

# Comprehensive Plan for City of Shullsburg, Wisconsin 2023-2033



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## Shullsburg Vision 2033

“Through direct, proactive efforts and perseverance, Shullsburg has leveraged its abundant assets to be a welcoming and inclusive community where all residents can benefit from the excellent quality-of-life developed through collective action.”

A vision statement sets a shared direction and foundation for all current and future leaders, employees, residents, and partners. It is also used to assist the city in moving beyond existing barriers and resistance that prevent the community from making necessary changes. The above vision statement is a response to the core values identified through community input and stakeholder engagement. It represents a desired future state for the city. The following core values represent the guiding principles for how Shullsburg makes decisions and develops strategies for future development.





## **CORE VALUE: A Family Friendly Community**

Survey responses consistently identified the desire to welcome new people, and specifically young families. The city identifies itself as a good place to raise children, and a good place to be a child. Badger Park, community events, the library, and the Shullsburg School District are all assets to be leveraged to welcome and attract new families. These assets and values will help the city to attract new residents, volunteers, workforce, and students. The survey also identified several reasons why the city fails to attract young families, the greatest weakness being a lack of inclusivity and welcoming initiatives. To maintain this value, the city will need to invest in attracting new residents by marketing its many assets and being inclusive and welcoming to new populations.

## **CORE VALUE: Responsible Stewardship of Community Assets**

Shullsburg is one of Wisconsin's oldest communities, and its vintage charm is evidence of the careful and responsible management of its residents. Due to this stewardship, the community has a strong historic identity that can be marketed to visitors and future residents. The community has high expectations of its employees and leadership to ensure public trust and money are being utilized for the public good. Volunteers and business owners are also relied on to continue to offer the amenities that create the high quality of life for Shullsburg residents. The community should build on this value by identifying, acknowledging, and investing in community stewards.

## **CORE VALUE: Productive Action**

Survey respondents and public meeting attendees expressed the value of being an action-oriented community. The Parkview subdivision, many community events, and individuals regularly volunteering and donating is evidence of the community value of getting things done. In public meetings, the primary way residents measured success was by identifying what gets accomplished. The survey and public meetings have expressed a desire to see renewed action from local government as a partner and facilitator for future productive action. Productive action requires strong leadership, collaboration, and functioning systems.



## Project Scope

### Building on Community Success

Shullsburg, as evidenced in its core values, is a community that prides itself on the successes and achievements of its residents, associations, and community as a whole. In recent years the community has achieved a lot of success in its many initiatives. Community associations such as Advance Shullsburg and the Lions Club have demonstrated the ability of a small city to draw regional tourism and offer high quality amenities to its residents through collective action. The city's endeavor to develop the Parkview Subdivision and offer free lots, in order to draw in new residents, is a successful model for smaller communities regionally and statewide. The School District, a collective foundation of the community, has taken the initiative to address the unmet need for childcare in the city. The community has demonstrated its ability to go above and beyond in order to make Shullsburg a great place to live, work, and visit.

The strategies and actions outlined in this plan intend to keep and build upon the momentum of the community. The community will need to continue to utilize its many assets to accomplish its goals over the next ten years. This includes engaging individuals, assist community associations, and celebrating success.

### Resiliency

Recent decades have presented many communities with greater uncertainty in the face of a rapidly changing and unpredictable economy, global public health crises, and the impacts of global climate change. A more rapidly changing, interconnected, and developing world has brought global challenges to the front door of many rural communities. Unfortunately, smaller communities tend to respond slower and take longer to recover from global and local setbacks than larger communities with greater resources and capacity. As part of the planning process, input was solicited regarding how the city can become more resilient and the plan's recommendations reflect this strategy.

An integral part of being a resilient community is the ability to accept and prepare for change. The future will present Shullsburg with a variety of changes: immediate and gradual, radical and mundane, cultural and technical, and planned and unplanned. Change does not mean a loss of identity, rather a preservation of identity by adaptation. Changing with the times, and in anticipation of the times, will be required over the next ten years for Shullsburg to remain a vibrant city for residents and visitors.

To help determine what the city can do to prepare for change, this plan introduces the Formula for Change.<sup>1</sup> As seen in the figure, three factors are required to be present for meaningful change to take place: dissatisfaction with the status quo presented in this plan as Issues and Needs, a vision of the future presented in this plan as Vision and Goals, and first concrete steps towards the vision presented in this plan as Actions and Opportunities. If all of the three factors are present, the city can actively pursue meaningful change.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Beckhard and David Gleicher, *Organizational Transitions: Managing Complex Change*.

## Formula for Change



**CHANGE =**



**Dissatisfaction  
with status quo**



**+ Vision**



**+ First steps**



**> Resistance**

## Planning Elements

Wis. Statute 66.1001 outlines nine elements required to be included in a community's comprehensive plan. This plan addresses those nine elements in six chapters. The following chapters and their corresponding planning elements are listed here:

- Chapter: Shullsburg at a Glance - Issues and Opportunities.
- Chapter: Economic Development - Housing, Transportation, and Economic Development.
- Chapter: Community Resources - Agricultural, Natural and Cultural resources, and Facilities and Utilities.
- Chapter: Leadership - Intergovernmental Cooperation.
- Chapter: Land Use.
- Chapter: Implementation



# Planning Process

The Shullsburg Comprehensive Plan update process began with initial discussions among the city council and Advance Shullsburg in 2021. The city council began working with Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) in late-2021 to develop an updated 10-year comprehensive plan to accomplish a shared vision for the future of Shullsburg. SWWRPC began a process to gather resident and stakeholder input through a survey and a series of in-person meetings. That input, along with the most relevant data, is incorporated into the following plan (and corresponding appendix) to provide a community informed and directed vision and guide for the city over the next ten years.

## Community Input

In November 2021, the city adopted a Public Participation Plan to ensure the community would have a variety of accessible public input options during the comprehensive planning process. The Public Participation Plan outlined the public meetings, online survey, steering committee, and one-on-one conversations to form the foundation of the plan.

Table 1: Community Input Results

Open House Public Meetings	Attendants
March 8th, 2022: Vision, Opportunities, Barriers, Concerns	12
March 15th, 2022: Economic Development, Land Use, Housing, Recreation	14
High School Engagement	Attendants
March 21st 2022: Seniors	17
March 22nd 2022: Juniors	21
Survey Response	Attendants
Total responses	154
Average responses per question	102



A survey was available for all residents and community stakeholders to provide input for the plan. The survey was available online and paper copies were made available by request. Information on access to the survey was distributed through the city's email newsletter, via flyers, social media, and on the annual tax billing. The results of the survey were used to frame questions for the open house meetings.

Two open house meetings were held in March. These meetings allowed one-on-one and group conversations with residents around key topics. The meetings were held in the gym of Shullsburg High School from 4:00 to 8:00pm. Despite the distribution of the flyers and the meetings taking place in a well-known community facility, attendance at the public meetings was minimal, with only 12- 14 people showing up at each meeting.

To provide guidance and to supplement public input, a steering committee reviewed and commented on survey and meeting results, as well as preliminary objectives and actions within this plan. The steering committee was made up of members from the community, Shullsburg schools, the plan commission, local industry, and economic development.

## Public Notice, Hearing, and Adoption

On November 10th, 2022 a Class 1 public notice was published in the Republican Journal to inform residents and stakeholders that a draft of the comprehensive plan was available for review for the next 30 days. Following the 30-day notice, the planning commission held a public hearing to hear comments and suggestions related to the draft plan on December 14th, 2022. Following the public hearing, the plan commission took action to recommend the city council adopt the comprehensive plan. City council adopted the comprehensive plan at a meeting immediately following the plan commission's meeting.

**Table 2: Comprehensive Plan Update Meeting Schedule**

Introduction and Scoping with City Council	October 20th, 2021
Public Participation Plan Adoption	November 17th, 2021
Steering Committee Planning Kick-off	February 15th, 2022
Open House Meeting - Vision, Opportunities, Barriers, Concerns.	March 8th, 2022
Open House Meeting - Land Use, Economic Development, Recreation, Housing	March 15th, 2022
Shullsburg Student Engagement	March 21st & 22nd, 2022
Steering Committee Review of Vision and Core Values	April 28th, 2022

# Shullsburg at a Glance

Shullsburg is one of Wisconsin's oldest communities. The discovery of lead ore in the area, by the city's namesake Jesse Shull, brought miners and settlers as early as 1818. Miners, traders, speculators, and merchants continued to arrive in Shullsburg throughout the nineteenth century. The city was platted in 1846 and served a brief stint as the Lafayette County seat between 1848 and 1852. In 1861, Shullsburg was incorporated as a municipality. In addition to its storied mining and settlement history, Shullsburg continues to celebrate the history of its early residents and leaders including the venerable Father Samuel Mazzuchelli. Mazzuchelli was an Italian missionary who founded St. Matthew's parish, designed its church, and named the streets in the northeast part of Shullsburg after the "virtues of life."<sup>2</sup> The city's history also boasts an impressive and significant eight-acre park at the center of town, Badger Park, which was designed and built as part of the Works Progress Administration.

The city is approximately 1.1 square miles and is located in southwest Lafayette County. The city is located in the Iowa - Illinois - Wisconsin tri-state area and nearby municipalities include Galena, IL; Dubuque, IA; and Benton, Platteville, and Darlington, WI. The city is located on State Hwy 11, a major thoroughfare connecting Janesville and Monroe to the east, and Dubuque, IA to the west. The city's industrial and workforce characteristics are reflective of the region and include agriculture, transportation, and cheese manufacturing. The city has also built upon its strengths to build a strong tourism economy.

The city is located within the Driftless region, a region of the Midwest where the erosion and deposition impact of glaciers did not occur. This lack of glaciation resulted in a landscape characterized by steep hills and narrow valleys with spring-fed streams. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources identifies Shullsburg as being part of the Southwest Savanna Ecological Landscape, an area once primarily dominated by a variety of prairies and oak savannas, a once fire-dependent ecological landscape. Today, native landscape remnants are rare and the landscape is dominated by agriculture - row crops and pasture.<sup>3</sup>

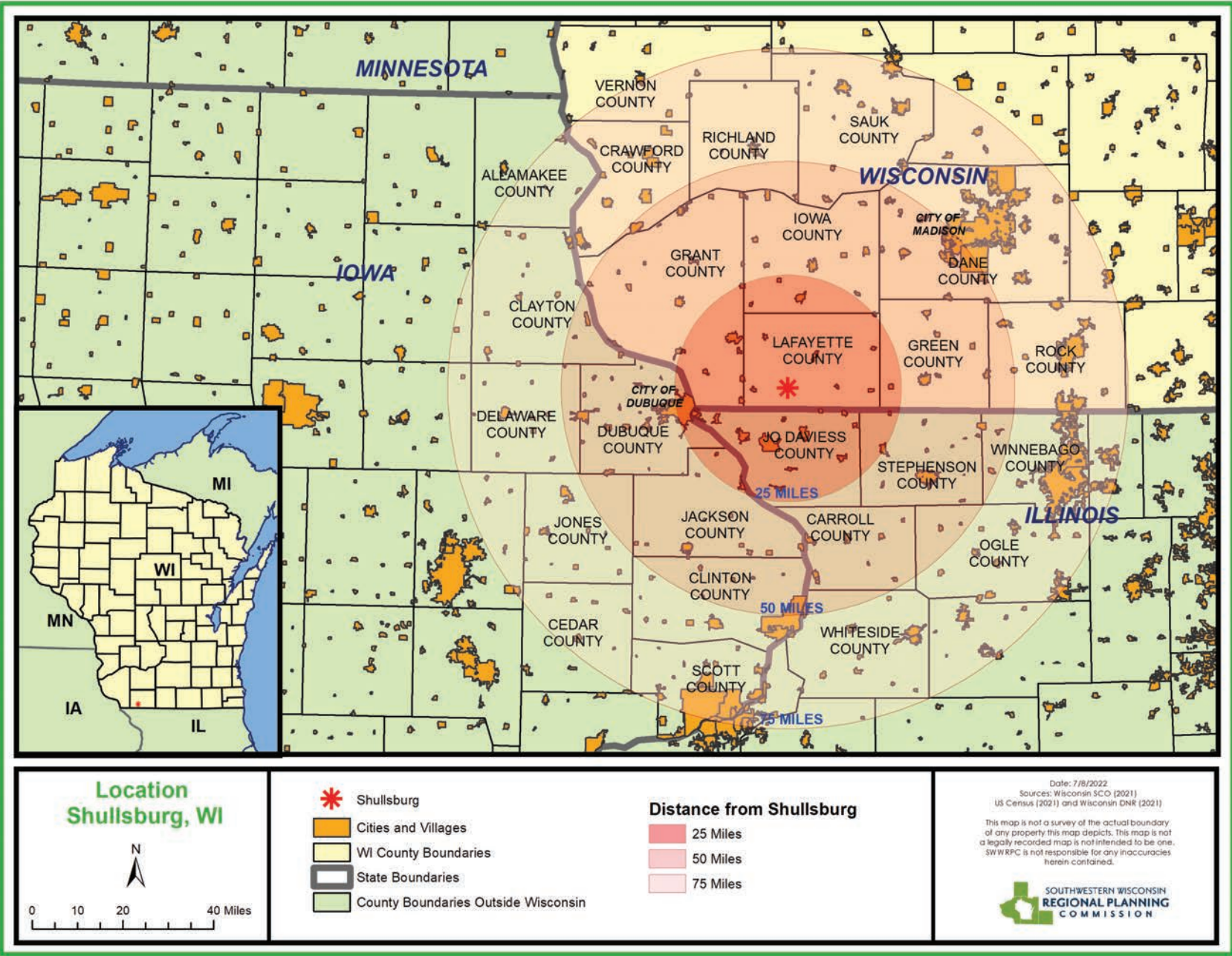
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<sup>2</sup> Consul Wilshire Butterfield, *History of Lafayette County, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Society, 1881), 570-574. Accessed at: <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/wch/id/8259/rec/24> and, Advance Shullsburg, Inc. *Experience Shullsburg* (website). Accessed at <https://experienceshullsburg.com/history/>

<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, *The ecological landscapes of Wisconsin: An assessment of ecological resources and a guide to planning sustainable management*. Chapter 20, Southwest Savanna Ecological Landscape, PUB-SS-1131V. Madison, WI. 2015.



Figure 1: Shullsburg Location



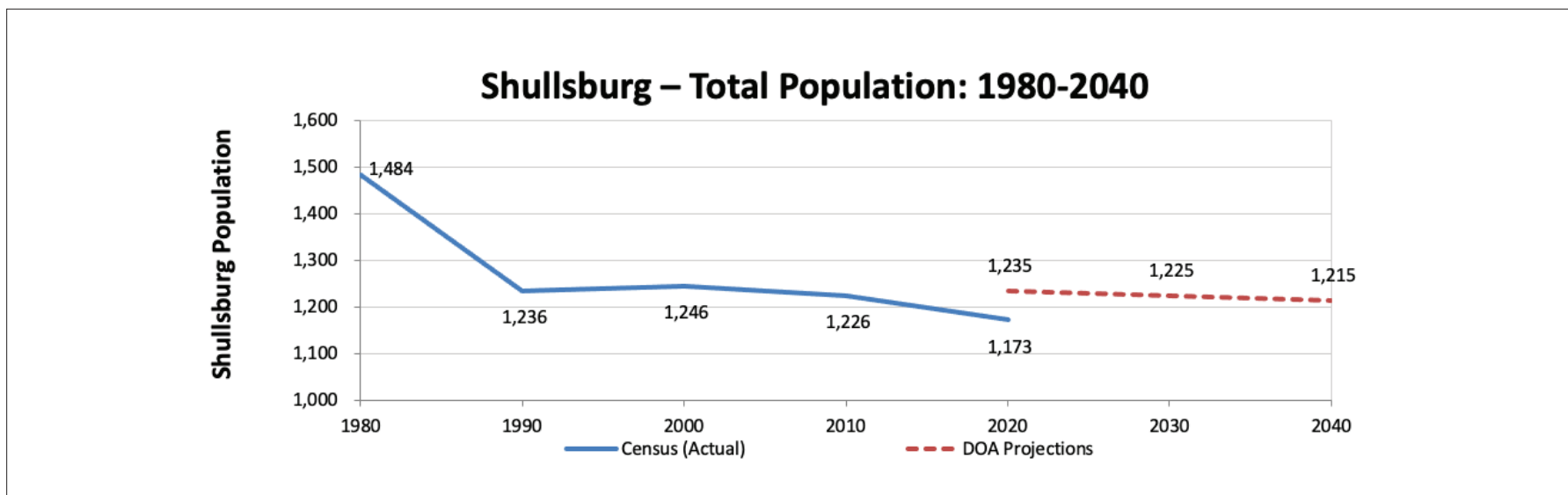
## Issues

A primary goal of gathering public input and reviewing available data is to identify significant issues that are, or are likely to impact the city in the coming years. Generally, the city will need to respond to issues in order to accomplish its goals. Issues presented here are substantial challenges that will impact all aspects of the city.

## Demographics

According to U.S. Census Bureau, Shullsburg's population in 2020 was 1,173. This is a decrease of approximately 4% since 2010 when the population was 1,226. Furthermore, Shullsburg was projected to have a slight increase in population based on the 2010 Census, but having failed to meet those projections is now trending in the opposite direction.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 2: Shullsburg Population Actual and Projected, 1980 - 2040



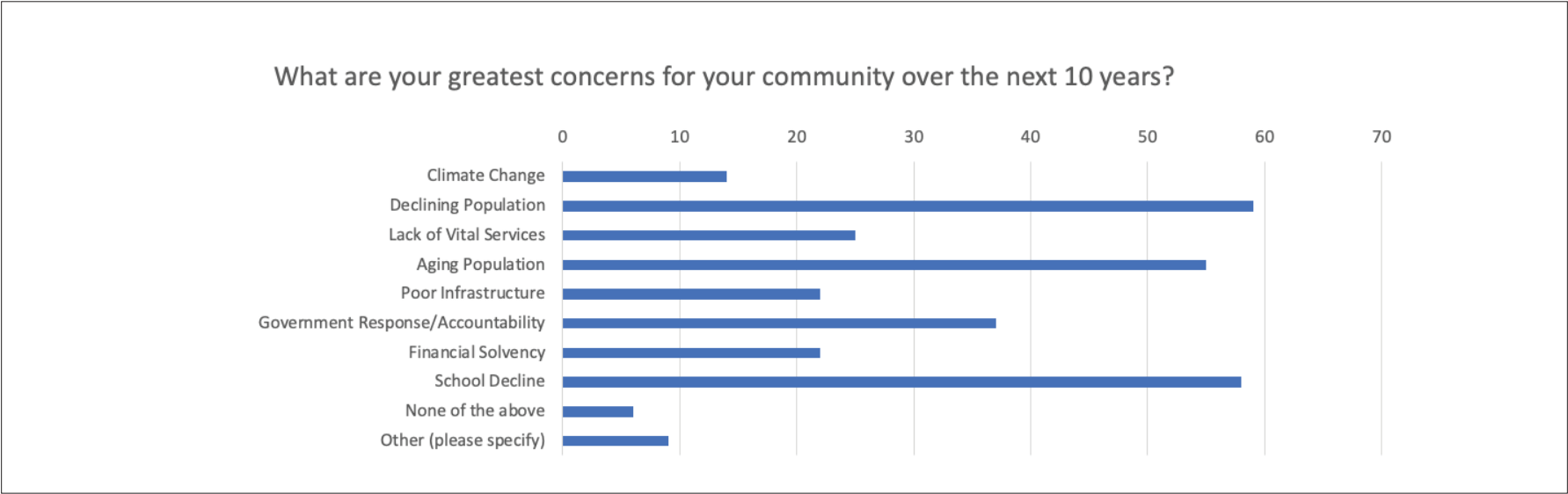
<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2016 ACS Estimate, 2019 ACS Estimate) and Wisconsin Department of Administration. (2013). Wisconsin Population & Household Projections. Retrieved 1/5/2021 from [https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population\\_Projections.aspx](https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Projections.aspx)



Shullsburg’s declining population affects every aspect of the community including an unsustainable school enrollment, a greater individual tax burden, a mismatch in supply and demand of vital services such as childcare and EMS, a declining workforce for local industry, and a lack of volunteers to take over the events and programs of community associations.

In addition to the data provided, residents identified a declining population, school decline, and aging population as the top three concerns of the community in the community survey.

**Figure 3: Survey Response to “What are your greatest concerns for your community over the next 10 years?”**



## Leadership

Leadership is required for any community to be vibrant and active. Leadership strengthens local voice and provides the community with collective agency. Without it, communities cannot be proactive or resilient.

The fourth greatest concern of residents as reported in the survey (behind the three demographic concerns previously discussed) was “Government Response and Accountability,” and it showed up as the second greatest weakness of the community in the survey. There were also comments during the public input meetings regarding a lack of council activity, lack of vision, lack of collaborative decision-making, and issues with leadership were identified as barriers to getting things done. Ancillary comments arose throughout public input sessions that were indicative of leadership issues such as a lack of public participation, unclear roles and responsibilities, cynicism, and a feeling Shullsburg relies on the status quo.

Despite comments and concerns, residents have high expectations of city leadership and city employees. Public input indicated the community can only make so much progress without leadership at city hall, and they would like to see a more productive and collaborative leadership style. The goals and actions of this plan work to build stronger and more collaborative leadership at city hall. Since these public meetings, city leadership has prioritized efforts to pursue progress and meet the expectations of residents.

## Inclusion

Throughout the planning process, public input identified the need and desire to attract new residents, particularly young families. Residents and stakeholders identified being a friendly and supportive community as Shullsburg’s top strength, and attracting residents as a primary goal over the next 10 years. Yet, the top weakness of the community, as identified by the community, is a lack of inclusiveness.

Similar to many smaller rural communities, Shullsburg has longtime residents who are closely connected over generations. These long-time relationships extend through government, businesses, families, community associations, and faith-based institutions. These relationships make it difficult for long-established residents to be inclusive to new members of the community and difficult for new residents to navigate the long-held practices and relationships. It is common for smaller communities to see themselves as friendly and welcoming, but not include or trust new residents in the same way as established residents. Comments about inclusion ranged from economic inclusion for businesses, to deep concerns about the voice and power of residents whose family are not generational to the city.

In order to address population decline and the associated impacts, Shullsburg will need to attract new residents or entice former residents to return. Public input has indicated that a lack of inclusiveness in the community is hampering many of the other efforts of the community. While this is not solely the responsibility of local government, it is something that can start at the local government level and extend through community associations and businesses.



## **Growth Barriers: Housing and Land**

One of the great recent successes of Shullsburg is the development of the Parkview Subdivision. The city was proactive in its development by acquiring and developing land and then selling the residential lots at a steeply discounted rate. Community-driven developments such as this are important to smaller rural communities where the market does not traditionally encourage investment.

Despite this success, the demand for housing of all types continues. The need for housing impacts workforce and school enrollment. Shullsburg's industry and businesses require affordable housing for their workforce. Retirees and those approaching retirement will look for low-maintenance options, and young families can only be attracted to the area when affordable and suitable housing is available.

One of the challenges to new housing in the city is the availability of land. Attendees at the public meeting often referred to Shullsburg as being, "land-locked" in the logic that growth is being prevented because of the lack of adjacent land on the market. This is an issue that will need to be addressed through proactive leadership, optimizing available land, and collaborative partnerships with landowners.

## Opportunities

Shullsburg is regularly presented with numerous opportunities. These opportunities may be unexpected or the result of the city's own initiatives. Examples may include the opportunity to annex adjacent land, apply for grant funding, or support an industry considering locating in the city. Yet, not all opportunities will help the city accomplish its long-term goals or its vision. Approaching opportunities in a strategic manner provides a foundation and rationale behind decision making and answers how the city will accomplish its overarching goals. This plan encourages the city to address future and existing opportunities with strategic questions and offers the following strategies to help the city accomplish its goals.

The following strategies are also referenced alongside the recommended actions in the following chapters. Some recommended actions address numerous strategic initiatives, while others are more focused on a specific strategy.

### People Focused

**“Does this promote a welcoming and inclusive community?” / “Are we being transparent, welcoming, and trustworthy?”**

As discussed previously, the issue of population is a significant challenge for the city. Public input identified the desire to welcome more young families into the community and build upon the tourism industry. Yet, public input also identified that the city is not always welcoming or inclusive to new residents and business owners. While being welcoming and inclusive is not a traditional role for government, the city needs to act as a leader to develop this culture throughout the city. Numerous goals of the city, including welcoming new residents, rely on the impacts of this cultural change.

In addition to attracting new residents, an inclusive community also requires the city to focus on their existing residents, business owners, and visitors of Shullsburg. Public input and attendance at the public meetings indicated a low point in the city's public reputation that needs to be addressed. The city will need to rebuild its reputation over time by being more transparent, welcoming, and trustworthy.

### Capacity Building

**“Does this provide the necessary capacity for the city to effectively and efficiently provide residents the services they expect?”/  
“Does this demonstrate the city's commitment to existing staff?”/ “Are we taking advantages of the resources available to us?”**

In addition to welcoming and including new residents, the city will need to focus on developing and retaining the human capacity to accomplish its long-term goals. Over time, the requirements of municipal public works and utilities, administration, and parks and recreation have grown and become more complex due to both increased requirements and increased demand for services. These increasing requirements and demands have not always come with increased funding or staffing. The complexities and increased workloads require professional staff, who are highly sought after. In order to attract and retain staff, who can likely earn more in larger nearby markets, the city will need to work to organize and define roles, offer the tools and training necessary, and work to make staff feel valued.

Capacity building is also about increasing the means to accomplish initiatives. The city has demonstrated in the past their ability to leverage outside funding to accomplish projects. The city should continue to do so and actively pursue available funding options.

## **Action Infrastructure**

“What *action infrastructure* is in place, or needs to be in place, to address this issue or accomplish this initiative?”

The Aspen Institute’s Community Strategies Group has developed a framework to guide rural development called, Thrive Rural Framework. Within this framework, *Organize an Action Infrastructure* is identified as a recommendation for communities to work towards productive action. An “action infrastructure” includes, “the institutions, policies, systems, data, information, media, and resources needed to establish, align, and achieve priorities that increase both well-being and outcomes.”<sup>5</sup>

Public input identified that widely accepted and agreed-upon initiatives had difficulty being implemented. There were barriers that stood in the way of residents, stakeholders, and leaders; a breakdown in the city’s “action infrastructure.” These barriers did not affect all aspects of the city, as the city appears to have many policies in place to simplify administrative tasks and guide decision-making.

## **Collaboration**

“Can this service be shared with another municipality?” / “Can this product or service be jointly contracted for?” /  
“Can we achieve this more efficiently and with the same results in cooperation with another organization or municipality?”

Shullsburg has a limited ability to raise revenue. Tax levies can only be increased in relation to the city’s net new construction, and other sources of revenue are difficult for small cities to implement and manage. At the same time, the cost of services and goods are increasing. In short, revenues are not keeping up with municipal expenses. This is not expected to change in the near future, so the city will need to learn to do business in a new way. One way to do this is to collaborate with other municipalities and identify services that can be shared. These services can include sharing staff or jointly contracting for services.

## **Competition**

Does this make us more competitive?”

Shullsburg is in competition with other communities. The city competes for new residents, new businesses, and the time and money of tourists and residents. In order to be competitive, the city needs to invest in itself. A great example of this success is the Parkview Subdivision. Competition should not be confused with comparison. If a community has had success with a certain endeavor, that does not mean Shullsburg will also have success. Rather, identifying and investing in the city’s competitive advantage will allow the city to compete and accomplish its goals.

## **Resiliency**

“Does this make us more resilient?”

Recent years have demonstrated the local impacts of global disruptions. Pandemics, inflation, and climate change all have local impacts. Additionally, localized events such as severe storms create another level of disruption for communities. As local challenges like population decline continue, disruptions become more impactful and more frequent. Resilience is the ability to bounce back, reduce the long-term impacts, and evolve. Building resilience is comprehensive and requires addressing all aspects of municipal operations.

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5 The Aspen Institute. Thrive Rural Framework. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/community-strategies-group/thrive-rural/>



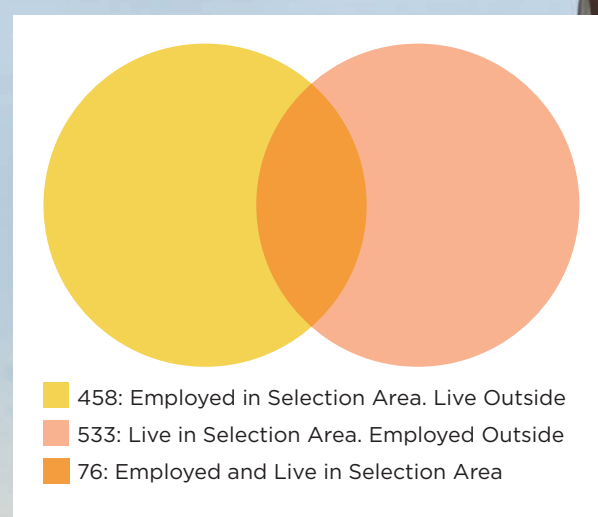
# Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation

Shullsburg has established and built upon a diverse economy. The city has several major employers in the dairy and trucking industry and numerous small businesses in the construction and tourism/service industries. Shullsburg's large employers attract employees from throughout the region. The inflow/outflow table below indicates that nearly 86% of people who work in Shullsburg, live outside of the city. These are people who may find interest in living in Shullsburg. Additionally, the majority (87.5%) of working people who live in Shullsburg work outside of the city.<sup>6</sup> Only 14% of residents work in the city. The largest share of workers in Shullsburg find employment in Dubuque, Iowa (15.6%). The inflow/outflow data indicates there may be a lack of affordable housing within the city for those who work in the city.

Table 3: Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs, 2019)<sup>7</sup>

	Count	Share
Employed in Shullsburg	534	100%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	458	85.8%
Employed and living in Shullsburg	76	14.2%
Living in Shullsburg	609	100%
Living in Shullsburg but Employed Outside	533	87.5%
Living and employed in Shullsburg	76	12.5%

Figure 4: Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2019.<sup>8</sup>



6 US Census. On the Map. <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

## Assets:

### Tourism

When asked what Shullsburg should be known for, public survey responses heavily focused on attractions such as events, shopping and dining, cheese, and history. Residents know the city has much to share, and few other communities in southwest Wisconsin have developed the successful marketing efforts to the extent that Shullsburg has. Through the work of Advance Shullsburg and other community groups, the city attracts tourists to events throughout the year and continues to maintain a vibrant commercial downtown. Tourism is a growing industry for the city, and the city should continue to build upon this asset. Beyond being an economic driver, Tourism also works to attract new residents to the city.

### Main Street Community

Shullsburg has been a nationally-designated Main Street Community since 2017. Through this designation, commitment, and partnership with Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the city receives assistance and access to resources to support and revitalize its historic downtown. These resources and guidance both enhance tourism and establish a downtown identity for the community as a whole. The city should continue to maintain its Main Street Community participation and remain active in implementing the four-point approach to its downtown: Design, Economic Vitality, Organization, and Promotion.

### Advance Shullsburg Inc.

Advance Shullsburg is connected with much of the recent economic development success in the city. This nonprofit has taken the lead on tourism promotion, events, and economic development for the city since being created in 2016. The organization is also the city's lead in its Main Street Community participation. In addition to the tourism and economic development work, Advance Shullsburg has mobilized a sizable board of directors and resident volunteers to take on community projects and events. At present, there is no organization that acts as a greater advocate for the city. The city should continue to support this organization and the work it is doing to attract visitors and new residents.

### Industry

As discussed, Shullsburg has a diversity of industry that includes: cheese manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, retail, and small businesses that cater to service and the tourism industry. While the city currently has several large industries, they do not take away from the quality of life in the city. Although currently limited by available land, the city should continue to pursue the expansion of its industry park for new and existing industries to locate in the city. Expanding the city's industrial land along the Highway 11 corridor will make the land more attractive to future and existing industries and continue to retain the quality of life for Shullsburg's residents. In addition to ensuring land is available for new businesses and expansion of existing businesses, the city will need to make stronger efforts to ensure the city's employers find the city cooperative and a good place to do business.

## Needs:

### Housing

Shullsburg has been one of the region's most pro-active communities when it comes to developing housing. The Parkview Subdivision is an example of a community investing in its future by incentivizing the construction of new homes. Yet, community input identified that demand for housing continues to grow. Commuter data identified that the majority of people who work in Shullsburg, do not live in Shullsburg. The community survey response showed a belief that attracting new residents will be a significant opportunity in the next ten years. Attracting people requires additional housing. Current population trends in southwest Wisconsin indicate the region's population is getting older. As the baby-boomer generation ages out of their single-family homes, they will look for lower maintenance options for their smaller households. In theory, this will open housing for younger families to move into those homes. However, the majority of Shullsburg's homes are single-family homes, meaning the older generation has fewer options. The city will need to remain open to multi-family, senior, and workforce housing options over the next ten years.

### Land acquisition

The city struggles to grow because of the availability of land. While there is plenty of land suitable for both industrial and residential development within the city's boundaries, no willing sellers have been identified. There is no simple solution to this problem. The city will need to continue to pursue options and maintain regular contact with owners of developable land within the city boundaries. The city may also consider seeking land outside of its current boundaries through an annexation agreement.

### Practices to attract and develop businesses

To compete for businesses, Shullsburg will need to encourage businesses to locate in Shullsburg and encourage local entrepreneurs to remain in the city. To do this, the city should review and reconsider ordinances that discourage business development and attraction. In addition to reviewing ordinances and developing policies, the city should be proactive in approaching existing businesses and work closely with local economic developers to attract new businesses.



## Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation Goals and Actions:

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

**Strengthen and diversify the local economy by creating opportunities for new and existing businesses to locate and grow in Shullsburg.**

**Strategy aligned  
with actions**

Expand areas for industrial development in proximity to the existing industrial park along Highway 11.



Target vacant and under-utilized properties on the Highway 11 corridor for redevelopment.



Work with Lafayette Development Corporation (LDC) to develop certified developable sites for industrial and residential uses and market them on city, county, and other available websites.



Work with LDC and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) Main Street Program to develop a local grant program to incentivize businesses to occupy vacant commercial storefronts.



Partner with McCoy Public Library, Advance Shullsburg, Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin (PSW), and LDC to develop an entrepreneurship program to offer resources and tools for entrepreneurs. This may include co-working space and a network of local mentors and investors.



Facilitate and coordinate business retention and expansion visits with LDC



Maintain active membership in WEDC's Main Street Community program and support Advance Shullsburg's pursuit of initiatives identified in the 2016 Resource Report.



Explore and consider updating the zoning ordinance to prohibit storage within the downtown commercial area.



People Focused

Capacity Building

Action Infrastructure

Collaboration

Competition

Resiliency

# HOUSING GOAL

Ensure a diverse, safe, and affordable housing supply for all ages, incomes, and abilities.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Begin acquisition, planning, and development for the expansion of the Parkview Subdivision once the existing subdivision is 75% full. Market new lots.



Contact SWWRPC to undertake a return-on-investment study of the Parkview Subdivision as soon as the subdivision is 50% developed and occupied.



Develop a public-private partnership with the local dairy industries to develop workforce housing. This may include approaching developers together and jointly applying for WHEDA tax credits.



Lafayette County Housing Authority will be replacing the existing senior housing in the coming years. Continue to work with the Housing Authority to ensure housing is replaced in Shullsburg and explore options to expand the number of housing units. Assist the Housing Authority with identifying available land and incentivizing the development.



Extend TIF districts for one year to take advantage of the affordable housing extension on all current TIDs. Develop a policy to utilize funding for additional housing developments and selective housing improvements for existing homeowners. Policy should address need for additional affordable housing, making owner-occupied homes safe and affordable, and encouraging first-time home buyers with down payment assistance. Market the availability of these funds along with other city-offered housing incentives.



Work with LDC and PSW to be “developer-ready.” Create a housing taskforce of informed stakeholders who have the responsibility to:



- Develop clear and transparent housing incentives, streamlined permitting policies and timelines, and an inventory of available land. Publish on the city’s website.
- Contact, negotiate, and encourage owners of potential housing property to develop or sell their land. Develop and maintain these relationships. Ensure they know who to call if and when they are ready to sell.
- Develop marketing materials including industry and school district testimony on the need for additional housing, and invite and meet with housing developers
- be prepared to evaluate and pursue funding opportunities related to housing when available.

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Action Infrastructure

Collaboration

Competition

Resiliency

Coordinate the city police department and public works to establish a policy (and calendar) of ordinance enforcement to protect existing properties and incentivize growth. Enforcement of property ordinances should be enforced throughout the city with stepped enforcement and clear violation penalties. Publish this policy annually.



Update the Shullsburg Housing Study by 2025.



## TOURISM GOAL

**Tourism is a strength. Develop baseline of the number of visitors and work to increase this by 10% each year through marketing, events, directed development, and an understanding of tourism demand.**

**Strategy aligned  
with actions**

Work with WEDC's Main Street Program to undertake an economic impact study of Tourism for Shullsburg.



Consider implementing a room tax to support marketing and a hotel/conference study. Work with LDC to encourage surrounding townships to do the same.



Pursue a study to identify the gaps in tourist lodging accommodations and the city's ability to attract commercial lodging and an event center.



Develop a short-term rental policy for vacation rentals that monitors, registers, and ensures ordinance compliance (such as those related to parking).



Support Advance Shullsburg's existing efforts to brand, market, and hold events. Continue to market Shullsburg information in a variety of media formats.




Through partnership with adjacent communities, expand Shullsburg's tourist draw, especially encouraging regional tourists already visiting Galena to experience the "vintage charm" of Shullsburg. Consider partnering with Lafayette County Tourism and other municipalities to develop itineraries of the region's tourist draws.



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Improve the aesthetics of high traffic roads, especially Highway 11. Enforce ordinances, budget for and implement attractive plantings to screen residential and industrial facilities, and encourage local industry or community groups to participate in “Adopt a Highway” program. Consider development ordinances that prioritize the aesthetics of the community through measures such as screening or strategically placing parking and giving priority to pedestrian use.



Support the implementation of the wayfinding plan developed in 2022 to cohesively brand the city in an attractive manner and encourage commuter traffic to visit.



Support the continued existence of a visitor center on Water Street. Ensure the location is situated to be welcoming and accessible to visitors.



## TRANSPORTATION GOAL

**Develop and maintain safe, accessible, and efficient transportation options, with priority given to increasing the walkability of the city.**

**Strategy aligned with actions**

Update and expand upon the existing capital improvements and maintenance plan to include an inventory of all transportation and critical facilities with the expected lifespan, current condition, cost-analysis, annual budget, and coordinated projects for each. Include a timeline for regular updating. The more this is used, the more useful it will become.



Meet annually with Shullsburg Township and neighboring municipalities to coordinate and bid capital improvement projects to seek out lower rates due to decreased mobilization and transportation costs.



Consider shared service agreements with Shullsburg Township and other surrounding municipalities.



Leverage future state and county projects to improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle transportation networks, especially along WI - 11, County Roads U and O. Work with neighboring communities to expand this network along local and county roads. Advocate for expanded shoulders, signage and paint, and preferentially separated corridors.



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When rebuilding city streets, give preference to designs that accommodate pedestrian sidewalks, especially near parks and schools. Seek out funding from state transportation alternative programs to facilitate. (See City Sidewalk Map)



All sidewalks require ADA compliant curb cuts, signage, and crosswalks. Ensure the city's infrastructure is compliant.



Consider signage to notify drivers of bicyclists on routes used by recreational bicyclists.  
Provide a public bicycle work stand and bicycle racks.



Work with internet service providers to coordinate the installation of conduit on all city street reconstruction projects to facilitate the expansion of broadband and telecom infrastructure. Advocate for this measure on state and county projects as well.



Promote SWCAP and Lafayette County ADRC shared ride services, bus routes, and day trips.



Monitor vehicle and pedestrian accidents on a quarterly basis and evaluate accident locations for potential safety corrections.



Review ADA parking availability during community events and create temporary set-aside areas for parking and drop-offs in preparation for community events.



Identify and plan for ATV/UTV and snowmobile use on city streets.




Identify and plan for ATV, UTV, and Snowmobile parking downtown.



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# Community Resources

Shullsburg's community assets are an impressive testament to the work of the community over time. Badger Park, McCoy Public Library, and active community associations are points of pride for Shullsburg. These assets provide a quality of life that residents have come to expect and that future residents seek out. As one of Wisconsin's oldest communities, these assets exist because of community stewardship, where culture and way of life have valued and cared for these amenities over nearly 200 years.

In addition to the built environment and community, Shullsburg's pastoral setting is a resource for existing residents and a draw for newcomers. Caring for and expanding the city's natural resources ensures that the community will remain attractive, comfortable, and safe.





## Assets

### Badger Park, Mine, and Museum

Public input, both at in-person meetings and through the online survey, identified Badger Park as an incredible asset for the community. The park includes sports fields, a swimming pool, pavilions, and a museum and historic mine. Few communities in southwest Wisconsin can boast of a park as expansive, centrally-located, and amenity-filled as Badger Park. Badger Park was identified by residents as the most visited and the greatest quality park within Shullsburg. Over time, the park has experienced deferred maintenance and requires significant upgrades to continue to offer the quality experience that residents have come to expect. Additionally, the Badger Mine and Museum is an asset that serves not only as repository of public memory and interpretation, but brings tourists and school groups to learn about southwest Wisconsin's history and early industry. Due to the size of the park and the number of amenities within it, approaching the maintenance and upgrades may be overwhelming for the city. This plan recommends that the city approach the park through facilities plan that identifies upgrades and routine maintenance.

The expansiveness and central location of Badger Park make it heavily utilized. In order to reduce the heavy use and stress on its amenities, the city should seek to spread out amenities, as possible, to the city's other parks.

### McCoy Library

The increase in personal computers, residential internet services, and on-demand media have often left libraries overlooked in small communities. Despite those technological advances, public input praised McCoy library. In addition to serving as a public square and facility for enriching community members, McCoy library offers extensive programming directed towards young families. The library is an important part of the city's infrastructure and is in a unique position to serve Shullsburg's entrepreneurs by hosting classes and providing membership access to online resources. With strategic partnerships, the library can expand its reach to the community including parts of the population that overlook the library as a resource.

### Shullsburg Schools

There is no greater unifying institution in Shullsburg than the school. Identified as both a top asset and a top concern for the community, the school has a very important role in the identity of many Shullsburg residents. Similar to other school districts, Shullsburg Schools have experienced decreasing enrollment. The schools are both an indication of the existential demographic changes and seen as an asset to reverse the trend. Previous planning efforts identified consolidation of school districts as something to be avoided at all costs, yet the decline in enrollment has not slowed. Considering existing and forecasted trends, the city and school need to work together to design a future where consolidation is managed to protect the quality of service the school provides to residents of the district and the city. Since the beginning of the process for this plan, the school district has taken action to offer childcare services, a significant need for the community. This action is an important step in building the infrastructure needed to attract young families and reverse declining enrollment.

## Needs

### Walkability

“Home is everything you can walk to.” – Rebecca Solnit.

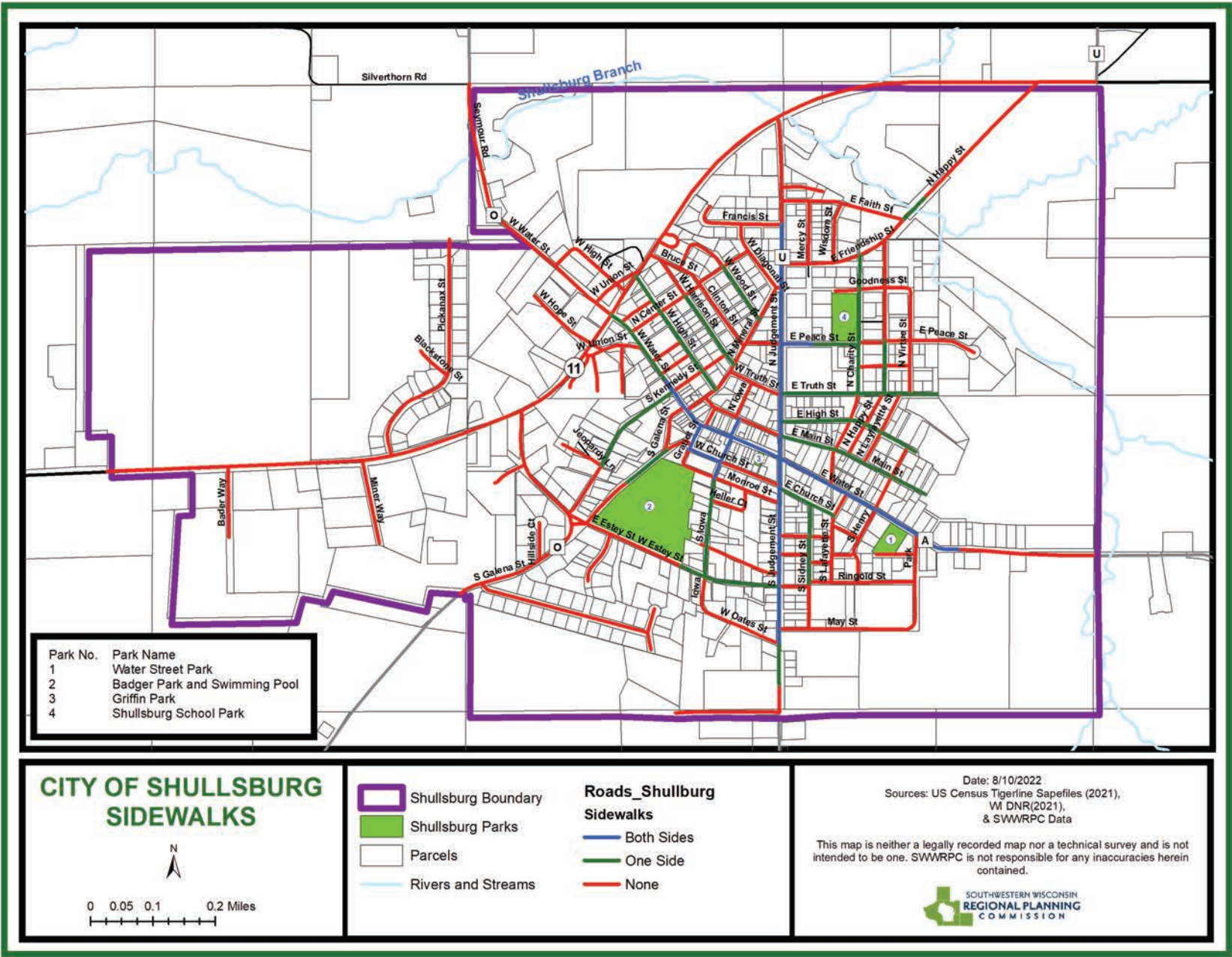
Shullsburg’s beautiful downtown, parks, and geography are all invitations to walk around the community and explore. Both residents and visitors should be encouraged to explore the entire community. Walking and exploring provide both a sense of place and a familiarity with the city. Yet, much of the city lacks the infrastructure for community members to connect with the amenities of the city unless they are getting to and from locations by car. The community survey identified the desire for increased walking trails, but the city lacks the availability of public space and connecting routes from neighborhoods and commercial areas. Shullsburg’s historic neighborhoods were not initially designed to accommodate both modern roads and sidewalks, however, many areas can accommodate pedestrian travel with creative design, signage, and painted shoulders. Further, these improvements offer a sense of safety and accommodation that walking in an undesignated street does not. Sidewalks and/or walking signage should be prioritized in areas around the school, commercial areas, and parks, places where pedestrian travel is already taking place in the street. The following map identifies the existing sidewalks within the city. The majority of the city has no walking infrastructure.

Figure 5: Google Street View of W. Diagonal St<sup>9</sup>



9 Image Captured: September 2013. Accessed July 2022.

Figure 6: Shullsburg Sidewalk Map.





## Childcare

Throughout the planning process, childcare was referenced, along with housing, as a barrier to attracting new families. The current marketplace for childcare is not one that works in favor of small communities such as Shullsburg. Generally, local wages are not high enough to cover the cost of childcare, causing individuals to leave the workforce or seek work (and residence) in other places. During the planning process, Shullsburg Schools took action to begin offering childcare in the community. This is an important initiative that should be encouraged and supported by the city.

## Green Infrastructure

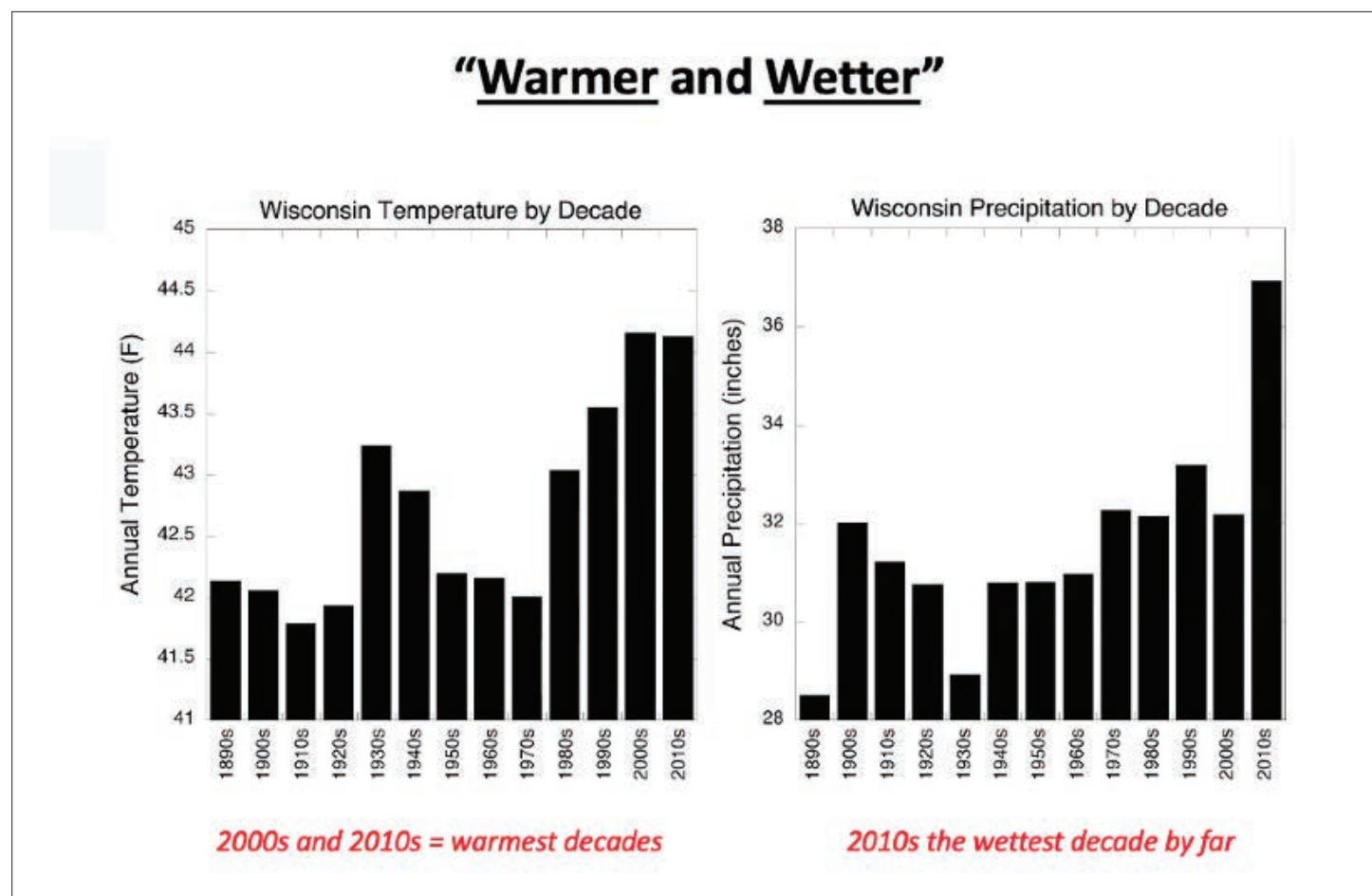
The global impacts of climate change are now a common occurrence and are expected to increase in frequency and severity.<sup>10</sup> In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts expects increasing temperatures and precipitation to impact the state. As seen in Figure 7, the trends of increasing temperature and precipitation has been taking place for several decades, with the 2010s being dramatically wetter than any other decade on record. While much of the global causes and effects are outside of the control of Shullsburg and its residents, there are planning efforts the city can take now to become more resilient to the increasing heat and precipitation that is expected in the coming years. Many of these efforts can be undertaken through cost effective measures; such as bio-swales to lessen the impact of stormwater and tree and shrub planting to lower the temperature on city streets and neighborhoods. Additionally, the transition to electric vehicles will drive demand for charging stations and solar generation. Not only should the city accommodate and encourage this shift in demand but also consider these capital improvements to city facilities and operations to improve the resiliency of city operations.



<sup>10</sup> NASA. *Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet*. <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>



Figure 7: Temperature and Precipitation by decade in Wisconsin, 1890s – 2010s.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts, Steve Vavrus Presentation at Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention. April 20th, 2022. Data sourced from: Midwest Regional Climate Center. Cli-MATE database. <http://mrcc.purdue.edu>. and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Prediction. <http://www.ncei.noaa.gov>.

# Community Resources Goals and Actions:

## COMMUNITY INCLUSION GOAL

All residents, business owners, and members of the greater community feel they have a stake in the *community's success*.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Facilitate a meeting of all community associations on an annual basis for a strategic planning session.



In coordination with McCoy Public Library and Advance Shullsburg, hold an annual volunteer sign up and community fair. Encourage all community associations and groups to participate by share information with residents.



Facilitate and coordinate business retention and expansion visits with LDC



## COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP GOAL

Stewardship of existing community assets and strategic investments in services that greatly increase the quality of life for residents.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Badger Park is a significant asset and has overdue maintenance and upgrades. Develop a plan to address this park and its many amenities and apply for funding assistance from the WIDNR. The plan and application should strategically identify the required upgrades to be made. Budget city resources to cover costs not funded by WIDNR.



Offer outdoor recreation amenities that accommodate all ages. The city's existing Outdoor Recreation Plan and comments in the survey identified the demand for a pickleball court. Consider how this facility could co-exist or take the place of under-utilized facilities such as the skate-park. Apply for WIDNR grant funding to cover some of these expenses.



Continue to protect and enhance the historic preservation efforts on Water Street by continuing to take advantage of resources available through WEDC's Main Street Program and the Wisconsin Historical Society.



Support Advance Shullsburg and the city's Historic Preservation Commission in applying for a grant from WHS to survey areas of the city that are expected to hold historical significance such on the periphery of the current historical district.



With the assistance of WEDC's Main Street Program, the recently completed wayfinding plan, and Wisconsin Historical Society, pursue interpretive signage citywide. This can be done cost-efficiently through the use of QR codes and online applications.



In addition to expanding the capital and maintenance plan for the city's transportation and critical infrastructure, develop a plan to identify and financially prepare for the future needs of the city's facilities including utilities, parks, and city hall/library.



City support of events and organizations includes a simple and streamlined permitting process and coordination with city staff to help facilitate events. Continue to offer city-owned facilities for public use with as few barriers as possible. Highlight the efforts of community associations on a regular basis through the website and in public meetings.



Explore the resources needed to hire and retain a parks and recreation director. This can be done either as a part time role of an existing position or with a collaboration with another agency/municipality.



Establish regular meetings between school administration and city leadership. Consider collaborative actions that support shared goals such as a parks and recreation director and childcare.



Coordinate with the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin (CFSW) to ensure the Shullsburg Fund is being adequately utilized and applied for. Work with CFSW to ensure this fund is marketed, accessible, and equitably delivered. Encourage CFSW to simplify its application. Coordinate applicants with city staff to complete applications.



Work with LDC to pursue broadband expansion, ensuring city residents have access to reliable, modern, and affordable internet.



Ensure backup power generators are available for all of the city's critical infrastructure as well as the at least one community building to serve as a heating or cooling station in the event of an emergency.



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# ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL

Increase resiliency, residential well-being, attractiveness, and resources by strengthening the natural environment.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Evaluate the city’s mowing and brushing demands. Create a plan to limit frequency of mowing and establishing limited maintenance landscapes that are native to the region, such as prairies. Encourage native plant use throughout the city, especially in areas where additional water retention has been identified as a need.



Work with LDC to explore participation in PACE Wisconsin. This program allows commercial, industrial, and non-profit entities to attractively finance energy efficiency upgrades at no cost to the municipality.



Plan for energy efficiency improvements to all city facilities in the facilities plan. Undertake an energy audit and invest in energy efficient upgrades such as solar panels, heat pumps, and more efficient lighting and appliances.



The “tree/shrub” cover of Shullsburg is only 5.6% of the land area, which is lower than nearby cities in the region.<sup>12</sup> The city should pursue a greater canopy cover for the many benefits that shade offers for residents and the environment. Develop a plan to increase canopy cover that considers appropriate tree and shrub species, available land, and public incentives. Consider pursuing “Tree-City” status by:



- Maintaining a “Tree Board” (existing grounds committee)
- Having a tree ordinance
- Spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry
- Celebrating Arbor Day

Balance all future development with improvements to the natural environment including plantings, pervious surfaces, and stormwater management.



Require all future developments and stormwater improvements be designed to accommodate expected increases in precipitation tied to climate change.



<sup>12</sup> Dodgeville – 12.8%, Mineral Point – 16.9%, Cuba City – 6.6%, Platteville – 17.3%, Darlington – 6.2% <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/urbanforests/ufia/landcover>



Encourage future developments to provide electric vehicle charging facilities.



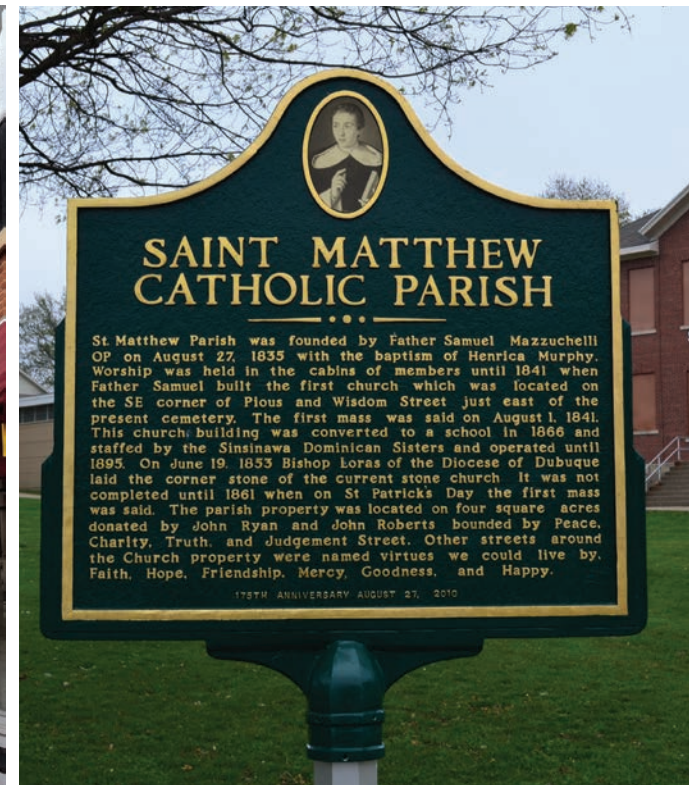
Pursue wastewater treatment facility discharge compliance with WIDNR. Evaluate riparian and landscape restoration versus streambank stabilization through riprap alone.



Continue to replace all lead infrastructure in the city-owned water supply infrastructure and private water-supply laterals. If unsuccessful in securing funding, facilitate collective contracting for residents and businesses to remove laterals.



Explore the cost of sampling and testing municipal drinking water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). WIDNR currently offers a voluntary participation program to support this testing for municipalities.



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# Leadership and Governance

When asked about Shullsburg's weaknesses, "leadership and government" was a top response from public survey respondents. Responses referenced the mayor, city council, and city employees as all having limited vision, leadership, and responsiveness. During the public meetings, this was also a common response when asked about barriers and problems with the city.

Survey respondents also identified "government response and accountability" as a top concern over the next 10 years (see Figure 3). Public input indicated that residents of Shullsburg had lost trust with the city leadership and when asked about satisfaction with leadership, responses were heavily weighted towards not satisfied and somewhat not satisfied.

As mentioned previously, elected leadership responded to the comments of residents prior to the completion of this plan by prioritizing progressive action towards larger goals. Many of the recommended actions are already being worked on by city leadership as a response to comments heard in the survey and during public meetings.



## Assets

### Existing staff and engaged residents

The city currently benefits from employees who have developed a breadth of institutional knowledge. These individuals are highly valuable assets to the city. Their knowledge of the city, its operations, people, and the requirements of the positions are not easily replaced. Ensuring employees are satisfied and well compensated is the first step in keeping them. The city will need to address the retirement of long-term employees in a way that both transfers institutional knowledge and develops additional capacity. Through the planning process, discussions about reorganizing the administrative offices arose in response to the retirement of a long-term employee. The purpose of this reorganization is to account for increasing amounts of administrative work and the desire to pursue initiatives, such as those developed in this plan.

In addition, the city has several engaged residents who provide feedback to leadership and staff. These residents are also involved in community organizations and businesses. Cultivating relationships with the engaged residents of the community will help re-establish resident trust with city government. This will eventually create additional engaged residents who see value in working with the city to accomplish initiatives.

## Needs

### Communication

When asked, “How can the city work with other institutions?” the top responses were focused on communication. Throughout the planning process, leadership often stated there was a lack of communication with neighboring municipalities and other key stakeholders, such as the school district. In order to accomplish its goals and create a strong community, the city will need to be more proactive in reaching out to other municipalities and stakeholders, and be willing to take an intergovernmental leadership role among the smaller municipalities within the greater Shullsburg community. This plan identifies numerous stakeholders and partners for the city to engage with and identifies collaboration as a strategy for future opportunities.

In addition to a lack of intergovernmental and stakeholder communication, approximately 25% of survey respondents were “somewhat not satisfied” with city communications and nearly 14% stated they were “not satisfied.” Without clear and open communication channels from the city, residents will often feel disconnected from leadership, or become misinformed. It was not clear if this was due to a mismatch in the media the city uses and the media the residents use or a general disinterest from residents, but this will need to be corrected in order for the city to be successful. In addition to determining how residents want to receive information from the city, the city should strive to be as transparent as possible with residents. It should also strive to market itself by celebrating victories, big and small.

### Ability to Change

As discussed in the first chapter, the Formula for Change requires three factors in order to overcome resistance to change, dissatisfaction with the status quo, a vision, and first steps. Throughout the planning process, dissatisfaction was well documented by residents and elected officials but a vision for the future was more difficult to pull from comments in the survey and in the public meeting. This plan provides a vision statement and goals the city can continue to pursue.

In addition to a vision, the city needs to take first steps. Many of the actions identified in this plan can be considered first steps towards a goal, or they might need to be broken down into further steps in order to be effectively managed. It is up to the leadership of the city to determine how to empower and enable staff and elected officials to take those first steps. The implementation chapter of this plan will also provide guidance on taking first steps.

Management Structure

In discussions with elected officials, it was identified that little management structure exists with the city staff. The public works departments have no director, neither do parks and recreation programs, and the administrative and clerical staff of the city likely bear the brunt of this burden on top their own work. This is one reason why it is recommended the city explore hiring an administrative manager in coordination with the retirement of the long-serving clerk, or that mayoral duties and responsibilities may need to expand.

Without a management structure in place, responsibilities fall through the cracks and there is uncertainty about responsibilities. If these uncertainties persist, necessary work is never accomplished. Official roles and management structure are an important way to ensure the necessary work is being done in an appropriate way. It is also an important way to ensure city staff are satisfied in their position.

Leadership and Cooperation Goals and Actions:

COMMUNICATION GOAL

Increased responsiveness, transparency, and trust in city leadership and employees.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Research the value in expanding the administrative capacity of city staff. In coordination with upcoming staff retirement, explore the ability to hire an Administrative Manager for the city. The position can be heavily focused on the management and coordination of city departments, governance, and initiatives. In addition to the administrative manager, the city should have a full-time clerk, and potentially a part time deputy clerk.



Encourage elected officials and department managers to participate in the Community Leadership Alliance Program through UW-Extension. Consider future manager and leadership training such as through Wisconsin's Certified Public Manager program.





Invest in council training through the League of Wisconsin Municipalities or the University of Wisconsin-Extension local government center. Encourage annual training for council and planning committee members.



Continue to be transparent in meeting posting and minutes, work to accommodate resident requests to offer greater access. Ensure all committee and council minutes are posted in a reasonable amount of time. Consider recording and posting recordings of meetings.



Seek to have departmental reports take place during council meetings. This will ensure that important information from the city's departments is available to the public through public minutes.

Encourage new businesses and organizations to attend public meetings and introduce themselves.



Work with Lafayette County Emergency Management to develop up-to-date emergency operations plan and identify training for elected officials and staff to understand their responsibilities during emergency events.



Adopt a policy of local procurement. Seek to purchase products and services from local businesses. Encourage local businesses to provide products and services where there are current gaps on local offerings.



Make a point of celebrating community achievements.



Continue to replace all lead infrastructure in the city-owned water supply infrastructure and private water-supply laterals. If unsuccessful in securing funding, facilitate collective contracting for residents and businesses to remove laterals.




Explore the cost of sampling and testing municipal drinking water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). WIDNR currently offers a voluntary participation program to support this testing for municipalities.



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# LEADERSHIP GOAL

City employees and leadership have established positions and policies that encourage staff development and accountability.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Establish a management structure within the existing city staff. An example might include departments for administration, public works, parks and recreation, and police, fire, and rescue. Each department has a manager who oversees initiatives, manages employees, and reports to council.



Invest in continuing education for all city employees. Trainings should be focused on public management, and position specific skills development. Require all department heads to participate in leadership training with UW- Extension. Encourage annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training on an annual basis.



Establish a personnel committee to undertake annual staff reviews and 6-month check-ins to evaluate staff performance and discuss available resources for staff. Undertake exit interviews with staff to understand why employees seek employment elsewhere.



Ensure vision drives investments and donations. Donations should not drive actions of the city. Always evaluate funding opportunities in relation to long-term costs.



# COORDINATING GOAL

Act regionally and in cooperation with neighboring municipalities to address shared challenges and opportunities.

Strategy aligned with actions.

Develop a boundary and development agreement with the Town of Shullsburg.



Establish regular meetings between school administration and city leadership. Consider collaborative actions that support shared goals such as a parks and recreation director, childcare, and share space usage.



Coordinate and bid capital improvements with surrounding municipalities to seek out lower rates due to decreased mobilization and transportation costs.



Consider shared service agreements with neighboring communities to contract shared employees, services, and contracts.



Maintain communication with SWWRPC and LCD and support county- and region-wide efforts.



## RESILIENCY GOAL

**Increase community resiliency by preparing for and mitigating for natural and manmade risks.**

Update outdoor warning siren(s) for automated activation of tornado/high wind threat.



Undertake a cyber audit and pursue actions to remediate shortcomings.



Work with Lafayette County Emergency Management to develop up-to-date emergency operations, continuity of operations, and continuity of government plans. Include planning for cyber-attack events.



Require, as necessary, elected officials and staff to take training related to emergency event response.



Establish new intergovernmental mutual aid agreements for sharing services and resources.



Identify and designate weather shelters by type in the community and communicate to residents.




Ensure backup power generators are available for all of the city's critical infrastructure as well as the at least one community building to serve as a heating or cooling station in the event of an emergency.



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# Land Use

Land use impacts all aspects of life in Shullsburg and is an important component of understanding how and if the city will grow over the next ten years. A cohesive, logical, and attainable land use strategy facilitates the implementation of the actions in this plan. From an outside perspective, the city appears to be surrounded by open and developable land, even within its own boundaries. Yet, no owner of prospective developable land is currently motivated to sell or develop their property. Despite the current challenges, the city should continue to facilitate conversations and be prepared for this to change. This plan seeks to identify how land will be used in the future and encourage the city to take a proactive planned approach to development and growth. This chapter reviews the existing land uses in Shullsburg by exploring the established zoning and presents a future land use map to guide the future development of the city. According to the State of Wisconsin Statutes, the future land use map shall be followed by the city. Any future rezoning must comply with the future land use map.





## Assets

### Developable Land

Although public input indicated that much of this land is currently not for sale, the city's boundaries encompass a significant amount of land that can be developed. Over time, the city has found it difficult to purchase this land, but should continue to seek out the development of this land either through purchase or encouraging the sale to a private developer. The future land use map in this chapter identifies future uses of land, removing agriculture as future land use for the city.

## Needs

### Updated Zoning

Shullsburg currently uses a traditional zoning code, which allows development based on particular uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, and more. Shullsburg has four primary zoning districts currently located within the city: commercial/business, manufacturing, residential, and agricultural preservation.

Shullsburg current zoning is divided between existing residential neighborhoods and new subdivision developments. The result is zoning that highly restricts multi-family housing. This limits the available and potentially available housing for seniors, workforce, and young families. It is recommended that future zoning ordinances allow greater residential development in both future developments and existing neighborhoods.

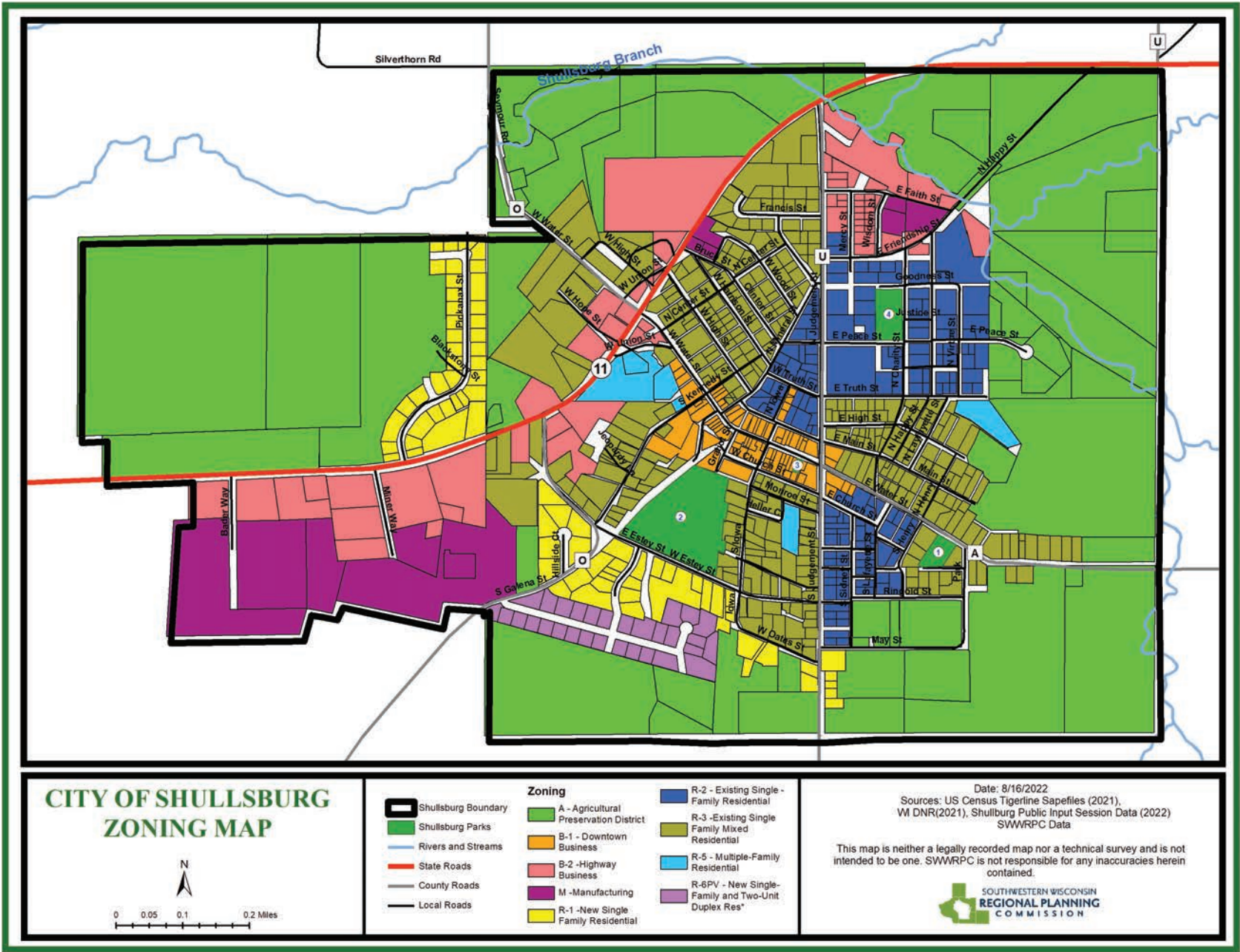
A substantial amount of the city's undeveloped land is currently zoned agricultural preservation. According to the city's zoning ordinance, the purpose of this zoning is, "to delineate and protect the areas best suited for agriculture and to provide for controlled growth." This zoning is a barrier to growth for the city. From the perspective of the city, development is the best use of the land within the city, and areas outside of the city boundaries are best suited for agriculture.

This plan identifies several options to be included in the updated zoning ordinance that make the city more competitive for future residents, developers, and industries. One strategy that allows the city be competitive, is flexibility. The city is not sure when its next opportunity for development will come or what it may be so offering options that create flexibility within the zoning ordinance is beneficial. One example of this is a mixed-use zoning that allows residential and commercial uses to co-exist.

### Growth options and planning

The city should pursue a boundary agreement with the surrounding township in anticipation of future growth. Developing these agreements will simplify any future annexation. This is an important piece of planning for growth. Planning for growth also involves maintaining contact with owners of the developable land within the city's boundaries. Throughout the public input process, it was identified that the city did not maintain contact with owners of highly impactful and potentially developable land. This also means that if a developer calls, the city has no answer for what land is potentially available. The city should make a regular practice of being informed of the current for-sale status of the high-impact properties within the city's boundaries and on its immediate periphery.

Figure 8: Current Zoning, 2022



## Future Land Use

A primary objective of this Comprehensive Plan update is to establish a future land use plan. The future land use plan is a projection of future development goals. Residents and stakeholders expressed a demand for future housing and commercial development; the following map identifies what land areas are best suited for those future developments. A future land use plan helps to avoid conflict between the opposing goals of development and conservation. The future land use map shall inform all future rezoning, and as mentioned previously, no areas on the future land use map are identified as agricultural preservation.

The future land use map also identifies areas of potential annexation. According to the existing zoning ordinance, all land annexed into the city will be annexed as R-1. Modifying this requirement is recommended. Annexation requires the agreement of the landowner and coordination with the township. This plan recommends working with Shullsburg Township on a boundary and development agreement.

The future land use map is designed to allow flexibility in its use by identifying general land use, not specific zoning. For example, areas identified as residential can ultimately be zoned either single-family or multi-family. Additionally, the map identifies areas identified for future recreational development – these are areas hashed with residential and recreational use. As growth occurs in the city, recreational land use is encouraged to be developed along with residential land. The areas that are hashed are not meant to be interpreted as being all recreational or all residential, rather that the area include recreation as part of its development. Shullsburg's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan also identifies these areas for potential recreational use.







## Land Use Goals and Action:

### ORDINANCE GOAL

**A modern and up-to-date zoning and land-use ordinance and incentives that encourage development within the city.**

**Strategy aligned with actions.**

Update the city's zoning ordinance and map. The existing zoning was adopted in 1998 and has been amended with the addition of subdivisions. A new zoning ordinance will need to be in agreement with recent state law changes and recommendations made in this plan. A newly adopted ordinance does not mean that it is modern, or that it is an asset to the community. Approach the zoning ordinance as a tool to make the community more welcoming to new residents and developers.



Implement a fee structure and policy that ensures rezoning, variances, and conditional use permitting are appropriately recorded and able to be presented on a map. Consider working with SWWPRC on an online, interactive map.



Consider including greater residential density zoning in existing and future developments



Permit, by right, entrepreneurial endeavors of at-home businesses and food trucks.



Evaluate how the existing ordinance may inhibit the city's ability to compete. Examples may include allowing commercial butchering and beekeeping within the city rather than forcing them to locate outside of the city limits.



Utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) when financially responsible and consider the geographic expansion of existing TIF districts if necessary and/or financially possible.



Extend TIF districts for one year to take advantage of the affordable housing extension on all current TIDs. Develop a policy to utilize funding for additional housing developments and selective housing improvements for existing homeowners. Policy should address need for additional affordable housing, making owner-occupied homes safe and affordable, and encouraging first-time home buyers with down-payment assistance. Market the availability of these funds along with other city offered housing incentives.



 People Focused

 Capacity Building








 Action Infrastructure

 Collaboration

 Competition

 Resiliency

# GROWTH GOAL

Establish options for growth.	Strategy aligned with others.
Establish and maintain communication with all property owners within and on the periphery of the city that own land for potential future development.	
Work with the Town of Shullsburg to develop a boundary and development agreement.	
Consider areas outside of the city for a future park as identified in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.	
Undertake a full return on investment analysis for major projects and seek out multiple opinions. Evaluate these projects based on their ability to maintain existing population or encourage new population growth.	
Grant funding is desirable, but the city has limited ability to raise matching funds. Do not overleverage the city's ability to borrow by chasing available grants. Change the approach from chasing grants to developing a long-range grant strategy and policy.	
Update and expand upon the existing capital improvements and maintenance plan to include an inventory of all transportation and critical facilities with the expected lifespan, current condition, cost-analysis, annual budget, and coordinated projects for each. Include a timeline for regular updating. The more this is used, the more useful it will become.	
Monitor the for-sale or for-lease status of high impact properties, especially those on Water Street, and in the areas between Water Street, Badger Park, and Highway 11. The city should be prepared to assist in the redevelopment of these properties as necessary to ensure the planned development of identified needed assets.	

# LAND USE GOAL

An up-to-date future land use map that guides future development.

Strategy aligned with others.

According to state statute, the city must follow the future land use map included in this plan. Any zoning changes that are not in agreement with the future land use map require an update to the comprehensive plan future land use map.



# Implementation

To accomplish any goal, a transition from planning to implementation is required. This plan recommends the city utilize the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle. Through the adoption of this plan, the city has made the first step in this cycle. The Comprehensive Plan is not passive and does not represent a satisfied goal, rather it is a starting point for the community to implement their desired goals. The PDSA cycle requires this plan to be reviewed regularly and, at times, updated when determined vital to the best interests of the city.

Figure 10: Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle.





## Plan

This is the work completed through the Comprehensive Planning process, culminating in this document. It included community engagement, review of relevant data and past planning work, and conducting interviews with key personnel. This process should take place again no later than 2032.

## Do

This phase includes plan roll-out and executing the actions identified within each chapter of this plan. Key aspects include:

- Prioritizing objectives – The many actions laid out in this plan must be clearly prioritized in order for the city to identify which actions to pursue first.
- Identifying responsible parties – Identify city staff, board members, or asking community associations to step into a role that uniquely fits their mission.
- Identifying required resources and partners –build capacity and establish collaboration.
- Documentation – Develop or finalize the targets and measures the team will use to measure progress towards continual improvement and plan implementation. This includes both the analysis of existing data and collection of new data to be used to measure progress.

## Study

Measuring progress requires a team to monitor and manage implementation, and to record progress. Two major steps should be undertaken.

- Identify the committee or group to monitor progress and ensure there is continued momentum. The team should meet quarterly and be able to connect with city staff, committees, and board. The team should be inter-disciplinary and include board members, staff, business owners, and residents with varied interests in the community, all of who have a passion for this work. An engaged planning committee is ideally suited to this work.
- Identify and define barriers to implementation in order to overcome or surmount them when possible. When barriers cannot be overcome, they should be documented to inform future planning work. Common barriers to plan implementation include:
  - Legacy rules or procedures.
  - Lack of staff time to work on initiatives.
  - Choices or trade-offs are not made. Trying to do everything.
  - Choosing to wait for a “better time.”
  - Parochialism / narrow mindedness.

## Act

This phase of the process sets the stage for continual improvement. As the city sees progress, documents successes, or encounters barriers on any given initiative, it should look to:

- *Adopt* practices that work and are successful. Formalize them as part of the city's culture.
- *Adapt* good practices that need improvement. This includes surmounting obstacles, finding efficiencies in existing processes, and documenting why things don't work.
- *Abandon* existing practices that don't support progress, and new initiatives that are not the right fit for the county. The aim must document the reason for abandonment so they can learn from this and avoid similar issues in the future.



ORDINANCE NO. 320

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023-2033 FOR THE CITY OF  
SHULLSBURG, LAFAYETTE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHULLSBURG, LAFAYETTE COUNTY, WISCONSIN,  
DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to Section(s) 62.23 of the Wisconsin Statutes, the City of Shullsburg is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2. The City Council, by the enactment of an ordinance, formally adopted the document titled City of Shullsburg Comprehensive Plan as the City's comprehensive plan on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

SECTION 3. The Planning Commission, by a majority vote of the entire Commission at a meeting held on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, recommended to the City Council the adoption of the City of Shullsburg, 2023-2033 as an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan as required under Wis. Stat sec. 66.1001(2)(i).

SECTION 4. The City published a Class 1 public notice and held a public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update.

SECTION 5. The City Council of the City of Shullsburg, Lafayette County, Wisconsin hereby adopts the proposed City of Shullsburg Comprehensive Plan, 2023-2033.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this ordinance and the plan updates and amendments to the parties listed in Section 66.1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 7. This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the full membership of the City Council and publication as required by law.

Adopted and approved this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December 2022.

  
Vefne Jackson, Mayor

Attest:



Marsha Einsweiler, City Clerk/Treasurer

Date Adopted: 12/14/2022  
Date Recorded: 12/14/2022  
Date Published: 12/20/2022  
Effective Date: 12/22/2022





# CITY OF SHULLSBURG, WISCONSIN



SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN  
**REGIONAL PLANNING**  
COMMISSION

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