147

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.34%	369
No	10.83%	51
Other (please specify)	10.83%	51
TOTAL		471

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## Q28: Think of times you have WALKED (or used a mobility device such as a wheelchair) to get somewhere in Baraboo, or times you have wanted to WALK but chose not to. As a pedestrian, what were the challenges you faced or what prevented you from walking? (Choose all that apply.)

Answered: 472 Skipped: 146



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q28: Think of times you have WALKED (or used a mobility device such as a wheelchair) to get somewhere in Baraboo, or times you have wanted to WALK but chose not to. As a pedestrian, what were the challenges you faced or what prevented you from walking? (Choose all that apply.)**

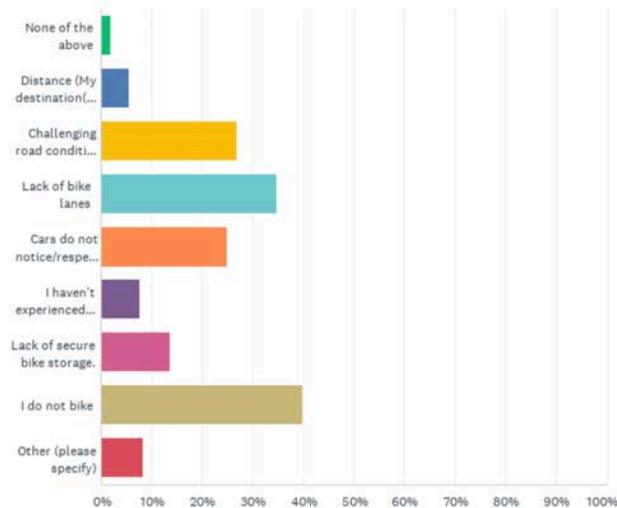
Answered: 472 Skipped: 146

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	2.75%	13
I do not walk around the City	10.38%	49
Lack of crosswalks where needed	15.25%	72
I don't like to cross South Boulevard	20.13%	95
Cars did not see me or did not yield to me when crossing the street	30.51%	144
Sidewalks too bumpy or cracked to walk safely	27.75%	131
Lack of sidewalks/disconnected sidewalks	31.14%	147
I haven't experienced challenges walking around the City	27.12%	128
Did not feel safe.	6.57%	31
Other (please specify)	18.01%	85
Total Respondents: 472		

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q29: Think of times you have BIKED to get somewhere in Baraboo, or times you have wanted to BIKE but chose not to. What challenges did you face as a cyclist or what prevented you from biking? (Choose all that apply.)**

Answered: 472 Skipped: 146



Powered by  SurveyMonkey

**Q29: Think of times you have BIKED to get somewhere in Baraboo, or times you have wanted to BIKE but chose not to. What challenges did you face as a cyclist or what prevented you from biking? (Choose all that apply.)**

Answered: 472 Skipped: 146

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	1.91%	9
Distance (My destination(s) are too far for me to cycle)	5.51%	26
Challenging road conditions (ex: pot holes or loose gravel)	26.91%	127
Lack of bike lanes	34.75%	164
Cars do not notice/respect/look for cyclists	25.00%	118
I haven't experienced challenges biking around the City	7.63%	36
Lack of secure bike storage.	13.56%	64
I do not bike	39.83%	188
Other (please specify)	8.26%	39
Total Respondents: 472		

Final Report  
October 2022



# Baraboo

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY PLANNING