

July 24, 2023, City of Stoughton Sustainability Committee Meeting Notes

Committee members present: Donelle Scaffidi, Sienna Scott, Rachel Venegas, Lisa Reeves, Adrienne Nienow, Heath Massey, Mayor Tim Swadley (ex officio)

Non-committee members present: Tyler Denig

Call to Order: 6:13 PM

Communications

Donelle shared that Mayor Swadley has spoken to a diversity, equity, and inclusion coordinator about working with this committee on the sustainability plan. Donelle also communicated that she had met with members of UW Extension and learned about how Sharon Lezberg and Michele Probst are planning to use Stoughton's process as a model for other communities. They also plan to help us with the public rollout of our sustainability plan. Donelle will be absent from the August 14th meeting and Adrienne agreed to run the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Rachel moves to approve 6-26-23 meeting minutes, Sienna seconds, and Lisa abstains (having not been present at the meeting).

Vision Statements and Goals

The committee began a discussion of revisions to the vision statement and goals of each focus area. After discussing the vision and goals of the energy section, the committee agreed that members would review the proposed revisions individually and we would resume the discussion on August 14th..

Timeline for the Sustainability Plan

The committee discussed when and how to share the sustainability plan with city staff in order to generate the most helpful feedback.

Adjournment: 7:45 PM. Heath moves to adjourn, Adrienne seconds.

Stoughton Sustainability Committee

Focus Group Summary Report

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Overview

The Stoughton Sustainability Committee has been working for the past two years to study sustainability issues in Stoughton. The committee is in the process of writing a sustainability plan that includes recommendations for City actions to foster sustainability and reduce the risk of climate impacts.

A big part of the Committee's work has been in gathering public input. The committee hosted an in-person dialogue on sustainability (9/21/2022, with over 60 people in attendance) recently sent out a community-wide survey (garnering over 560 responses), and hosted focus groups. Educators with UW-Madison Division of Extension assisted the Committee with planning, facilitating and analyzing the focus groups.

The purpose of focus groups is to get input from specific audiences who may not have been engaged in the community dialogue or survey, and who are important in the implementation of the sustainability plan and recommendations. In order to gain input from the full-breath of sectors in Stoughton, focus groups were hosted for each of the following audiences:

- 1) Manufacturers
- 2) School District
- 3) Environmental Groups
- 4) Community Anchor Institutions
- 5) Developers

An invitation list of organizations within each audience was generated with assistance from Committee members, Mayor Swadley, and Council President Regina Hirsch (for the Developer group). Extension Dane County sent out invitations via email to the invite list, and worked with the committee to develop questions that were asked during the focus group. Sharon Lezberg and Michelle Probst facilitated the focus groups and recorded responses from attendees. A member of the Committee was present at each of the focus groups (with the exception of the manufacturing small group) to share background information about the Committee's activities and observe the conversation. Responses and conversations from each of the focus groups were summarized in a confidential manner and presented in this report.

How this report is organized

This summary report is organized by focus group audience. Recordings from the focus group were shared with attendees to ensure accuracy.

Each section of the report will identify who was represented at the focus group, an overview of current sustainable activities, barriers to adopting sustainable practices and policies, and opportunities for implementing sustainable practices.

A full recording of each of the focus groups can be found in Appendix A.

Key Takeaways from all Focus Groups

- **Need for a Sustainability Coordinator:** the City can take a lead in coordinating efforts and programs to avoid duplication of efforts, increase communication, promote collaboration, and track progress on sustainability goals.
- **Cross-sector Collaboration:** Industry, realtors, businesses, community institutions and schools are all working toward a goal of improved sustainability; communication, coordination, and collaboration will move these efforts forward efficiently and effectively.
- **Information sharing:** focus group participants consistently asked for information about sustainability practices, opportunities, and resources. The City (or a designated organization, such as the Innovation Center) can be a hub for information sharing.
- **Public education:** Nonprofit organizations can be great partners in providing public education. The City can support their efforts by providing space for demonstration sites and partnering on programs. Sustainable Stoughton has a strong role to play in linking organizations/resources to the community and the City government.
- **City Sustainability Goals:** Developers, industry, and the School District all requested clear goals from the City, so that they know the indicators of success and can work toward these.
- **Continuous feedback and improvement:** The City should solicit feedback on a regular basis from various sectors and constituents about these goals and what it will take to achieve them.
- **City as Convenor:** Various sectors benefit from having conversations with other representatives in order to learn from each other and share innovative strategies. Industry and developers, in particular, would benefit from having a convenor to host dialogues for learning, collaboration, and resource sharing.
- **Focus on Impact:** While there were many opportunities suggested for how to improve sustainability within various sectors, it is important to analyze the impact each initiative might have, and to recognize both cost and effort constraints.

School District Focus Group Summary

During the community engagement process, there were many opportunities identified for the schools as the schools are seen as a valuable part of the community.

Participants to the School District focus group were identified by Dr. Daniel Keyser, the District Administrator. Sustainability Committee member Steve Jackson reached out to Dr. Keyser to discuss who should attend. The following representatives were deemed important to the conversation, and were invited to attend the focus group:

- Facility manager
- Advisor to the H.S. Environmental Club
- High School Principal
- Jr. High School Principal
- Elementary School Principal
- Food Service representative
- Teachers
- Parent Group “Working for Kids”
- Students (environmental club participants)

The purpose of hosting a focus group with the school district was to understand the following:

- What sustainability innovations are possible?
- What are the barriers to sustainability?
- How is sustainability being taught?
- What opportunities are there for students to get involved in sustainability initiatives in their school?
- Where are opportunities for partnerships (in education/ in implementation of sustainability plans

Attendees:

Due to the support from the school district Administrator, most of the invitees were in attendance at the focus group. Attendees included administrators, teachers, the facility manager, a representative from the school board, a representative from the parent group ‘Working For Kids,’ and two students from the high school environmental club.

Current Activities:

The school district has focused a lot on energy efficiency. They’ve made upgrades in LED lighting, occupant sensors, HVAC remodels, and have worked with Focus on Energy to determine what to invest in. The recently passed referendum will fund solar panels and energy efficient windows.

There are many natural spaces for students to explore. The high school has the arboretum and there’s a garden at Fox Prairie. Expanding these natural spaces can be a great way to partner

with community organizations and expand learning opportunities. Additionally, the high school has replaced soccer fields with turf to conserve water.

Additionally, the high school has an environmental club that focuses on sustainability. Although they haven't quite gotten the group off the ground, the students have been involved in the Community Dialogue and this focus group.

Barriers:

Attendees identified that funding is an issue, the return on investment for solar panels isn't always the greatest, so it takes a lot of support to fund clean energy initiatives. Investing in energy efficiency is also difficult because everything will need to be retrofitted to existing schools. A lot of energy efficiency initiatives are easier when a brand new building is being built, and a brand new building would be a significant capital investment. While there are grant opportunities available, it is difficult to know who to talk to about opportunities.

Getting community support for these initiatives can be difficult, if the community doesn't have kids in the school system, the school is not seen as integrated in the community. While education definitely has its opportunities, it is difficult to go beyond individual actions and make systemic change. Schools can play a very important role in providing this education, but this impact will be much later after students have graduated so it can take up to 10 years to see this impact.

It was also shared that students lack interest in sustainability and this makes it a challenge to educate on sustainability issues. While increasing awareness in students is a great goal, students don't have the support from larger entities, like governments and decision-makers, to enact changes. There is a disconnect between the leaders and community residents.

What's Possible:

There is motivation for the school district to incorporate sustainability and social justice into all of their planning efforts. Building a partnership with the City can help coordinate sustainability efforts to maximize impacts in the community. The City and Dane County can work to develop planned communities that are connected by paths and amenities and wouldn't require as much driving. Additionally, the City and School could partner with Findorff and EUA for capital investments.

Reducing food waste in cafeterias is another opportunity. This could be done by collecting food scraps and then composting the food waste. The student club is supportive of this, but recognizes that composting would require a lot of logistics. There is an opportunity through the referendum that was recently passed to redo the cafeteria and look at where food is produced and understand what infrastructure is needed to collect and compost food scraps. Additionally, attendees recognized that composting is a great way to support a closed loop system—the waste that is generated in the school is made into compost that can be used right at the school. This learning opportunity is great for students and their parents.

There is a significant need to invest in cleaner and safer transportation alternatives. A lot of students don't have drivers licenses due to costs and the pandemic, so they have a lot of trouble getting around town and it's a safety issue. Having a trolley along mainstreet or a bus to Madison can help students be mobile in the community. Building safe bike lanes can help students get around town, and partnering with B-cycle, bike giveaway and maintenance programs can ensure that all students can have access to bikes. Additionally, installing an EV charging station at the school and investing in electric buses can invest in clean transportation options.

Schools can lead sustainability initiatives by educating students and their families. While it can be difficult to keep the momentum moving long-term, the schools work with the community every day. Schools additionally have visibility in the community and can showcase what can be done at home. Partnering with the City to educate and distribute information on sustainability can be very effective.

Key Takeaways:

The School district has made great strides in energy efficiency (by improving building lighting and HVAC systems); the recent referendum will allow solar on rooftop, window replacement, and further energy efficiency measures. The referendum also presents an opportunity to upgrade cafeteria infrastructure to allow food waste collection. These advances are important for energy efficiency and for student learning comfort.

Schools have a mandate to educate students, yet it has been difficult to engage students in these efforts for several reasons: students are already busy with other sports, enrichment, and social activities, and have shown little interest in attending environmental club meetings; students aren't around for long enough to build a multi-year program or to catalyze big changes. Nevertheless, students are interested in sustainability and concerned about their future, and efforts to build sustained programs, such as in food waste composting, should be sustained. Teachers can use environmentally themed activities for classroom education.

Similarly, schools can be a vehicle for community education and can catalyze community involvement. School grounds can showcase sustainability practices (composting, rain barrels, rain gardens, natural landscapes, native and pollinator gardens). Focus group attendees supported City/School partnerships to showcase innovation and to educate the public.

A critical need that links the schools with the community is that of expanding safe multimodal transportation options. Students tend to drive to the High School because there are no public transportation options. Participants suggested that the City and School work together to improve bicycle and pedestrian safe routes to school, and to provide public transportation for youth to get to school and to job sites.

Manufacturing & Industry Focus Group Summary

Industry and businesses can contribute to a more sustainable community by addressing production processes, energy and water use, materials sourcing, waste management, and product innovation. Increasingly, as customers demand more sustainable management, industry and business stand to benefit from incorporating sustainability into their manufacturing and customer services processes.

We invited representatives from 12 different businesses to the focus group, including:

- Cummins
- Emmi Roth Specialty Cheese
- Kunes Country GM Superstore
- Marquis Metal
- Stoughton Health
- Stoughton Hospital
- Stoughton Lumber Company
- Stoughton Trailers
- Stoughton Utility
- Uniroyal Engineering Products
- Zalk Josephs Fabricators
- Zinkpower-Stoughton

Unfortunately, we received only three responses from industry indicating willingness to participate (Stoughton Utilities was scheduled to participate during a second focus group; this was canceled due to the fact that the Committee has previously met with representatives of Stoughton Utilities). The low response rate is not surprising, in that neither the committee nor the facilitators had existing relationships with these companies or with the industry sector. Nevertheless, the low turnout leaves open a door for future educational opportunities, such as roundtable discussions for industry representatives to learn from each other and to share ideas.

The purpose of hosting a focus group with industry representatives was:

- To understand current industry sustainability efforts;
- To recognize barriers that get in the way of sustainable manufacturing or management processes;
- To identify opportunities to reduce the barriers and encourage innovation

Attendees:

There were three attendees at the focus group, representing Emmi Roth USA (Specialty Cheese) and Stoughton Health.

Current Activities:

Emmi Roth is a specialty cheese manufacturer, with three production facilities and one distribution facility. Emmi Roth has put concerted attention towards sustainability throughout the

company, and specifically with regard to the new facility in Stoughton. The Stoughton plant is a conversion facility, where the primary activity will be repackaging cheese products. The parent company - the Emmi Group - based in Switzerland, has mandated sustainability practices. Emmi Roth has a dedicated staff person as Sustainability Manager. Clearly articulated company values and staff capacity for sustainability has made a huge difference. The company considers sustainability criteria in decision making and has established green teams in all facilities to help with tactical implementation. Some notable efforts include:

- Reducing water use by 50% since 2019 by taking care of leaks in the pipes and recycling cooling water;
- Reducing energy use with the goal of reaching net zero by 2050;
- Working with industry groups to address waste reduction in cheese production;
- Setting goals for water use, waste reduction, recyclable packaging, emissions reduction;
- Incorporating staff in sustainability decision-making and challenges through 'Green Teams' in all facilities; encouraging sustainability champions;
- Design of the Stoughton facility to promote recycling;
- Native plant landscaping;
- Working the Innovation Center for U.S.Dairy to improve farm soil health practices.

Stoughton Hospital has had to focus on Covid challenges over the last three years, which has hampered sustainability efforts, in that all staff have been fully occupied with treating patients and incorporating measures to contain the spread. Additionally, the pandemic forced the Hospital to move toward throw-away projects (both in medical care and food services). Due to the increase in waste stream, they have made a large investment in biodegradable materials.

There are individuals within the organization who are sustainability champions, and efforts can now resume as the pandemic wanes. Past and current efforts include:

- Installation of 4 EV chargers;
- Investigating microgrids to reduce reliance on backup generators;
- Facility expansion will have capacity for solar power in the future (this could reduce energy costs by 30%); currently the cost is too high and ROI is too long to do this;
- Interior lighting throughout the facility is being replaced with LED lighting.

Sustainability, in the past, was not seen as a high priority in health care, but public interest can move the industry to step up. When hospitals and health care facilities are being built new, there are many more options to incorporate sustainable design; it is harder to do with retrofits.

Barriers:

In cheese production, there are two major constraints to sustainability. Emmi Roth buys milk from dairy producer coops and does not dictate farm production practices. The company indirectly influences dairy production practices through their participation in sustainable farming organizations and research initiatives. A second constraint concerns the waste stream: Cheese manufacturing generates a lot of waste, and there is no immediate option for reusing or disposing of this waste.

A barrier for both industries is finding the return on investment for adoption of new, energy saving technologies, as some initiatives are too costly to justify. Investment capital or grants is necessary with technologies that have a long ROI. Lack of information about, or understanding of, new technologies impedes adoption of such technologies. Facilities personnel need to keep abreast of new innovations in order to make decisions that benefit the industry in the future.

What's Possible:

According to focus group participants, collaboration and information sharing across industries will be essential to accelerating innovation. Cross-industry and community-involved collaborations will present more options than relying on one industry alone to find a solution (an example is with waste from cheese manufacturing - the solution will likely be found across multiple industries that generate food waste, and will involve large-scale food digestion facilities). Cost-sharing partnerships between industries and sectors is essential (an example is a partnership between LaCrosse's Gunderson Hospital and Organic Valley to put up wind turbines).

Healthcare is a unique sector, and it operates as an island. There is not currently a focus on sustainability in this field. The industry would benefit from cross-fertilization and learning from other industry sectors. The representative from Stoughton Hospitals advocated strongly for industry round table discussions in order to learn from other industries who are innovating at scale. For example, hospitals feed a lot of people. There are other facilities (ex. Epic) that feed at scale and have lessons that can be shared.

Key Takeaways:

Industries and businesses are key partners in moving toward a more sustainable future. Industrial processes utilize a great deal of materials and energy, and generate waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Every industry has opportunities to improve their sustainability without impeding on profitability. Additionally, industry and business employ a great many people who will be influenced by the sustainability initiatives taken on by the corporation, and who will be more likely to adopt sustainable practices in their own homes and community activities. This positive method of 'contagion' helps spread energy and resource saving practices from work to home to community.

Industry actors need to be attentive to both return on investment and public opinion. If ROI is negative but public opinion in support of moving toward more sustainable practices, the public sector will have to help fund changes. If both public opinion and ROI are positive, industry can fast-forward initiatives. If the public (and/or employees) is/are not in support of change, there is no motivating rationale for industry to make changes.

Developers Focus Group Summary

Developers (housing, commercial facilities, redevelopment entities) have opportunities to integrate sustainability and energy conservation into their building and location design. However, developers also operate under fiscal constraints, and are balancing cost of materials and labor on one hand, with state regulations and community preferences on the other. City government has very little opportunity to impose sustainability requirements above and beyond state code. The Sustainability Committee, in requesting a focus group with developers, was seeking to understand the parameters under which developers operate, and to get a sense of whether developers are willing to voluntarily build sustainably.

The facilitators worked with Council member Regina Hirsch and Mayor Tim Swadley to identify potential participants for this focus group. Some developers were identified but not invited due to the lack of a contact name and email. The following businesses and organizations were invited:

- Curt Brink Builders
- Eldon Homes
- Forward Development Group
- Friede Associates
- Independent realtor
- Lennar
- Matson Custom Homes
- RHD Properties
- Shaw Building & Design
- Stoughton Housing Authority/Senior Center
- Stoughton Redevelopment Authority
- Stoughton Trailers (STI) Holdings

The purpose of hosting a focus group with developers was:

- To understand current sustainability practices and products in housing/facility development;
- To recognize barriers that get in the way of sustainable design;
- To identify opportunities to reduce the barriers and encourage innovation

Attendees:

Attendees included individuals representing the following developers:

- Eldon Homes
- Forward Development Group
- Friede Associates
- Stoughton Trailers and Holding
- Stoughton Housing Authority
- Stoughton Redevelopment Authority

Stoughton City Council President Regina Hirsch attended the focus group as a listener.

Current Activities:

Participants were asked which sustainability practices they were incorporating into building design. Most participants indicated that they include energy efficient appliances in new buildings. Half of the participants indicated that they include solar energy and/or tree planting in new facilities. Several good ideas were shared, including: conducting energy audits with a third party vendor, commercial gray-water recycling, geothermal energy systems, EV charging stations in parking structures, landscaping with trees, green roofs, lighting conservation, use of recycled construction materials, and standardizing use of energy efficient appliances. Of note is that customer demand is driving the increase in energy efficient appliances and rooftop solar.

Developers are looking at additional products and practices as more customers demand innovation. Design concepts suggested included:

- Solar should be considered early on in the design process.
- Engineering design and waste stream monitoring can be utilized to reduce lumber loss. This improves sustainability, reduces costs, and minimizes landfill waste.
- Premanufacturing of all wood systems in housing, where the unit is built off-site and assembled on-site. This reduces time, costs, and materials waste.
- Working with Habitat for Humanity [ReStore] to source efficient windows and appliances.
- Cooperative buying to reduce the cost of appliances, in particular heat pumps.

Sustainability plans/goals: Developers were asked if they had sustainability goals in place. Responses indicated that many have product and process standards in place, and that these evolve rapidly as the market changes and customer demand increases. Developers want to go beyond the code, but there are costs associated with being more sustainable. Using City processes to reduce costs is critical.

Barriers:

From the perspective of community residents (especially seniors) who want to have more sustainable homes, the City can provide financial support and programs to help them incorporate new practices.

For developers, the biggest barrier is cost and return on investment. Firms will take a risk and sacrifice ROI if a product or process is in line with their sustainability goals. Participants noted that the sustainability problem is dumped on developers, whereas it would be better to have private and public money working together to address sustainability. In particular, participants requested that there might be ways to reduce the overall cost of projects, such as waiving or reducing park fees and engineering fees.

What's Possible:

Developers are trying to incorporate sustainability practices and efficiency into new developments, but will always need to assure that there is a financial return on investment to doing so. As the public becomes more concerned with sustainable building and energy efficiency, there are increased benefits to building green. While park and engineering fees in Stoughton are high, developers will find that there are other benefits to developing in Stoughton,

especially as the City is willing to collaborate. The City needs to be clear and transparent about their goals around sustainability, so that developers can work through any new rules or expectations. The City can also provide non-financial incentives to developers through social media shout-outs and awarding a company for building sustainably.

Focus group participants indicated that increasing the size of city streets works against sustainability. Narrower streets (less pavement) will reduce runoff and lower costs of the car-focused infrastructure. Narrower streets also tend to slow traffic and reduce accidents. The City, alongside developers, should be looking at higher density housing.

Key Takeaways:

A partnership between the City and developers will be a path toward greater sustainability in building design and construction. The City should develop goals for sustainability, in regards to development, and work with Developers to provide feedback on goals and implement strategies to reach sustainability goals. Developers have to be concerned about return on investment, but that is not their only goal - they also want to be good community institutions and to serve the community. A partnership with the City will look for win-win solutions where the interests of both parties are served. Customers are key drivers to innovation; if customers demand energy efficiency, developers will follow suit.

Environmental Organizations Focus Group Summary

During the community engagement process, many community members shared ideas about how to provide environmental education and accelerate sustainability practices at the household and community level. Dane County has a wealth of environmental organizations that are leaders in providing environmental education. This focus group was intended to learn more about what these organizations are doing, and how the sustainability committee and Sustainable Stoughton could tap into their programs.

We invited a limited number of local and Dane County focused environmental organizations to the focus group. In that many environmental organizations are state-wide (and were not invited). In hindsight, we realized that we focused primarily on organizations that water quality and native planting, and did not have representation from those organizations that address issues of energy, transportation, and public health. The organizations invited included:

- Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society (FOLKS)
- Fort Littlegreen
- Groundswell
- Lake Kegonsa State Park Friends Group
- Low-tech Institute
- Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership (MAMSWaP) Dane County Land & Water Resources Dept.
- Prairie Enthusiasts
- Rock River Coalition
- Sustain Dane

The purpose of hosting a focus group with environmental organizations was to understand the following:

- The role environmental organizations play in promoting sustainability in the community;
- Who environmental organizations partner with (or could partner with) in their work and in implementing sustainability practices;
- The barriers to accelerating sustainability.

Attendees:

Attendees included individuals representing the following environmental organizations:

- Sustainable Stoughton
- Rock River Coalition
- Friends of Lake Kegonsa
- Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership (MAMSWaP) Dane County Land & Water Resources Dept.
- Sustain Dane

Current Activities:

Sustainable Stoughton was the only organization that specifically focused on the City of Stoughton. The current focus of the organization is encouraging native plants in backyards to provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Several of the organizations present work to increase awareness of surface water quality. Rock River Coalition works across the Rock River Basin (in which Stoughton resides) to collect surface water quality data through volunteer stream monitors. Additionally, they coordinate education and outreach on aquatic invasive species, stormwater, and recreation. The Friends of Lake Kegonsa provide educational events for shoreline property owners and promote practices that reduce runoff into the lake. These practices include rain barrels, planting native shorelines, and rain gardens. While many shoreline property owners have a Stoughton address, they are actually in the town of Dunn or Pleasant Springs. MAMSWaP and Dane County Land & Water Resource Dept. work with many communities across Dane County, including Stoughton, on stormwater education and outreach. The City of Stoughton is currently signed onto the 'Adopt a Storm Drain' program to keep storm drains clean and clear. Additionally, these organizations promote leaf free streets, rain gardens, and rain barrels to reduce stormwater runoff.

Sustain Dane shared information about programs, including 'All Around Dane County,' which showcases sustainability efforts in communities outside of Madison. Sustain Dane has piloted a food scrap collection program at Madison Farmers Markets. They also support energy efficiency through their Efficiency Navigator program.

Barriers:

When asked about barriers in promoting sustainability in Stoughton, organizations shared that messaging for events is very difficult. While reaching people is difficult, getting people to commit to attend programs is equally as challenging. There are so many things going on, and a lot of people don't have time that they choose to dedicate to learning about sustainability.

Additionally, organizations identified that there was a lack of awareness in Stoughton about the importance of native plants in parks and why parks are managed to maintain native plants.

What's Possible:

Organization representatives recognized that several of the environmental organizations attending the focus group are doing similar things. To ensure there isn't duplication of efforts, coordination and collaboration on programs would be very impactful. Additionally, environmental organizations can work together to promote what each organization is doing. Organizations such as Sustainable Stoughton, Friends of Lake Kegonsa and Rock River Coalition can work in Stoughton to share resources and educate community members. Additionally, Sustainable Stoughton can feature the work of environmental organizations in the City's Hub Spot every six weeks.

Attendees discussed opportunities to educate the public about energy conservation. The City could reach out to organizations like Renew Wisconsin to facilitate clean energy opportunities. Sustain Dane's Efficiency Navigator Program and Project Home could also bring energy efficiency programs to Stoughton.

There were many opportunities suggested for City-owned property to be a demonstration site to showcase practices that community members can implement at their home. Practices showcased at demonstration sites could include diverse native plants (including trees), rain barrels, rain gardens and downspout gardens (less work than a rain garden; plant native plants near a downspout), permeable pavers, etc. This is in line with current efforts by MAMSWaP, which is showcasing rain gardens and downspout gardens that are smaller in size so that it would be easier for a resident to envision a rain garden at their home. The demonstration sites have signage to educate residents. This could be a program that the City could participate in.

Additionally, Sustain Dane hosts a Food Scrap Collection Program in Madison where food scraps are collected at the South and East Madison Farmers Market and brought to Neighborhood Food Solutions farm in Fitchburg for composting. This is something that could be replicated in Stoughton by partnering with a local farm for composting.

When asked about support from the City, attendees recognized and were very supportive of the current collaboration and openness to new ideas. They would like to see this be continued, and work to put Sustainability Goals into action. Presentations and press releases to showcase the City's efforts can help the community be more open to new ideas.

Key Takeaways:

Dane County is the home of many nonprofit organizations doing environmental work across various issue areas. The City of Stoughton and Sustainable Stoughton should tap into the wealth of resources and programs that these organizations offer by supporting networking, recruiting organizations to provide educational resources and programming, and being a local resource for these organizations.

While connections were made with those organizations that attended the focus group, there are additional opportunities to network with, and develop educational programs on, a broader array of organizations to promote energy conservation, sustainable transportation, air quality, and solid waste management.

To further promote sustainability in Stoughton, the City can play a role in showcasing successes. This will get the word out and show how practices like native plantings, solar panels, and food waste composting are all possible for residents.

Community Anchor Institution Focus Group Summary

We are using the term 'anchor Institutions' to refer to community organizations and facilities that play a vital role in community identity, sense of place, and connecting residents to each other and to resources. Anchor institutions tend to be respected and promoted; as such, they are 'influencers' of community opinion and action. When anchor institutions adopt sustainability practices, these will be readily visible to both residents and visitors.

We invited a range of anchor institutions to our focus group, including:

- Stoughton Opera House
- Stoughton Chamber of Commerce
- Syttende Mai
- Visit Stoughton
- Downtown Business Association
- Innovation Center Stoughton
- Taste of Stoughton
- Livreise (Norwegian Heritage Center)

The purpose of hosting a focus group with representatives of anchor institutions was:

- To understand current sustainability efforts;
- To recognize barriers that get in the way of sustainable practices;
- To identify opportunities to reduce the barriers and amplify sustainability efforts

Attendees:

The anchor institution focus group was attended by representatives of three separate organizations (Stoughton Opera House, Downtown Business Association, Innovation Center Stoughton) and the Mayor. Those organizations that were not able to attend were wrapped up in planning for the annual Syttende Mai Festival (members of the Chamber and Taste of Stoughton indicated that they would like to participate in a future session).

Current Activities:

As each of the participating organizations is different, their sustainability initiatives are listed by organization.

Stoughton Opera House: The Opera House is a City-owned historic building that has been renovated through sustained efforts of the Friends of the Opera House. The Historic nature of the building poses some challenges in terms of energy upgrades. Several years back, a consulting organization (Slipstream) identified energy saving opportunities within the building. Lighting is an area for improvement. The Friends Group will be looking into upgrading the lighting for greater efficiency. Solar rooftop would be challenging, but as there is an opportunity to install solar on the adjacent fire house, which could support a portion of the energy use of the Opera House. The Opera House recently opened a lounge area for concessions and a welcome space for performers. The lounge provides food and drink, and the staff has endeavored to

identify serving materials that are recycled or compostable. Food provided to performers is organic and locally sourced.

Downtown Business Association: The DBA represents and supports local businesses along and nearby Main Street. They encourage businesses to carry products that have stories behind them, including recyclable and local products. The leaders of the DBA are interested in sharing information with businesses about how to compost food waste and in developing a branded, compostable container for local restaurants. Downtown buildings are owned by local businesses; these business owners could use financial assistance for energy efficiency upgrades.

Stoughton Innovation Center: The Innovation Center is a new concept that will provide shared maker space and a community hub to support skill development to increase labor force participation. The center has sustainability, job creation, community networking and resource sharing at its core. The hub aims to support new ideas and innovation in clean energy, food waste composting, and other sustainability concepts. They will share resources with residents about opportunities such as rebates for energy efficiency from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Barriers:

Participants at this focus group recognized that there are many events in Stoughton that bring people together; these events also generate a lot of waste. While there was interest in looking into ways to reduce waste - and specifically food waste - there are not a lot of options available for composting food waste. There are also questions regarding the use of compostable plates and cups, with the recognition that (at present) these still go into the landfill waste stream. The Innovation Center is poised to research food waste collection and composting. Participants were also interested in reducing packaging and recycling boxes and plastic bags.

What's Possible:

The organizations present at the focus group were passionate about encouraging discussions about waste reduction, food waste recycling, and other sustainability measures. These umbrella organizations have not yet prioritized sustainability in their discussions with members, or in their operations, and recognized the possibility of prioritizing sustainability through communications, changes in marketing practices, and encouraging collaboration in buying practices, community marketing, and sharing of resources. There were several ideas that participants were excited about:

- Bulk purchase of compostable to-go food containers that are Stoughton branded;
- Make it easier to deal with food waste;
- Encouraging small business owners to find energy efficiency measures for their buildings, such as heat-pumps.
- One source go-to for information on contractors, energy efficiency, and sustainability measures
- Zero waste events; recruiting volunteers to help separate garbage from compostable and recyclable materials

- Establish EV charging stations in the City

Key Takeaways:

Anchor institutions are in the public eye and can make things visible to community members. There are small scale innovations that can be taken to lift up businesses and organizations; these steps can be promoted and publicized in order to build a reputation for the community as a sustainable community. The City must play a leadership and visionary role. The City has a lot of expertise to put together action and provide resources and education to bring people together. The City (and Sustainability Committee) can bring in people more broadly through the process and bring in benchmarks and goals that we should work towards. The sustainability plan should identify who is responsible for what in order to meet the benchmarks.

Addendum: Recorded Notes from Focus Groups

Stoughton School Focus Group 4-19-2023

**Facilitator: Michelle Probst, Dane County Extension
Recorder: Sharon Lezberg, Dane County Extension
Sustainability Committee member: Steve Jackson**

Participants included school/District leadership, teachers, and students

Question 1 What are current efforts toward sustainability in the schools? (facilities, processes, student learning, engagement)

- Passed a referendum on building projects: maintenance building, gym. Solar panels in the facilities
- Referendum; Sandhill will get energy efficient windows. They have air conditioning. New windows will make sure that the cooler air is not leaking out.
- Natural spaces for students; HS has arboretum; garden at Fox Prairie – the students check out the gardens
- Referendum: energy upgrades – lighting for LED.; variable frequency drives; self-learning heating and cooling systems. Lighting, sensors, occupant sensors
 - After the referendum there will be these systems in all the HS rooms
 - Dimmer requested. Multiple sensors
 - Lights will take into account windows and natural lighting
- HS: HVAC remodel in past year; they are working the bugs out. Energy efficiency; cost savings with heating and cooling. (1 year old)
- Refillable water bottle stations. Students appreciate these.
- Soccer fields –new turf field versus old grass; pollinator garden (green space)
- Environmental club focused on sustainability; they are not quite off the ground
- Flooring chosen: uses less chemicals.
- Pesticide and herbicide applications across the district; they are working with the city to make sure that there is notification when nearby fields are sprayed with chemicals; any applications near Sandhill Elementary are done when kids are not in school
- Guideline for planning: they have to take into account sustainability in all of their planning efforts

Question 2 What are your current and future goals in terms of sustainability?

- Building a partnership with the city. Coordinate sustainability efforts in order to maximize impacts for the community
- Reduce food waste in the lunchroom (elementary school); desire to start a composting program (future goal); not currently happening. Parents come into the school to help with the lunch room; they are noticing the waste.
 - Student club at HS has talked about this a lot. Logistics of having someone stand at bins is difficult. Students have pushed for food waste composting.

- Referendum allows for the District to redo the cafeteria. Opportunity to look at where the food is produced. Concern about increasing variety in dietary choices to accommodate dietary restrictions.
- Electric vehicle charging station at school (for electric bikes and for drivers with electric cars); entertaining the idea of electric buses. (talk to Steve about this)
- Elementary school in past: a custodian was standing by the bins to collect the scraps and send them to a local pig farmer
- Continuing to make curricular connections; where are opportunities at elementary level to make connections/amplify thoughts about sustainability (e.g., sustainable food sourcing); always looking for more connections
- Transportation issues: public transit to Madison; within town; how to get people from one side of town to another (grocery stores on one side of town);
- Section 8 housing: people need transportation to get to jobs. (bus line to the south side transfer station).

The facilitator shared that the Sustainability Committee has several focus areas: energy, waste, water, transportation, land use, community engagement.

- Reducing water use. They have done a good job; there are ways that they can improve more. (e.g. turf)
 - Sustainable grass seed. Less water, impact resistant
 - Look across the district, not just sports fields
- Partnerships: Focus on Energy. Working with them annually
 - Facilities is partnering with them. They review all projects with FoE. They get rebates and get support on how to access these rebates
 - Energy savings on referendum, benefits.
- Partnership with City to get information as it comes forward
- Expand natural spaces; e.g., natural classroom. Partnered with the Boy Scouts. Great learning opportunities.
- Bring kids/families to natural spaces; those that many families do not have access to.
- Social Justice: how do we incorporate social justice into the plan? Baking in social justice to all the focus areas

Question 3 _What are the barriers to reaching these goals?

- Funding. ROI is not always the greatest. E.g. solar panels. Putting the solar in has to be done so that there is payback. There is a lot to getting support for funding these initiatives.
- Infrastructure: some barriers are not obvious. Long-term commitment needed. E.g., food waste. How do you source it out to local community recipients? Having a process that is continuous (beyond individuals); start small with an individual, then expand on it. It takes time, commitment, to get through the process of scaling up.
- Education: communicating why the process is important. To learn about it, build awareness. Community education – teach process and procedures that go with the sustainability initiatives
 - Teach the teachers so they can teach the students on how to do this (e.g., composting food waste); they also need to connect with the parents to do this at home

- Providing the information to generate the will; people have competing commitments
- HS Students: lack of interest; lack of care about sustainability. Challenge to get students interested. (also scheduling is challenging for Environmental club)
 - Educating kids in the classroom about sustainability will have beneficial impact in 10-15 years (starting with elementary age students)
 - Students/schools don't necessarily have the support from larger entities (government) and decision-makers/leaders (example., transportation initiatives); There is a disconnect between 'higher up's and community residents.
- Getting the community as a whole to see the benefit of these initiatives. Community sees the school as 'over there'; getting the community to see how what the school district is doing benefits them (community education components)

Question 4 What do you see as the role of the school district in moving Stoughton toward being a more sustainable community?

- Schools can be the lead (the engine); students/teachers move the engine forward by educating the students. This takes time.
 - How do you maintain the momentum/traction and keep it moving forward?
 - Important to incorporate this into the curriculum, make it grow, even with new people coming in (e.g. students moving on and up)
 - Tough to keep momentum forward
 - City can 'drive' with them
 - Schools touch the community everyday
- How do you operationalize the system? So that what is taught then becomes the norm
 - Systemic response so that, down the road, this is part of the community system.
 - How to motivate people within the school system? sustain this through systems, so that it continues
- Outreach to the community: could the school system develop metrics, and then show this to the community. "Oh wow, the District is doing this..."
- Schools have visibility. People have family members in the schools; people see what is happening through their students. If sustainability is happening in the schools, then it becomes normalized in households (kind of like a media outlet)
- Example of community members collaborating in closed loop systems: Trees cutting; materials used in pottery kiln. Trees Used in community center. Closed loop recycling. Individuals in the community feel this impact.
- Compost. If schools generate compost, and then this is used in gardens, it becomes a measurable impact. People see the benefit; it is of help to them. They can then appreciate it.(supporting a closed loop system)

Question 5 How might the City, the County, or other entities (such as nonprofit organizations) help the school district accelerate sustainability efforts?

- Scale up notion of closed loop systems
- Putting systems in place for the initiative to be sustained (e.g., compost buckets; how is it collected, where does it go?)
 - People who are in the schools (students) move on; how do you make the system self-perpetuating so that every student is doing it, as a matter of practice
 - Systems: e.g. school gardens at every school; composting at every school

- City is invested in creating new green spaces, trails, etc. > have these used by school district.
- Achilles heel: getting the idea into an action plan that lives in systems beyond the individual
 - First steps: Research places that have done this already and see how it is done; see if it is appropriate to Stoughton schools.
 - Determine how much these projects cost.
 - Start with small action projects that a group has identified as a priority, and then replicate these.
- City/Counties: educate people to live small; sustainable living
 - There are communities around the nation that have created shared living communal spaces;
 - Planning issue – acceptance of a different way of living (American spread versus European style of living). Need to have an attitude shift of what is possible & preferred.
 - Communities that plan for smaller living will move forward. (planned communities with city center, villages on outskirts, connected by paths to amenities)
- Transportation: big opportunity for the City to take a lead role in supporting schools on transportation initiatives.
 - Cmte has talked about Main street trolley; bike friendly connections; bike friendly public transport.
 - River Bluff – traffic to Main /street is a mess.
- City Infrastructure: more bike lanes needed.
 - Students don't have drivers licenses because DMV has been closed (pandemic, costs, etc.); as such, students have difficulty getting around to school and jobs. Lots of traffic during drop off and pick up; Lean into this with the city.
 - After school - Kids on sidewalk; cars blasting through. Safety issue.
 - Planning aspect for safety; moving students from one side of town to other sides of town (they don't have this now). Students can't get around.
 - Need connections. Transportation for summer school, work, etc.
- Partnerships:
 - UW: autonomous vehicles
 - B-cycle
 - Bike give-away programs: students would benefit from access to bikes:
 - Sandhill has partnered with Trek to fix up bikes; bike rodeo (bike maintenance); Younger kids. Have cash out cards; could access bikes with this card

Other Ideas on partnerships, opportunities, initiatives:

- Need information on grants that are available; who to reach out to (one central clearing house for grant opportunities). Contact for information. They don't even know what is out there. Steve forwards info from Kathy Kuntz (Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change)
 - Cheat sheet on who do you go to for guidance on grants
- Graduate students at UW who can come into the school district to provide information about areas of impact
- Learning what other schools/entities have done: who is the correct contact person? What would learning about it look like?
 - Physical plant
 - Moving students through system of knowledge: Instruction Leads

- Broad issues: Superintendent
- New construction can be Lead certified (from the ground up); schools that are retrofitting.
- Partnership with Findorff and EUA > on capital improvement projects
- Partnership with CSA farms; hooking that into education system. Bring them into the lunchroom. "Harvest of the Month"

Question 6 Of all the initiatives and goals we've discussed, what seems most important? What seems possible?

- Energy consumption throughout the District (referendum moved it forward); everything. Going green.
- Remodel/build: look at energy consumption
- Transportation: public transportation is critical. Move students; also move people to Madison
- Transportation. Round-abouts . They added sidewalks and flashing crosswalks. Makes the community more walkable. Partnerships with city/state on transportation. Improve bike lanes
- Improve ability to walk and bike.
- Increase access for people to get across the city
- Making clear high priority items; providing the metrics to know how we are doing,
- No bike trail from Stoughton out to the bike network in Madison and beyond (Capital City Trail). This is in the works, and is out a ways (this happens through the County)
- Food waste (something we could tackle as a district) especially as we are reconstructing cafeterias
 - Educate on the reduction of food waste
 - Great food vendor; willing to work with the District on a lot of things
- Transportation: most impactful
- Reduction of food waste: most doable
- Actionable: composting , food waste
- Actionable: improving access to green space; having school areas be a place to walk/hike outdoors. (gardens, hiking areas)

Manufacturing & Industry Notes

May 1, 2023

Facilitator: Michelle Probst (Dane County Extension)

Note-taker: Sharon Lezberg (Dane County Extension)

Companies that participated in the focus group

- **Stoughton Health/Hospital**
- **Emmi Roth** cheese company
- **Emmi Roth** packaging facility in Stoughton

Question 1 What is your business/industry currently doing with regard to sustainability practices within your firm (e.g., waste management, air quality, water quality, recycling, materials sourcing, energy conservation, transportation efficiency) ?

Emmi Roth:

- They are part of a few industry wide groups (cheese manufacturing).
- They have a number of goals: water, waste, recyclable packaging, reducing emissions, more sustainable agriculture industry, employees, community outreach
- They are reaching many of their goals:
 - They have cut their water use in half since 2019.
 - Energy: Trying to be net zero by 2050 (as is the industry)
- Challenge
 - They don't own farms; they buy from coops. This represents a barrier
 - To support the industry, they are part of organizations. Farmers for Sustainable food, sustainability alliance, Dairy producers
 - To have more influence: project through the Innovation Center about soil health. They are helping Farmers to become more sustainable through soil practices.

Stoughton Health/Hospital:

- Project planning to expand facility by 50,000 square feet
- New facility will have capacity for solar power: will reduce energy costs by 30% - part of roof installation with new building
- Replacing interior lighting with LED

Edgerton Hospital (an example) - new hospital has entirely geothermal heating.
Stoughton is in a different situation. Campus built over time, with additions.

Question 2 What initiatives has your business/industry taken that you are particularly proud of?

Stoughton Hospital: they haven't yet been leading on this, but some individuals have passion to move it forward.

- They put 4 EV chargers for cars

Future goals:

- Would be most proud of having an organization goal (target)
- Microgrids!! They have a lot of backup generators. These are just used to test the generator and back it up. But would like to look into microgrids.

Q: What are the reasons that there is not an organizational goal?

- They have been totally focused on covid. The focus has been on throughput to get people out of ER and into regular beds - this has been a huge challenge. They just took off their masks.
- Excited to have 'a new day' where they can address sustainability.

Emmi Roth:

- The company has been very mindful of recyclability of products, especially in planning for the new facility in Stoughton
 - Recycling plastic cover on inputs for products
- Developing a facility to accommodate mixed load: dock open for mixed recyclables (the other plants are older and don't have that)
- Baler coming. Keeping stuff out of trash compactor
- Looking at recyclers for waste cheese (this has been a challenge). Emmi Roth is looking into what to do there. FSMA rules prohibit giving it to animals. Keeping waste stream out of landfill; design for this.
- Organization is considering sustainability in decision-making process and part of culture. There are individuals who are climate/sustainability champions.
- Struggle to find the ROI; this puts a hamper on their ability to move forward
 - Geothermal was from Edgerton facility model; used this model to determine if they could do it in their plant > high price tag
- Stoughton facility: will have native plants around facility; because it is the right thing to do; based on Oak Savanna
- Talking about sustainability a lot in the industry; they are aware of the need

Q: You mentioned that the company has met goals for reducing water use in cheese production. How did you do that?

- In 2019 they worked on reducing water use in production facilities. They knew it was low-hanging fruit. Took care of leaks in the pipes.
- They have to run water through the system to keep it cool; they implemented a way to recycle that water. Systems thinking, circularity

Parent company Emmi Group: Largest cheese processor in Switzerland. They were told to implement sustainability practices in their plants. They were provided with tools to do this.

- Consumer led as well, in a way
- Takes off in the culture of the organization; there are levers.
 - Green teams in all the facilities; to help with the more tactical issues. Managers are not the only ones who are passionate about sustainability; they have been making sure that this priority permeates through every level of the organization. More consistent conversation.
 - Purposeful conversation and a lot of luck.

Q: Is this possible [purposeful focus on sustainability] within the healthcare industry?

- yes, of course; it just has to come up as a priority. They had a green team 10 years ago. It wasn't seen as a priority
- Could be an initiative in the future (having a sustainability team/green team)
- The constant pressure of ROI is huge
- Covid: had to move to throw-aways
 - \$90,000 investment for biodegradable materials (straws, plates, etc)
 - Doesn't work well in health care - quirky nuances
- Supportive implementation team and BOD - this moves them

- Public interest is very important; it moves the industry
- It's not going to be solved within healthcare alone; it will be solved in conversation with other industries so that they can see some new ideas/innovation

Question 3 Where do you see additional possibilities for incorporating sustainability practices in your business/industry?

- Process innovations?
- Monitoring/tracking resource use and waste management?
- Product innovations?

[addressed above]

Question 4 Does your industry/business have sustainability goals? Who sets them?

- Are there 'champions' in your industry/business who are leading efforts to incorporate sustainability practices?
- If you do not have sustainability goals, what might be the reasons that these are not included in your business planning?

[addressed above]

Question 5 What are the barriers to achieving your sustainability goals?

- Money. Capital
- The industry wants to move forward.
- The ROI is so important - tech is moving forward.
 - The ROI is in 20 to 30 years for many innovations
 - Need adjustment in thinking about ROI
- Plant is built to have solar (in the future), but it isn't a viable option > they can't make their money back.
- Education [of personnel in the industry]. Healthcare is an island. There is no focus on sustainability in the field.
- Hospitals, as they are being built, there are things that they can do. Having the inventory of what is in front of you (what is possible, what is evolving). What industries have something similar that you can benefit from.
 - E.g. culinary: if you are feeding staff, people [you can get ideas from other facilities that feed people]
 - What is the thing that most people have? Start there and then have conversations
 - Personal interest
- Education on emerging technologies
- Solar: Used to be a long-term ROI; they got it down to 11 years ROI. They may even be able to get a grant to chop it down to 3 years. (Grant from FOE)
- Gunderson Hospital in LaCrosse: they partnered with Organic Valley to put up wind turbines. Shared costs. Epic has also invested in wind turbines (but had to go outside of the County).
 - Turbines: There are other designs; European design for smaller model situated on the side of buildings.
- Partnerships: having industries come together is key - working together.

- Find solutions, locations, creative collaborations

Emmy Roth: There's thousands of pounds of cheese by-product waste each month in the manufacturing facility. They have trouble finding a home (or other purpose) for this waste. Food waste is a huge climate change issue. Can we do some of this as a community - compost or digest this waste? [rather than relying on the industry alone to find the solution]

Plant Manager perspective: you have to come up with creative solutions and be committed.

- Set the tone with employees right off the bat. This will be in the orientation; they will have a committee; they will challenge people to come up with ideas. This is possible with a new plant [harder to do with established plants that already have patterns of practice]
- They have purchased high tech equipment that reduces waste (trim); investment (cutters from Germany)
- With regard to ROI: we need to shift to long-term thinking (rather than short term ROI) – there's a difference in thinking between 5 yrs. and 20 years.

Question 6 How might the City, the County, or other entities help overcome these barriers in order that you could reach your goals

- Increasing renewables [energy] in the available mix. Being able to source renewable energy locally (they are at 21%).
- Waste infrastructure that allows recycling of plastic (wrap); and also to find a place to put food waste that is not landfill.
- Could the city offer a course for interested businesses on how to write your first sustainability plan?
- Coming together; sitting around a table. Talking about the opportunities.
- Share innovative practices that are happening locally or beyond. Informal time to talk with one another. Steps between here and there.
- Surfacing resources. Would take them a long way. [a single, up-to-date, reliable resource web site]
- There are leaders who can be showcased (LaCross Gunderson: still a unicorn in the industry). None of it got traction here.
- Get people together in a room to talk about shared interests and develop partnerships.
- Sustain Dane has a great focus and lots of information seminars
- Technology (Zoom) makes it convenient to do things fast. It is a way to get started. Schedule meetings for people to get together. Frequency and venue get determined from that.
- Stoughton: there is investment on the River Front; businesses, etc.; [get shared commitment from these]

Q: is there a benefit to bringing together small businesses and larger entities?

- They are very different, but there is opportunity depending on what Stoughton does (e.g. housing, waterfront); that changes the business environment. Small businesses interested in the concept of sustainability can emphasize what the next thing they are skating towards is.

Additional comments/suggestions from participants:

- Does Dane County do local podcasts? How to grow the conversation? Emphasizing education component. Local points.
- Education within the community: keep doing this. Expand the dialogue.
- For businesses: education around technology and actionable insights. Often people go to conferences and they hear the same thing all the time.
- Have people from energy sector and municipalities come talk with them.
- Get people in front of you where there can be follow-up and get over barriers - actionable.
- Celebrate the small wins. Some of it is too huge. What can you do today and tomorrow? Get people excited about moving toward more sustainability; get the minds thinking forward.

Emmi Roth is holding a Sustainability day (for employees): Attendees can win an electric bicycle or lawnmower. Provide an idea of how to make your facility more sustainable. Little things that get people thinking about it. Need to celebrate smaller wins.

- For employees, community people: Getting ideas together; collaboration. Do something about it, rather than just talking about it.

Participant Questions/comments:

- Will the sustainability report identify sustainability goals for the community? Will they be setting up goals for companies, businesses? Or identifying indicators of success linking to business and industry. Providing a framework for others to set goals.
- For the committee to have power to support change in business and industry sector; perhaps they can move to the Chamber of Commerce (away from City) to have more umpf.
- Committee can inspire and educate.
- Shared resources - Podcasts: A Matter of Degrees; Econtalk (not always climate-related, but they have some episodes on the topic); Climate of Change

Developer Focus Group

May 2, 2023

Facilitator: Sharon Lezberg

Recorder: Michelle Probst and Olivia Kovacs

Sustainability Committee Member: Scott Taylor

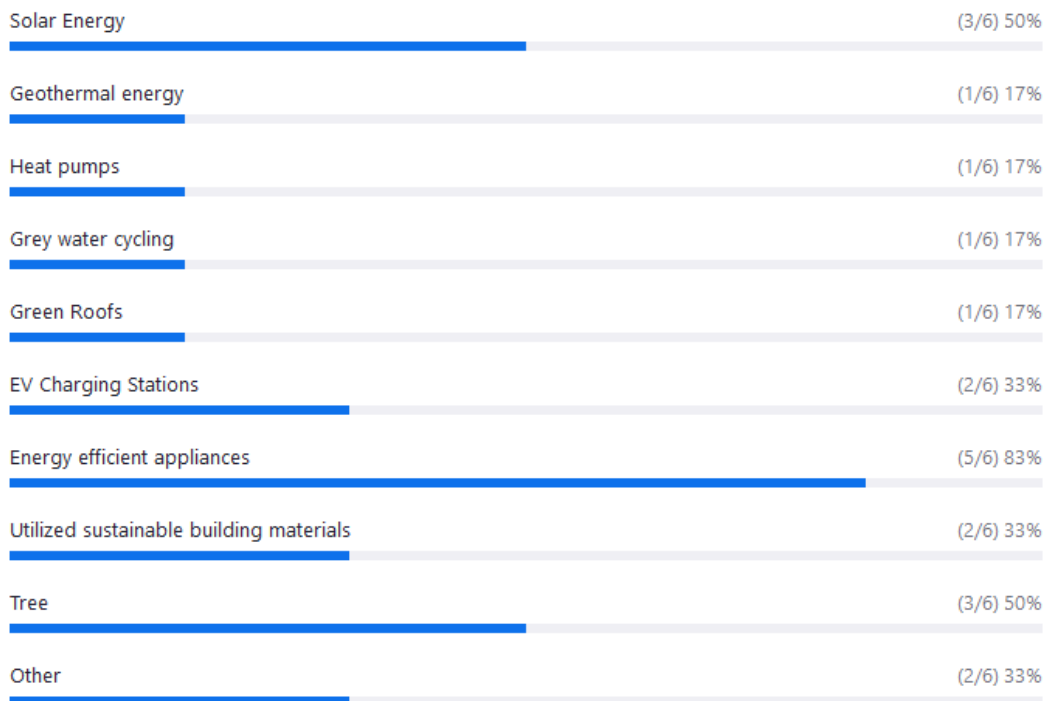
Participants included representatives of local developers and members of the Redevelopment Authority

Attendees: Friede Associates (general contractor business)
Stoughton Senior Center
Stoughton Redevelopment Authority
Stoughton Trailers and Holding.
Forward Development
Eldon Homes

Question 1 What is your firm currently doing to advance sustainability practices in your housing/facility developments? *Discussion on poll question:*

1. Has your firm implemented any of the following in your housing/facility developments to advance sustainability?
(check all that apply) (Multiple Choice) *

6/6 (100%) answered



Question 2 What sustainability initiatives within your developments has your firm taken that you are particularly proud of?

- Worked with a third party to conduct energy audits
- Installing connectors and uniform connections for charging. There are issues because there are several connectors and it's hard to unify our buildings and wiring.
- We are still looking to get in with the City of Stoughton. Outside of our manufacturing settings we have not implemented any yet.
- As a commercial contractor, they've done commercial grey water, geothermal. There is the market to plan for and develop for EV and solar charging.
- Redevelopment of the waterfront property included solar panels for lighting. EV charging ready for underground garages. EV isn't as sustainable as we'd like it be. Tree plantings will be done in the area. We haven't looked into building materials just yet.
- Conservation with lighting and LEDs. In collaboration with Lions club, we've collected plastic bags, and then furniture is created for us.
- From a Community perspective—would love to see different things be available to citizen to help them be more involved in sustainability. And include older generations in programs. Programs and sustainable practices might not be available to older generations financially.
- Green roofs are most marketable and what we are proud of.
- Energy efficient appliances are the most economical. We update the HVAC to support it, and appliances come into it.
- Street trees are always great to incorporate and make a neighborhood look more polished.

Question 3 Where do you see additional possibilities for incorporating sustainability practices in your developments?: Process innovations?-Monitoring/tracking systems?-Product innovations?

- Customer demand—Solar [panels] something people are looking into very early in the process. And there are a few projects in the area taking advantage of it.
- Energy efficient appliances are pretty much a must at this point. The economics work out, and people are looking for it. Changing perspectives on thinking more long term investment
- Future initiatives— green field projects. Size of city of streets, reducing the amount of pavement, but not the right of way. Streets infrastructure has gone up immensely. Focus street parking in certain areas, less pavement, less stormwater runoff. Can save costs along with environmental benefits.
- Development aspect needs to be reduced. They are making streets wider and it's not a sustainable design.
- Something else we are putting in place we are trying to engineer our homes to reduce the amount of lumber loss. We monitor our waste and work with engineers to reduce work waste. This is more environmentally friendly but also reduces costs and reduces landfill waste.
- Heat pumps—Affordability is difficult on these products. If there was a coop buying opportunity that would help cut costs.

- Huge growth premanufacturing with all of our wood systems. We build a whole house, and have it be built in one place, then bring it out to the job site. We can put it onsite, and assemble it within 2 days.
 - The design process is key to have the manufacturer involved to talk about the site and any challenges to work through any deficiencies in the system.

Question 4 Does your firm have sustainability goals that you are striving for in future developments? Who sets them?

- More driven by energy efficiency, it really depends on the product. High end homes have more opportunities. We try and get as close to zero as possible, but it depends on the product. That is the long term goal: it takes a little bit more time and streamlining to get there.
- Commercial projects, you are not marketing to the end user, but the contractor. Our goals are from the customer and projects rather than our business. Utilizing sustainable practices to take you beyond code is always a great thing. We might have to take on those costs [for sustainable practices] ourselves can be a challenge, so as a younger firm we don't have that capital to take on
- We have to be aware of all the practices and resources out there to show the client. We are great at recycling and upgrading windows / cabinetry /supplies to keep things from going to landfills. From a corporate standpoint, we work with Habitat for Humanity on getting new efficient windows and appliances. We also work hard to locally source our materials to take advantage of local supplies.
- Project management has sustainability standards in place that are written, but this is a growing area and ever changing, so we have to keep up with new products. This wasn't a thing people always were asking about but the market place is always evolving.
- Any way we can be efficient with sizing, we are using less materials and then less energy in the construction and use of the building.
- Any time we build a home, we do have standards, we continually look at materials and review our strategies and product lines. We like to source our materials locally.
- Every time a development request is put in place, we review all the standards. It has become the norm of trying to look more sustainable practices and efficiency as long as the cost is there. The city certainly has some processes in line and is developing more. Using those systems to reduce cost is the main game

Question 5 What are the barriers to achieving your sustainability goals?

- Money, cost is the biggest barrier for individuals. It would be great to have resources to make their own home more sustainable.
- It's not just ROI, you have to look into your intended purpose. We have a corporate office, have developed sustainability goals, and it is part of a carbon footprint and looking long term. Thinking about who we are serving, and what is important to them for sustainability. Then maybe you are willing to take the risk.
- Costs, who can afford the product. It is hard for older folks to afford these products. Focus on Energy is a great program to utilize. We could do something similar to this on a community level to help people afford some of these products.
- Mindset has to change. Developer has everything dumped on them, 'Now go do it' and the developer has to make it work and also ensure that the end user still wants to buy it. How can we get private and public money working together to get the best product out

there and available to people. Is there a way to build a system that we can build bike and pedestrian opportunities and move away from the cars? Cooperation between private and city to identify the common goals around sustainability.

- Park fees have drastically increased across the area, specifically in Stoughton and those costs have to be incorporated into the project
- We should be sharing the overall cost of projects—all of the things beyond the materials. Park and other fees can add significantly to a project. While those fees are applied, we also have to look at how we market Stoughton, and if there are incentives that the city and developers can work together.
- We should be showcasing other ways that Stoughton can be marketable. Park fees may be high, but there are other benefits to developing in Stoughton.

Question 6 What can the City do to help you grow/promote your business as a sustainability leader? (awards, publicity, referral, incentives, etc.)

- Collaboration with the City is super important—how can we grow Stoughton. Really community focused Sytende Mai has an opportunity to market our products. We are also working with Stoughton Trailers to show what we can do and market the community as a whole. It's a great community with great trails, resources, etc. How can we reduce engineering fees?
- Incentives are always helpful. Set benchmarks to make it more affordable and then accomplish goals. PACE has a lot of opportunities.
- We don't necessarily know what the City wants. What are their goals and how do we fit into that goal? There seems to be a little uncertainty as to what's important and what we should be planning for. Better communication to help plan for sustainability goals would be great.
- Transparency from the City on goals. Everybody be open and transparent about what we are trying to achieve. It might not always be focused on ROI. Someone is able to go a bit further when we know the motivations of the community. The City has a tendency to form a process, but it might not be set in stone. There are reasons for the process, and we should be able to talk about them in an open forum and have discussions based around everyone's needs.
- Consistency is also needed. People don't mind following rules, they just want to know that they will still be rules and everyone must follow them. Where can we support development from a land perspective—sometimes commercial is not an option, sometimes no housing.
- We should be looking at a higher density of housing. And understand where the city should be using their resources to support development. Also support the infrastructure to support new developments.
- Incentives are always helpful. Awards or shout outs on social media are super helpful.

Environmental Organizations Focus Group Notes

5/3/2023

Facilitator: Michelle Probst (Dane County Extension)

Note-takers: Sharon Lezberg (Dane County Extension) & Olivia Kovacs (Extension)

Stoughton Sustainability Committee Representative: Ben Heili

Organizations that participated in the focus group:

- Sustainable Stoughton
- Rock River Coalition
- Friends of Lake Kegonsa (FOLKS)
- Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership and Dane County Land and Water Resources Dept.
- Sustain Dane

Question 1 What are the current efforts of your organization to promote sustainability in Stoughton?

FOLKS: not doing anything specifically within city limits of Stoughton. They work with residents who live around Lake Kegonsa – they have Stoughton addresses but are in Pleasant Springs or Dunn. The organization focuses on education programs, speaker events, rain barrel program; planting with Plant Dane, workshops on growing native plants, exchange and tour in June (tour of people planting natives, doing sustainability. 450 person membership; ~ 100 people show up for events. The impact is from neighbors see what is happening around the lake. They are talking with Clean Lakes Alliance about the reward/acknowledgement system (recognition for those whose efforts promote sustainability).

Sustainable Stoughton: current focus is on encouraging pollinators by promoting backyard refuges for animals, birds, and insects. They've been bringing in speakers to talk about this. Trying to have residents plant native plants in backyards. Book club on "Nature's Best Hope" by Doug Homme (which promotes creating a backyard national park extending across people's backyards).

MAMSWaP: Program works with over 21 communities across Dane County (those who are part of [MAMSWaP](#), the Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership) on stormwater education and outreach. [The goal is to provide community outreach and education to reduce adverse impacts of water quality in lakes and streams from urban sources of runoff.] Projects include storm drain program (Stoughton has signed on to the 'adopt a storm drain' program; leaf free streets, rain gardens, demonstration gardens, and residential gardens. They are hoping to do a tour of natural landscapes to give people ideas and inspire people. They also have rain barrel programs.

Sustain Dane: planning for their 'All around Dane County series' in Stoughton. They go outside of Madison; gather stories about sustainability and share info with each other. the City of

Stoughton joined as a member of Sustain Dane, so they have access to all of their sustainability programs. Stoughton Sustainability Committee members have attended 'accelerate sustainability' workshops.

Rock River Coalition: This organization does work similar to some of the other groups and is happy to do things in Stoughton, such as rain barrel workshops, native planting. They don't focus as much in Dane County. Dane is in the Rock River basin, but other Counties in the basin have fewer resources. Other programs include:

- Streamwater monitoring with WAV program (UW Extension/DNR). Water quality data available through website or DNR database
- Outreach and education around water/stormwater
- Invasive species work partnerships in Dane County
- Summary of their projects: Aquatic invasive species, stormwater, streamwater monitoring; outreach & education; recreation

Question 2 What are the barriers for your organization in promoting sustainability in Stoughton?

- Reaching the right people to spread the word, especially in terms of social media outreach.
- Lack of education [of people in the community]. People don't understand why certain things are being done - e.g., why native plants are being planted in parks; why invasive species are being taken out.
- Time. People don't show up. People are strapped with so many different things. Getting people to come to events is a big deal.

Question 3 What opportunities do you see for nonprofit and community organizations to work together to advance sustainability in the community?

- Coordination: there are many organizations doing the same thing. Native plantings, getting the word out. Maybe we all need to coordinate; work together to get more native plants on the landscape in a short period of time. Coordinate promotion and organizing.
- Spreading the word about various programs that different organizations are doing. Let's not reinvent the wheel; let's be spokes.
- Food scrap collection as an opportunity. Sustain Dane collects food scraps at farmers' markets and brings this to a farm managed by Neighborhood Food Solutions for composting. It would be possible to do a program in Stoughton to collect food scraps at the Stoughton farmers markets and bring them to a local farm for composting.
Note that Stoughton Public Works Department is thinking of composting. There are two farmers markets in Stoughton.
- More diverse and native tree populations in city property
- Rain Barrels in public property as education
- Signage so that people know what their tax dollars are supporting

- Storm Water Education Program is starting work to put rain gardens and native planting demonstration plots on public property (city buildings). These small plot gardens would capture the attention of homeowners and be replicable. 'Downspout gardening' (less work than a rain garden; plant native plants near a downspout). Using shorter species; providing signage as education/demo. Supply homeowners with a starter kit to make it replicable. Target audience is residents. Municipalities have rain-gardens (staff maintain them) - but these are large scale. Hard for homeowners to make the connection between their own space and the demo garden.

Question 4 What city-initiated sustainability efforts have you seen in other communities that you would recommend?

- Stoughton Utilities, renew WI > talking about community solar buying collaborative.
- City (Stoughton) is working on cleaning up parks and river
- Stoughton is trying to get more community involvement in renewable energy; they need help to facilitate this effort
- In Watertown they are putting in permeable pavers in public parking lots and planting native plants along streams.
- Sustain Dane has a partnership with the City of Madison for the 'Efficiency Navigator Program.' This program supports energy efficiency into small and medium sized housing to reduce energy costs (can be extended to other communities but needs outside funding source).
- Project Home: works with low-income households and beyond. They do an energy audit of your home. They cover the cost of improvements for low income, or sliding scale. Help you make your home more energy efficient through upgrades. The program operates in Dane and Green Counties.

Question 5 What do you see as your role in implementing the Stoughton Sustainability plan?

Sustainable Stoughton: Sustainable Stoughton can educate the community beyond what the committee can do. Education and promotion of sustainability is their charge.

FOLKS: They intend to share resources with people in the community; the more people who are involved, the more these ideas spread.

RRC: Happy to share resources; give presentations; help with projects. They try to roam around the basin.

Extra Question 5.1: Stoughton is a municipality and operates differently than nonprofits. How do you feel that nonprofit work intersects with the government sector? How do government entities and nonprofits connect and collaborate?

Rock River Coalition: Municipalities will reach out to them because they don't have outreach staff. The community does not have the internal capacity to take care of permits, etc.

Municipality will sub-contract with them, or they will get grant \$ to do it. The municipality doesn't have a staff person to do the work.

FOLKS: as a nonprofit, they work with everyone; RRC on water quality; work with MAMSWAP, Plant Dane , etc. Dane County Parks and Water. It is amazing how much help they get. Very responsive.

Sustainable Stoughton: Works in collaboration with municipalities. Forums/big events - they partner with Stoughton utilities, who provided funding and brought in speakers and people with electric vehicles. Previously they did research for the municipality (River Front Development); they looked at other communities and gave a presentation to the RDA. Initially, one of the big efforts was to do IPM in the parks and schools, public green space; educating the public; involved UW researchers to do research on the ball fields about different types of maintenance of grass. This then folded into new city policy.

Question 6 What support would you like to see from the City, the school district, or other entities??

- The people who are here on this call provide wonderful resources. County supplies the funding. The support and the resources are wonderful.
- Continued collaboration and openness for new ideas. Mayor has been attending Sustain Dane Programs. Getting City Council open to these ideas . Putting the sustainability goals forward. City and other entities are helping with big events. Giving presentations and sharing what they are doing with regards to sustainability. Giving parks, public works, etc. a platform.
- City, school, etc. are great places for demonstration projects. If the municipality provides space for workshops, education programs, that is helpful.
- Showcase successes: Get the word out with stories that get people thinking about what they can do. Break the issues down to bite sized pieces so that efforts don't feel so overwhelming.
- Communications. It would be good to get more press for what they are doing so that the general public can learn about these efforts.
- Sustainable Stoughton is invited to write an article for the City's Hub Spot every 6 weeks. They will run out of ideas and welcome other groups (those present in the focus group) to tell their own stories. Suggestion that they can 'regurgitate' stories from other organizations in their Hub spot. [Contact Sustainable Stoughton](#)
- Dream of Sustainable Stoughton: have a Sustainability Fair at one of the parks.

Community Anchor Institution Focus Group Notes May 2, 2023

Facilitator: Sharon Lezberg, Dane County Extension
Recorder: Michelle Probst, Dane County Extension
Sustainability Committee member: Donelle Scaffidi

Organizations that participated in the focus group:

- Stoughton Innovation Center
- Stoughton Downtown Business Association
- Stoughton Opera House
- Mayor Tim Swadley

Question 1 What are current efforts within your organization to move toward sustainable operations?

Stoughton Opera House

- Operations—bringing in consumables that can be recycled or composted, organic and local. The green room is an oasis for artists, so we offer good food for people and make it comfortable for them and have artists want to come back to the opera house. It's a little unknown if recycling actually gets recycled. Choose paper rather than styrofoam.
- Slipstream came through the building to understand efficiency opportunities. The lighting could be more efficient, but we want to keep the integrity of the building. The friends group is interested in fundraising towards more sustainable opportunities like the lightning. We've had discussion about solar, but are unsure about the roof space, but could utilize the fire house. We have unique challenges with a historic building.

Downtown Business Assn

- General philosophy—to have a product that has a story behind it. Try to have recyclable and local products as much as possible. This is really key to our local businesses. A lot of fundraising for Ukraine, and discussions around Juneteeth celebrations. Paper straws and compostable containers—how do we incentivize this? Share that information with people about how we are supporting initiatives.
- Number of buildings downtown need help, and it would be helpful to keep the ownership local. It is difficult for a small business to be able to afford energy efficient buildings. Property keeps going up in price.

Stoughton Innovation Center

- The values of sustainability are embedded in our organization, nothing explicitly stated of how that operationalizes. Convening groups in Stoughton that have been working with other entities who work with UW-Madison students, and being an organization that can help implement what comes out of these reports that students have been working on. Students are working with the innovation center, RDA, and the sustainability committee.
- Nuclear fusion research at UW, and understanding if that could be a long term goal for Stoughton. The innovation center wants to be a hub that can support new ideas and develop projects that can promote sustainability.
- Working to understand IRA money and what that means for clean energy and with small businesses.
- Revolving loan funds—city council put funding towards this. The idea is to couple this money with IRA funding to invest in clean energy.
- The innovation center will hope to be a learning hub, and one of those 'hubs' will be sustainability to learn about IRA.

Question 2 Where do you see additional possibilities for incorporating sustainability practices in your organization and/or events that you sponsor?

- Lots of food at events—how can we reduce food waste at these events?
- There are companies who do food waste collection, but a lot of them don't serve Stoughton.
- Someone at Promega is trying to collect food waste and the innovation center could be working on how to bring that idea to Stoughton.
- The lions club collects plastic bags and makes them into benches.
- Packaging is our biggest challenge. It would be great to have a boxing reuse program where people can donate boxes to other organizations for use.

Question 3 For umbrella organizations: In what ways is sustainability discussed within your membership and in your organization??

- Membership primarily focuses on music. There is so much generosity around the opera house operational and in really good shape.
- There's a historic component to Stoughton, and so it's discussing how we can keep that historic identity and market it. Utilizing more digital marketing rather than paper. These spaces also serve as a community space. Small businesses sell an experience more so than a product.
- Many patrons would come to get tickets right away, and the pandemic made people do more online sales, which reduces driving. Pandemic taught people how to utilize technology services.

Question 4 What are the barriers to advancing sustainability within your organization??

- Waste—do we know where our waste is going?
- There has been some work done to understand how downtown can be better utilized, it's been difficult to get anyone to utilize these spaces. It is more money to retrofit an area vs just building brand new. This is also an issue of land use—if we keep building out, we are contributing to urban sprawl.
- TIFF funding - consider how to incorporate sustainability. This creates a lot of opportunities.
- Waterfront development has been difficult with other regulations on what can be done. The regulations make it difficult to retrofit buildings. Specifically with buildings close to the water. We can only invest 50% of the worth of the building.
- For small businesses it is difficult to have the capacity to focus on sustainability. It is the opposite with big corporations, but it's hard to get things done to know who to contact at big businesses.
- Is there an opportunity to collaborate on shared resources? This happened in the pandemic, the restaurants worked with each other to get food supplies. Can merchants do this?
- Start with education around sustainability—define sustainability
- Sharing the ROI on products. Choosing organic is more expensive, so how can we communicate the value even though it's a higher cost?

- Can we bulk purchase compostable to-go containers that are Stoughton branded? Forever wear–reusable to go containers. A downtown business or the opera house could utilize this.
- Carbon emissions reduction
 - How do I do this as a small business? On a personal level, I know the practices, but what can my business do?
 - Heat pumps have a lot of energy efficiency possibilities.
 - Could someone give the exact steps, the cost, what needs to get done
 - Real estate gives out a preferred list of contractors, this could be done for energy efficiency.
 - Laying out the opportunities for businesses would be helpful

Question 5 What do you see as the role of your institution/organization in promoting sustainability in Stoughton?

- We have a public establishment—we can make things visible for the community
- It would be great to have a bullet point flier of what we did for sustainability in Stoughton to hand out to customers. It would be great to be given a directive. It would be great to help codify resources and help lift up other businesses. We want people to say, ‘Have you been to Stoughton? It’s great!’
- Innovation is to help the City be more sustainable, and make it easy.
- The role for the city is the leadership and visionary role. The city has a lot of expertise to put together action and provide resources and education to bring people together. We need to bring in people more broadly through the process and bring in benchmarks and goals that we should work towards. This plan needs to be something that can be handed off.

Question 6 How might the City, the County, or other entities (such as nonprofit organizations, e.g., the Innovation Center, Sustainable Stoughton...) help your organization accelerate sustainability efforts?

- Group purchasing for compostable boxes that are Stoughton Branded, then innovation center does the composting
- Making it easier to deal with food waste.
- Knowing what is out there, what exists, what opportunities are available. How the innovation center can help fill those needs.
- Energy, central information resource. How it can be done financially and how we change the resources. And how we can save money in the long run, especially focusing on older buildings.
- In the future for events:
 - Zero waste events and getting volunteers to help separate garbage
 - EV Charging stations

Agenda Item #4: Revising Vision Statements and Goals

Purpose: Revisions to vision statements aim to present a more resolute vision for each focus area to help clarify goals, objectives, and indicators. Community feedback indicated the need for clarity; additionally, vision statements are most effective as aspirational statements that enable people to envision the future we are striving to achieve. Revisions also aim to reflect sentiment from the community survey showing support for Stoughton to be leaders: “[a] broader community commitment to sustainability is required to achieve the necessary goals, and Stoughton should lead in that effort”.

Similarly, revisions to goals aim to provide more clarity to enable our city/community to be focused and united in the same direction, as well as set measurable, achievable objectives and indicators. Via focus groups, requests were made by developers, industry, and the school district for clear goals and “indicators of success” from the city. Community feedback consistently indicated that goals are too broad and/or need simplification.

Additionally, important considerations like equity, resilience, and risk mitigation, are now incorporated into the revised language. Focus group discussion acknowledged the importance of incorporating sustainability, diversity, equity, inclusion, [accessibility], and social justice into planning efforts. A major takeaway from the community survey is that economic equity and affordability are big issues that need to be considered with every recommendation. Resilience and mitigating risks to infrastructure, property, and human safety (i.e. potential risks include extreme temperatures causing power outages or extreme weather causing flooding; resilience is our preparedness to respond to these events; risk mitigation is our ability to proactively mitigate the impact of these events) are also important considerations, especially when thinking about the role of city government. Some survey respondents feel sustainability is beyond the city’s purview, though responsible land use planning and development, sound infrastructure management, safeguarding economic stability, and protecting public health and safety are unquestionably an important part of a city government’s duties to its residents, businesses, and industry. Equity, resilience, and risk mitigation are also important to include because all have a role to play in retaining and improving the quality of life and well-being in our community, important goals identified by survey respondents.

Energy

Community dialogue input: Concern about reliability of renewables as well as the global supply chain and adverse impacts of materials extraction, especially for solar. Concern about who takes responsibility (city gov vs. individual citizens). Cost and ROI concerns. But good support in general; potential solutions identified:

- Education programs for citizens on renewables, conservation, etc.
- Education programs for contractors/developers on green building, energy efficient appliances, home retrofits, etc.
- Advancing adoption of [technologies/solutions].
- Reducing barriers.

- Leadership and engagement.
- Collaborate outside of the municipality.

Focus groups input: Comments on there being a disconnect between city leaders/decision-makers and community residents. Clear goals and indicators of success are requested from the city. Concerns about securing funding for clean energy initiatives. Recognition that grant opportunities are available but that it's "difficult to know who to talk to about opportunities." School district finds getting community support for clean energy initiatives challenging; and finds student education on sustainability issues similarly difficult. Developers noted that customer demand is driving an increase in energy efficient appliances and rooftop solar, as well as other clean energy solutions. Sustain Dane supports energy efficiency with an Efficiency Navigator Program.

Community survey input: Some opposition (or fear) of renewable energy. Feasibility and the city's role were concerns when considering the adoption of ambitious carbon reduction goals. Support is there for "alternative sources of green energy."

Additional rationale for changes: Given the immediate threat of climate change and the fact that energy demands only continue to grow, clear and measurable action—driven by a bold and resolute vision—is called for. The updated language also aims to address the small amount of opposition, fear, and/or misconception surrounding the need for a clean energy transition as well as the role of city government in achieving that transition.

Current Vision Statement: The City of Stoughton reduces its operational impact on energy resources that contribute to climate change and supports business and community efforts in doing the same. The city achieves this by embracing energy efficiency and conservation, while decreasing the use of fossil fuels.

Revised Vision Statement for Discussion: Stoughton is *energy secure*¹ and considered a leader in the statewide transition to a clean energy economy. Reliable, affordable, and sustainably sourced electricity helps safeguard the city's infrastructure, property, businesses, residents, and economic growth. Community members and the city share responsibility: individuals are empowered to take personal action and city leaders are supported by the community and encouraged to take municipal-scale action.

Current Goals:

1. Reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Achieve 100% renewable electricity supply.
3. Reduce total energy consumption.
4. Decrease energy intensity. (Quantity of energy/ unit of activity). This will allow for decreases in energy while allowing for growth

¹ Energy security is the reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources.
<https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-security>

Revised Goals for Discussion:

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2040
2. Obtain 100% of energy needs from clean and renewable sources by 2050
3. Reduce energy consumption by 40% by 2035
4. Reduce health and economic disparities with energy efficiency upgrades for low- and middle-income rental housing

Transportation

Community dialogue input: Need for increased bike ability and multi-use trails, as well as partnership with neighboring towns, etc. Support for exploration of public transit alternatives, including reestablishing the train route to Madison and better access to regional rail transportation. Train, trolley, bus, or other intra city transport should be considered. Rideshare and park-and-ride options were mentioned, though past failure for these was acknowledged. Support for roundabouts and streets that allow driving, biking, and walking. Acknowledgement that a focus on more sustainable personal vehicles may be more realistic given surrounding rural areas' reliance on them as well as American individualism. Focus on bicycle and pedestrian friendly infrastructure and safety.

Focus groups input: Cleaner and safer transportation is a significant need, especially for school district students. Affordability and accessibility are main issues for students of driving age. Safe bike lanes are desired for student mobility. Public transportation like a mainstreet trolley or bussing to Madison are recognized as potential mobility assets. School district investments in clean transportation mentioned: (1) EV charging stations, (2) electric buses. Developers noted the need for narrower streets to lower transportation infrastructure costs, slow traffic, and reduce accidents.

Community survey input: Very little support for ridesharing (ingrained individualism, freedom, and car culture). Compared to other focus areas, survey responses showed lower support for transportation initiatives, particularly transit to Madison. Other initiatives received low support, perhaps due to individual accessibility and affordability barriers. There is, however, support for improving walkability and pedestrian safety, and strong support for improving the accessibility and safety of the bicycle infrastructure.

Current Vision Statement: Create a multi-modal approach to transportation for the City of Stoughton that emphasizes the wellness of the community, reducing pollution and improving livability, making clean, energy-efficient transportation a more desirable option for city employees, residents and businesses.

Proposed New Vision Statement: Stoughton's multi-modal transportation system reduces reliance on single occupancy vehicles and fossil fuels, reduces pollution and environmental impact, promotes livability and safety, and is easily accessible for every person.

Current Goals:

1. Decrease use of fossil fuels, including increased use of hybrid, electric and alternate fuel (e.g. hydrogen, compressed natural gas) vehicles.
2. Increase electric and alternative fuel infrastructure.
3. Adopt a "complete streets" planning approach to new and modified roadways to increase walkability and bicycling, while also improving stormwater management.²

² <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/>

4. Increase connectability of cycling routes and support other actions to increase bicycling.
5. Develop transit alternatives to the one-person, one-vehicle model currently used.

Proposed Revisions to Goals:

1. Replace internal combustion engine vehicles with hybrid, electric, and alternative fuel vehicles.
2. Increase electric and alternative fuel infrastructure.
3. Adopt a complete streets planning approach to new and modified roadways to make it easy and convenient to bike, walk, or use emissions-free transit.
4. Reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles with investments in transit alternatives that improve mobility, safety, and access for all residents.

Water

Community dialogue input: Emphasis on protection of water sources. Expression that goals are too broad; call for simplification [and clarity]. Recognition of the need to advocate for the Yahara watershed beyond municipal boundaries. Specific groundwater and surface water concerns: lead in water supply, historical industrial pollution and superfund sites, contaminants, and water treatment. Individual actions to protect finite groundwater resources: rain barrels, rain gardens, low flush toilets, etc. Any impacts on dam removal on groundwater? Water conservation measures need to take accessibility and income barriers into account. Recognition of the role of native plants in protecting groundwater. Decreasing flooding risk and water contamination will require specific measures and education, including lawn management, leaf management, lawn conversion, excessive stormwater ponds as population grows [vs. green infrastructure alternatives like permeable pavement, bioswales, rain gardens, etc.]. Support for building more natural water infiltration practices into development guidelines for stormwater management.

Focus groups input: Developer recommendation for narrower streets because less pavement reduces runoff. Current county-wide activities of various orgs: surface water quality monitoring; education and outreach on aquatic invasive species, stormwater, and recreation; educational events for shoreline property owners, promoting runoff reduction practices; Adopt a Storm Drain program.

Community survey input: The health of local lakes, rivers, and groundwater was rated highly important (4.65 mean out of 5). Rainwater harvesting programs and limiting runoff have importance.

Current Vision Statement: The City of Stoughton, including residents and businesses, conserve, protect, restore, and advocate* for groundwater and surface water resources, ensuring clean water is available for drinking, recreation, fishing, and the support of healthy aquatic habitat.

Revised Vision Statement for Discussion: Stoughton's groundwater and surface water resources are conserved, protected, continuously restored, and advocated for. A healthy aquatic habitat is supported, and clean water is available for drinking, recreation, and fishing. Stoughton keeps harmful substances out of all water resources and works to reclaim usable land by maximizing innovative water infiltration practices.

Current Goals:

1. Conserve groundwater by increasing water use efficiency and taking actions that decrease the wasteful use of water.
2. Protect groundwater from potential contaminants.
3. Protect local waters by managing surface runoff quantity and quality.
4. Manage riparian land use to protect surface water quality and enhance aquatic habitat.

Proposed Revisions to Goals:

1. Conserve groundwater by increasing water use efficiency and water conservation knowledge and practices.
2. Prioritize water infiltration practices to promote groundwater recharge and reclaim usable land.
3. Protect groundwater from potential contaminants.
4. Protect surface water quality with improved management of riparian areas and stormwater runoff quantity and quality.

Solid Waste

Community dialogue input: Support for reducing waste. Support for alternative handling strategies for waste. Call for clarity on who is responsible: city or households? [Success will require shared responsibilities; there are actions for the city and for residents]. Call for food waste to be prioritized in vision and/or goals. One concern for working within the existing system/regulations rather than recreating the system. Some concern about community apathy.

Focus groups input: School district recognizes there is an opportunity (along with logistical challenges) to reduce cafeteria food waste by composting, which the student club supports. Referendum passage is a great opportunity to adjust infrastructure for this purpose. Benefits include a closed loop system and student/parent learning opportunities. Sustain Dane has piloted a food scrap collection program at Madison Farmers Markets. Innovation Center is poised to research food waste collection and composting! Move toward zero-waste events.

Community survey input: Respondents requested recycling education and information. Findings indicate strong support for composting initiatives and food waste collection, especially at the schools.

Current Vision Statement: The City of Stoughton supports the 3 R's - reduce, reuse, and recycle, in that order. The city will reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, while decreasing the amount of waste generated overall, and ensure that all waste is disposed of properly.

Revised Vision Statement for Discussion: Stoughton's businesses, industry, institutions, and government collaborate to recirculate resources and reduce waste. Community members reduce personal consumption, prioritize sharing and reusing, properly dispose of any generated waste, and recycle or compost the rest.

Current Goals:

1. Reduce wasteful consumption and overall quantity of waste generated.
2. Reduce the use of toxic products and materials that have negative impacts on environmental and human health.
3. Support the use of quality products that retain their value, usefulness and function so they can be reused and repaired.
4. Ensure systems are in place to dispose of all waste properly, including hazardous waste, recyclable materials, and compostable items.

Proposed Revisions to Goals:

None proposed. Discussion invited.

Land Use and Development

Community dialogue input: Recognized importance of native plants, CSAs, converting lawns to native grasses, promoting wider-spread use of community gardens, “plant [city] terraces in native grasses”, “reestablish native plantings along the river”, increasing tree canopy, etc. Support for ordinance updates for noxious weeds, grass length, etc. Idea for assisting homeowner conversion of lawns. Support for mixed-use development to utilize small city lots and preserve area farmland. Concern over whether new development is being built as efficiently as possible; desire for the city to promote efficiency, e.g. rooftop solar, to developers. Suggestion for updated guidelines for increasing tree cover in new development.

Focus groups input: Developer discussion showed that rooftop solar and tree planting seem supportable; these and other ideas require proactive planning and design, such as incorporating EV charging stations as part of parking requirements, trees in landscaping design, green roofs, lighting conservation, and building with recycled construction materials. Developers face cost and ROI barriers while residents want sustainable homes and buildings; city and developer partnership will provide a path toward sustainable development. Developer asks: for the city to be clear and transparent about sustainability goals, rules, and expectations, and provide non-financial incentives for implementing sustainable practices via public acknowledgement and awards. Developer recommendations: (1) Narrower streets, which provide many benefits: less pavement reduces runoff, lowers transportation infrastructure costs, slows traffic, and reduces accidents; (2) higher-density housing.

Community survey input: High community support for planting shade trees, increasing biodiversity, native plantings, and wildlife habitat, and preserving farmland. Residents desire assistance with tree/sidewalk-sewer line conflicts and existing tree maintenance.

Current Vision Statement: The City of Stoughton acknowledges that land is a precious resource and strives to increase developed areas conservatively, only as needed to meet the needs of its growing population. It encourages compact, efficient growth that incorporates mixed use development, diversity of housing types, thriving businesses, and preserved and restored natural habitats.

Revised Vision Statement for Discussion: Proactive planning as well as resilient and efficient land use patterns have protected and restored natural resources and habitats. Compact and mixed-use development, housing type diversity, green infrastructure, and conservation practices help Stoughton meet the needs of its growing population while preserving community character, promoting thriving businesses, and enhancing quality of life.

Current Goals:

1. Provide housing for all income levels.
2. Promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and business districts.
3. Increase the density of housing and population.

4. Protect environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Increase tree cover.
6. Increase land area in natural & native vegetation.
7. Increase use of sustainable building practices, including net-zero.
8. Support local sustainable agriculture.

Revised Goals for Discussion:

1. Use land more efficiently by doing the following: ³
 - a. Increase the number of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and business districts.
 - b. Increase the density of housing and population while providing housing for all income levels.⁴
2. Protect environmentally sensitive areas by doing the following:⁵
 - a. Increase and maintain tree canopy.
 - b. Increase the use of native plants on public and private lands.
3. Increase the use of sustainable building practices, including net-zero and passive home design.
4. Support local sustainable agriculture through the following actions:
 - a. Encourage and promote partnerships between local producers, retail grocers, and restaurants within Stoughton.
 - b. *Encourage local groups to connect with and utilize products from local producers (Like a sort of meet and greet between local farmers and those groups?)*
 - c. *Promote health and social interaction by preserving working farmland as part of new mixed-use development⁶.*

³ Originally from Denise as “More efficient use of land”, modified to be an umbrella goal containing what used to be goals 2 and 3 from the [community dialogue handout](#).

⁴ Combined goals 1 and 3 from the [community dialogue handout](#).

⁵ Umbrella section originally from [community dialogue handout](#), now made to encompass Denise’s #2,3 & 4, the community dialogue’s #4,5&6

⁶ Agrihood-type development to create healthy, active, futuristic neighborhoods.

Community Health and Engagement

Community dialogue input: Strong support. Want to see all sectors included. Want to see the city as a role model for residents and for other communities. Want businesses to drive change. Concern that vision and goals are too “inward-facing.” Concern over whether implementation will be feasible and cost effective. Concern over public acceptance of personal lifestyle changes. Acknowledgement of need for leadership (city, business, and community orgs) to model sustainable practices.

Focus groups input: Reported findings: (1) the public should be encouraged to play a leadership role in sustainability initiatives; (2) most suggested actions made by individuals and businesses during public input process were outside of the purview of the city; (3) Innovation Center and Sustainable Stoughton are well positioned to lead citizen initiatives; (4) need to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the plan in a more robust way. Other key takeaways: A hub for information sharing is needed, whether driven by the city or a community org. Public education can be led by community organizations and supported by the city (e.g. providing space for demonstrations, partnering, etc.). Schools can be a vehicle for community education and can catalyze community involvement. Support for city–school partnerships to showcase innovation and educate the public. Industries and businesses are key city and community partners in moving toward a more sustainable future; industry is highly motivated when there’s some level of ROI as well as public support. Sustain Dane’s ‘All Around Dane County’ program showcases community sustainability efforts. There was general agreement that reaching people is challenging. There’s a wealth of nonprofits, programs, and resources for the city and community groups/orgs to tap into. Anchor institutions are essential influencers of community opinion and action, e.g. Stoughton Innovation Center and Downtown Business Association.

Community survey input: City-wide sustainability goal should be to “improve the health and wellbeing of community residents,” suggesting the need for broad and applicable messaging (for this plan, but this also applies to community engagement efforts). Call for education programs to make taking sustainability actions easy.

Current Vision Statement: The City of Stoughton promotes an ethic of sustainability by encouraging and empowering residents, businesses, and community groups to take actions that improve environmental and human health. Through learning and engagement opportunities for residents, schools, businesses and organizations, sustainability is a part of life for all in our community.

Revised Vision Statement for Discussion: Stoughton’s strong ethic of sustainability is a part of life for all in our community. Residents, schools, businesses, organizations, and neighbors are empowered through learning opportunities, as well as by the city’s leadership and example, to take actions that improve environmental and human health.

Current Goals:

1. Increase collaboration and connections among citizens, businesses, schools, city government, and organizations to promote sustainability awareness & engagement.
2. Increase the sustainability awareness of Stoughton residents, city staff, and businesses through innovative programs.
3. Increase the number of residents and businesses that have implemented sustainable practices, such as those listed in other focus areas of this Plan.
4. Ensure sustainability is considered in decision-making processes by the City of Stoughton, including the city budget process.
5. Support high quality of life through promotion of wellness activities, healthy local food, safe walking and bicycling, and reduction in environmental toxins.

Proposed Revisions to Goals:

None proposed. Discussion invited.

Stoughton Sustainability Survey Analysis

5/2023

The Extension Dane County team (Sharon, Michelle, and Aly) have reviewed the “Stoughton Topline Draft_3-27-2023” and would like to submit the following comments for consideration. Note that the analysis of the open-ended question (beginning on page 4) was conducted using qualitative analysis software in order to capture the wide range of responses [the summary analysis can be read side by side with the addendum, which provides all the survey comments by code. The analysis presented by Denise several weeks ago should also be considered when looking at these responses).

Topline Survey tables:

Table 1a: Respondent Demographics

- When thinking about respondents, the average age (51.2), children at home (33%), and retired (27.5) indicate an older respondent pool. Note that there was not a bump in responses with Peachtree (parents with school age children).
- A high number of respondents (21.1%) “had to work two or more jobs in order to make ends meet at any point over the past five years”; this would be a population that is low to mid-income and on tight budgets. Comments reflected this, as a large number of people voiced opposition to anything that would raise taxes or be costly to households.

Table 2: When thinking of the Stoughton area, how important are the following to you, personally?

[Note that the question is incorrectly stated on the topline survey results]

- The highest rated category is “The health of local lakes, rivers, and groundwater’. This is rated high for both conservative and non conservative respondents. What is the reason for this? One possibility is that Dane County has been incredibly focused on water issues for some time, and people have been exposed to media and outreach concerning the health of water bodies. There has been less emphasis (in the past) on issues of energy and climate change.
- The high rating for all three options shows a conservation minded populace

Table 3a: As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

- When looking at the responses to table 3, note that the question centers the city (versus Table 2, which centers the individual)
- The rates for planting shade trees is significantly higher than for other categories
- The rates are pretty consistent across categories in this table (for columns 2-4)

Table 3b: As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

- There is pretty sharp divergence between conservatives and not conservative (means) in all four of these categories. The response for ‘not conservative’ is pretty consistent, indicating support for each of the options.
- Items 1-3 are pretty clearly related to climate change (all will reduce CO2 emissions) and the responses are lower than the preceding table. Are they rated lower because they may have costs associated with them? Or because they have been less talked about? Or because people feel these are individual responsibilities rather than the responsibility of the City?

Table 3c: As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

- Support for the items in table 3c are lower than in previous tables. This is possibly because these are more ‘niche’ initiatives, and could be perceived to benefit fewer people (or select people, instead of the entire community)
- Note that the conservative mean is much lower than the not conservative mean

Table 3d: As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

- Bus service to Madison ranks low (however, there were several open ended comments supporting public transportation to Madison)
- The “no idling” vehicle policy might be a non-starter!

Table 4: Would you support or oppose sustainability measures that....

- Not surprisingly, there is less support for sustainability measures that ‘would cost the city money in the short term, and improve sustainability, but would have no monetary return on the investment over the long term’
 - Perhaps ROI is not the only way to measure benefits of sustainability
 - The committee will have to do work to justify expenditures and to convince the population of value of long term investment. Explore accounting methods that look at parallel benefits such as improvement in public health, destination economic development, etc.
- There is support for measures that have long term cost savings, indicating that there is great potential for messaging about long-term cost savings with investments for energy savings or public health

Table 5: Would you support or oppose the City of Stoughton adopting ambitious carbon reduction goals, such as achieving a 100% renewable energy supply by 2050?

- There is a lot of support for this. The mean is 3.81 and the median value is 4.00; the oppose/strongly oppose are quite likely from conservative respondents.

Table 6a & 6b. In your opinion, what should the goals be for a city-wide sustainability initiative?

- The first 4 items rank consistently high. Note that “Improve the health and well-being of community residents,” which ranks highest, is not a committee issue area but an

overarching goal. Use this category in promotion, as it is something that appeals to a large number of people.

- Why do the last two items rank so low amongst conservative respondents?

Table 7a & 7b. Would you or anyone in your household be likely to do the following if information and resources, such as assistance, rebates, or financial incentives, were available?

- This question/table is problematic because there was no option to respond with 'we've already done this' (note that there are a lot of missing responses)
- These actions are individual actions rather than city actions. The Sustainability Committee could assist by providing education programs or by coordinating collective work days (e.g., for tree planting) and by shining a spotlight on early adopters.

Table 8. Would you be willing to do the following, if the infrastructure in Stoughton made this possible?

- The averages here make it look like there is little support for these initiatives; however, these are individual actions and by creating the infrastructure, it makes the action possible so that more and more people could consider doing these actions.
 - Developing public transportation between Stoughton and Madison would be costly and would necessitate a big 'uptake' number
 - Developing bike infrastructure is also costly, but uptake can grow (with 'learn to ride' programs; free bike give-aways; electric bike rental programs, etc.)
- Note the number of 'missing' responses for columns 2 & 3 (indicating that for many respondents, this option 'does not apply').
- Positive responses for 'ride sharing' is low, even with the 'not conservative' respondents. Ride-sharing is difficult for people because it is unreliable and cannot accommodate emergencies. Nevertheless, the Greater Madison MPO sponsors a program called "[RoundTrip](#)" which promotes ride-sharing and can match riders. It may be worth educating the public about this program.

Table 9. Is sustainability a priority in your household? Should it be a priority for Stoughton?

- Sustainability is regarded as a priority for most respondents, both in their own households and for the City

Table 10. Purchase of electricity from renewable energy

- Approximately 65% of respondents would purchase the maximum amount of renewable energy (at a small surcharge)
- There were a high number of missing responses to this question (the assumption being that many households have already done this or that the question was too confusing)

Table 11. Purchase of LED lightbulbs

- Approximately 65% of respondents would purchase/replace the maximum number of LED lightbulbs (at a small surcharge)
- There were a high number of missing responses to this question (the assumption being that many households have already done this)

Participant responses to the open ended question: *Is there anything that you would like to share with the committee as we are working toward making Stoughton a more sustainable community?*

Note on methodology: The analysis of open ended responses was done using a qualitative software program (MaxQDA). The reviewers read through participant responses several times, and then created codes to reflect the comments as well as the Sustainability Committee's focus areas. We then went through the survey responses and coded all responses (except for those few comments which were not relevant). Some participant comments covered various topics, so received multiple codes, but each segment of the comment was only coded once. There were 349 coded segments in 237 participant responses. Two coders (Sharon Lezberg and Aly Scanlon) reviewed these responses and collaborated on the coding and analysis.

The following statements are summaries for each of the codes.

Individual Actions for Sustainability

This parent code contains random comments (4) that couldn't be sorted in any of the other sub-codes. They are mostly specific issues that individuals are concerned about: commercial farms, lawn mowing, car washing in driveways...

Also contains a suggestion about community 'swap' potential, e.g., extra bulbs. Another suggestion (coded under 'personal responsibility') recommends 'free libraries' and swap days for swapping other items (plant seeds, tools, kitchen equipment, household items).

Personal Responsibility

Comments (16) for this code emphasize how individual actions/thoughtful choices are critical toward moving toward sustainability.

Several respondents voiced support for personal responsibility in sustainable practice rather than collective investments. In this view, people need to care about sustainability in order to take personal action. Individuals will act if they feel that initiatives they are taking will have an impact in their own lives (e.g., composting, ride share). Actions taken by the city (e.g., solar on municipal buildings, EV fleet) will not impact individuals and therefore are unlikely to prompt individual actions. Some respondents were concerned that promoting sustainability might impinge on individual choice and force residents to engage in behaviors.

Many respondents noted the efforts that they were taking within their own households (solar, driving less, EV cars, native plant gardening, programmable thermostat) and several indicated that they are looking for additional ways to be more sustainable. Other respondents voiced that moving toward household and community sustainability will necessitate a culture change away from consumptive life-style, large houses and cars, etc. and toward simpler living. Individual actions alone are not enough - there needs to be community actions as well. Several

respondents promoted simpler living (composting, local/organic food choices, raising animals, hanging clothes outside). Respondents noted the connection between sustainability and household economics (for instance, you can save money through frugality, simpler living, and reduction of consumption). The alternative view is that sustainability is costly, e.g., solar, EV cars, etc.).

Negative Reaction to Sustainability

Negative reactions (6) were from the small subset who are not supportive of sustainability initiatives at either the personal or community/government level. These respondents were wary of some of the suggestions in the survey, doubtful that these initiatives would have significant impacts, and not supportive of government actions (or social pressure) to impose sustainability rules.

Other concerns include the financial cost for seniors and low-income people, the negative aesthetics, and potential damages to the environment from solar and wind developments. A few respondents indicated that city resources should be invested in other services (roads, employment, economics).

Thanks, Good Luck & Support for sustainability

There were (over) 42 comments indicating support for the work of the committee and applauding efforts to improve sustainability in the community.

Many expressed hopes to see Stoughton take on new initiatives to improve water quality, restore natural areas, improve park and bike trails, establish public transportation, and become a more sustainable community. In general, these respondents voiced support for the city taking sustainable action and residents being involved and educated in collective actions for sustainability.

Business Involvement in Sustainability

There were only 4-5 comments about sustainability. These focused on encouraging businesses to discuss and implement sustainability as it impacts them and their business. One respondent suggested 'green incentives' to attract and support sustainable businesses.

Importance of Sustainability

While many respondents supported the survey and committee in general, others emphasized the importance of sustainability in general (9). These comments supported the idea of positioning Stoughton (and its identity) as a sustainable community. "[A] broader community commitment to sustainability is required to achieve the necessary goals, and Stoughton should lead in that effort.'

Role of City Government

Respondents were concerned with the role of City Government (8 responses, but note that many similar comments are coded with subcategory 'community economics & Govt. spending).

Three of the responses were skeptical about the role of city government in sustainability, with recommendations for the City to focus on infrastructure and basic services; to regulate less; and to consider limitations to household finances.

Five responses were in support of the City government making sustainable changes and playing a role in encouraging community-wide improvements, activities, and educational outreach/assistance. Several called for the city to have public policy responses to address climate change, with a strong proactive stance. One respondent noted that staffing would be essential to implement the plan. Suggestions for city actions include sustainable city operations, community level improvements in transportation, bikeability, park space, and technical assistance to residents.

Household Economics

Comments about household economics (16, plus several coded elsewhere) indicate that many households are strapped, paying high taxes, and concerned about any mandate that would increase taxes. The committee/City is encouraged to consider equity in all recommendations made. Residents who cannot afford to make improvements to their homes would need financial assistance.

To get buy-in for sustainability measures, the committee has to assure that there are programs to support low-income and middle-income households to make home improvements.

Community Economics & Government Spending

There were a lot of comments about community economics and government spending (18). Many are consistent with the 'household economics' category and the role of city government. Concerns were voiced about using/raising tax dollars for sustainability initiatives. Respondents stressed that the role of city government is to support infrastructure (streets) and provide services such as snow plowing. In this view, sustainability should be the responsibility of individuals, private businesses, and philanthropic organizations.

While several respondents indicate that the city should not spend for these efforts, others support city spending if prudent: "Cost effectiveness and data driven projects should be the key to any decisions made by the city council." Additionally, there is support for smart growth (businesses, new households).

The comments in this section are important in that they illustrate the need to communicate with the public why the committee is suggesting any investments in sustainability and what the returns will be (also, what the costs of not doing this will be).

Incentives

There were mixed opinions regarding incentives (5 respondents specifically commented on incentives). Some respondents were against incentives, in that taxpayer dollars (paid by everyone) would go to support only a few. Respondents noted that there are better funding

sources for individual incentives (State energy office, Focus on Energy, Federal \$ available from the Infrastructure reinvestment Act) than city funding.

Other respondents noted that incentives can invite change and should be utilized to support individual households with fewer financial resources. To get businesses and developers to make these sustainable changes, the city must be willing to implement financial incentives. Households should also be able to receive financial incentives to offset the costs of these investments.

Air Quality & Public Health

Air quality and public health is important to respondents (there were 14 responses addressing air quality total - code plus subcodes). Many respondents complained about the Uniroyal Plant and suggested that the plant be moved to the industrial park. Residents are concerned about the downtown remaining a place that is appealing to residents and visitors. Other concerns were voiced about the dump and a vinyl factory.

UniRoyal Plant

At least 7 comments were registered about the bad smell and toxins from the Uniroyal plant. All would like to see the plant removed. Note that the EPA publishes a Toxics Release Inventory that tracks the management of toxic chemicals that pose a threat to human health. In 53589 zip code, top facilities for release are Stoughton Trailers and Uniroyal in 2021. https://enviro.epa.gov/triexplorer/tri_factsheet.factsheet?pzip=53589&pyear=2021&pParent=TRI&pDataSet=TRIQ1

Air & Noise Pollution from Vehicles

There were two comments about noise pollution. One suggestion was to reduce air and noise pollution by rerouting trucks and heavy traffic away from downtown. The second comment noted that restricting idling should be an individual choice.

Household Building Materials

Concerns about home building materials and health (4) suggested improving the quality of materials used in new developments/buildings and reducing household toxic chemicals. Ensure sustainable changes do not negatively impact public health.

Community Education & Partnerships

Two comments were in the parent code. One was in support of farmer's markets, garage sales, or "fix-it" events where the community can keep items out of landfill and help people increase the longevity of items. This could be an easy win for an organization like Sustainable Stoughton/Innovation Center. A second comment was in support of schools working closely with the City on community education.

Education Opportunities

10 respondents offered concrete recommendations on education programs desired, both for community residents and schools. Respondents support creating educational resources to teach residents about decisions they can make within their own households: proper recycling, reducing food waste, lawn care, gardening, composting, solar, etc.

There is strong support of sustainability education being built into schools and teaching children about sustainability in their city.

Public Input & Engagement

Some respondents specifically stated that they appreciate opportunities for public input (6 comments). At least two people indicated that they'd like to volunteer.

A respondent specifically requested transparency in the process: Keep asking for public input and publicize the results of these efforts (both good and bad).

Communicating with the Public

There were 8 comments about communicating with the public as communication and transparency are critical. Recommendations included: Use existing lines of communication to share educational resources and more community outreach materials; keep sustainability conversations on the table; promote sustainability using a positive public education campaign; provide information on what resources are already available to the community. One comment was about terminology: "conservation of non-renewable resources" might resonate more with the community (over sustainability).

Land Use

Most comments are in sub-categories. One comment about planned development. Avoid "a wasteland of big-box stores, acres of paved parking lots, and cheap construction."

Rain Gardens

Room for education and clarifications regarding rain gardens and acknowledging that rain gardens may not be possible for all households.

Native Plantings & Edible Landscapes

There's lots of love in Stoughton for native plantings and biodiversity in lawns, green spaces, retention ponds, and in parks (11 comments, all in support of more native plantings). Support voiced for no-mow areas.

Tree Planting & Canopy

Respondents have very strong opinions about trees (10 comments). At least 4 respondents are strongly opposed to planting trees in the terrace (park rows), because of the cost to homeowners for sidewalk repairs, roto-rooter needs, etc. There were additional complaints about how trees are taken care of or not taken care of. Other respondents are very supportive of

trees and recommended particular varieties (Oaks) and tree plantings in particular areas (along paths and to shade sidewalks, especially stretches along Hwy 51; in new developments).

Housing & Development

This code was used as a catch-all for comments about housing and development (28 comments).

Respondents are concerned about slowing urban sprawl and protecting farmland, woodland, and natural areas. Respondents prefer to contain development within the city boundaries through infill, renovation of existing structures, and repurposing of buildings that are not in use. There is support for planning and development that has character consistent with the community and that supports walkability, smart growth, affordability, increase in school enrollment and tax base. Older buildings need to be renovated and made to be energy efficient. There is support for improving historic buildings and growing downtown businesses and unique retail.

There is debate about whether the City is growing too fast or too slow, but several respondents remarked that smart growth is essential to continue paying for services and to attract young families. Others felt the new developments and high-rises being built obstruct natural views and should not have been approved. Several respondents mentioned that TIF could be tied to sustainable building.

Natural Areas & Parkland

There is strong support for park land, river access, woodlands, and nature areas (9 comments). Stoughton residents value their natural areas and ecosystems. Respondents emphasized the importance of conservation and restoration in sustainability initiatives, and in making natural spaces accessible to the public, like a park with paved pedestrian paths. This code is linked to 'housing and development' in that residents do not want to lose green spaces to developments.

Farmland & Farming

This code captures comments related to farmland (7). Respondents are very much in favor of protecting farmland. The Town of Dunn is contiguous to the City of Stoughton. The town has put in place protection of agricultural land and hopes that the city of Stoughton will respect the town's control over development rights. Respondents were also concerned about promoting sustainable farming practices.

Solid Waste Management

There were no comments coded in this parent code.

Recycling

There were 11 comments regarding recycling. Respondents would like clearer information about recycling, including 'how-to's' (lists of what can be recycled), information about whether materials are actually recycled and reused. There were specific requests made: (1) picking up recycling more often (weekly basis) and providing more/bigger containers for collection, (2)

recycling in multi-family housing, (3) policies that discourage plastic bag usage, (4) outreach about recycling and garbage disposal practices, (6) Opportunities for shredding of sensitive papers, and (7) a system for recycling electronics.

Composting & Food Waste

Respondents also had a lot to say about composting (11). Respondents voiced interest in the City supporting a community food waste collection and composting program (though concern was voiced about this raising taxes). There would also need to be provision of educational materials for homeowners with yards to learn about composting.

Transportation

The parent code captures comments that did not fit in the subcodes: Build upon/use existing infrastructure to improve public transit; explore alternatives to salting roads and sidewalks, such as brine.

Electric Vehicles

There were only 3 comments about electric vehicles. Two of these were supportive of replacing city vehicles with EV and implementing EV public transit. A third comment indicated that EVs are not a financially accessible investment for many families.

Pedestrian Access

There were 4 comments regarding pedestrian access (note that several additional comments regarding walkability are found in the bicycle infrastructure code). Respondents said that there was room for improved pedestrian access and safety, including improving sidewalks. The light crossings are a step in the right direction.

One idea for an easy win is to try no cars downtown once/month. During major community events, the streets are pedestrian use only and this is great for businesses- Stoughton should consider making this a more common practice.

Public Transportation Linking Stoughton to Madison and other Areas

Of the 14 comments regarding public transportation between Stoughton and other communities, 13 were strongly in favor. Most comments regarded public transportation (electric bus, ride share, light rail) between Madison and Stoughton. There was enthusiasm for some system, both to support sustainability and to get people to jobs, shopping. Public transportation between Madison and Stoughton would be especially beneficial for those who cannot easily drive between cities. This accessibility would open residents up to resources in both cities and improve quality of life.

The one comment against connecting Stoughton with Madison was out of concern of Stoughton retaining its own identity and autonomy, and not to become a 'suburb' of Madison.

Public Transportation Within Stoughton

The four comments on intra-city transportation were all in favor of a system to move people within the city. Recommendations include a city trolley, busses (with extended boundaries to get students to school), and an affordable cab service with respectful drivers.

Bicycle Infrastructure

Of the 17 comments regarding bicycle infrastructure, 15 are asking for more bike lanes, connected bike infrastructure, and safe routes. The expansion of the bike network between Stoughton and Madison, Oregon, and other places was also mentioned. Additionally, respondents noted that bike lanes need to be protected. The two comments that were not fully in support of additional bike infrastructure were concerned about strategic placement of bike routes and potential for bike infrastructure to impede traffic, parking, and garbage collection.

Water

There were 3 comments coded in the parent code (which didn't fit elsewhere). Respondents supported a city-wide solution for harvesting rainwater and incentivizing residents to collect rain, gray water, and runoff. One respondent encouraged the City to consider stormwater management that takes into consideration increased precipitation and storm events due to climate change.

The Dam & Whitewater Park

The proposed removal of the Fourth St. dam has some residents very upset (8 comments). Respondents voiced concerns about both the process by which the water park was approved and the potential environmental repercussions of removing the dam.

Lakes, Rivers, Water Bodies

While this code only has one response (limit runoff to lakes), we know from other survey questions that the quality of water bodies is of great concern to Stoughton residents.

Water Quality

Water quality was only mentioned by one respondent concerned about water quality in their own household and its impacts on health.

Energy

Energy generation and use are key aspects of moving toward becoming a more sustainable community. Nevertheless, this parent code received few comments (4). One respondent voiced support for city operations setting net zero as a goal. One comment reflected interest in nuclear energy and a third in hydropower. A fourth respondent encouraged incentives for residential and commercial geothermal heating.

Solar - Con

There were 6 responses expressing negativity toward solar energy, due to the environmental impacts of mining, processing and fabricating materials; lithium battery production; and the waste generated solar panels (non-recyclable solar panels). Respondents also mentioned that

wind turbines are killing birds and wildlife. Using farmland for solar farms (as in land use code) was not preferred.

Solar - Pro

Two respondents indicated support for residential solar energy. One additional respondent noted that they would support the placement of a solar farm in the area.

Survey Flaws

There were 22 comments about the survey tool itself. The most common response was that the survey did not account for residents who already made some sustainable changes. The survey should have had a response option 'already implemented' for all those questions that asked about willingness to implement specific practices. Some respondents had some trouble understanding the language used in the survey; several requested that a definition of sustainability be provided.

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Method

The City of Stoughton's Sustainability Committee worked with the Community Development Institute at the Division of Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison to conduct a survey of Stoughton residents in order to better understand their opinions related to sustainability.

Data in this report was drawn from the survey, which was fielded January 13, 2023 through March 19, 2023 using Qualtrics, an online survey platform hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A total of 554 residents completed a sufficient number of questions to be considered complete and, thus, included in the analysis. The survey was designed to take 15 minutes. The average respondent took 16.9 minutes (SD=64.66 minutes) to complete the survey.

Respondent Recruitment

Respondents were recruited through a combination of methods. A postcard was sent to each residential address in the City of Stoughton inviting all household members aged 18 or older to take the survey. Stoughton Utilities included a flyer in its February utility bills that also invited all household members aged 18 or older to take the survey. The Stoughton Area School District emailed an invitation to parents in the school district using its PeachJar parent portal. Notices were posted on the City of Stoughton website, at the library, and at City Hall. For those who preferred a paper-and-pencil format, copies of the survey were made available at the Stoughton Public Library and the Stoughton City Hall.

Results Analysis

The initial analysis in this draft includes online responses only. Results were analyzed using SPSS, a statistical program by IBM. In addition to tabulating overall results for all respondents, tests were conducted to determine if there were differences in subgroups of respondents. Differences that are both statistically significant and useful are included in this draft.

City of Stoughton residents and non-residents answers were compared. Non-residents are considered those living in the Stoughton Area School District, but not the City of Stoughton, those who live in the area, and those who live elsewhere. Answers were statistically identical with the exception of two small differences in answers among residents and non-residents: non-residents are slightly less likely to plant trees or conduct a home energy audit than City of Stoughton residents.

Since polarization among conservatives and non-conservatives is well documented, answers for conservatives were compared with answers for those who are not conservative. Conservatives included those who self-identified as "very conservative" or "conservative" when asked "Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a conservative, moderate, or liberal when it comes to different issues?" Non-conservatives were those who self-identified as "moderate," "liberal," or "very liberal." Conservatives comprised roughly 10% of respondents. There were statistically significant differences in answers for each question when comparing conservatives to others and these are noted in the results.

There were very few differences based on age. A preference for preserving farmland is positively correlated with age. A preference for expanding bike paths and a willingness to participate in ride sharing to Madison are negatively correlated with age. However, differences are small, and it would not be accurate to say are substantially different in their viewpoints based on age.

Respondent Demographics

Table 1a: Respondent Demographics	
Age (n=500)	Mean(SD)
Years	51.7 (15.5)
Gender (n=533)	%
Male	40.9
Female	57.4
Non-binary/Other	1.8
Children 18 or Younger at Home (n=526)	%
Yes	32.7
No	67.3
Place of Residence (n=539)	%
City of Stoughton	83.5
Stoughton School District, but not the City	13.9
Surrounding Area	1.0
Elsewhere	0.7
Is Stoughton Your Hometown? (n=536)	%
Yes, it's my original hometown	17.2
Yes, it's my adopted hometown	48.5
No, my hometown is elsewhere	34.3
Which Best Describes Your Employment Status? (n=535)	%
Employed Full Time	53.3
Employed Part Time	6.2
Self Employed	4.9
Unemployed, Looking for Work	1.1
Retired	29.0
Homemaker	1.7
Student	1.1
Other	2.8
Have you or anyone in your household had to work two or more jobs in order to make ends meet at any point over the past five years? (n=508)	%
Yes	21.1
No	78.9
Total Number of Respondents	594

Note: 594 respondents answered a sufficient number of questions to be considered complete. No single question was answered by all respondents.

Table 1b: Respondent demographics	
What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply)	%
White	78.6
Black or African American	1.2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.0
Asian or Asian American	0.8
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	1.3
Other	3.7
Generally speaking, do you consider yourself conservative, moderate, or liberal when it comes to different issues? (n=487)	%
Very conservative	2.8
Conservative	7.4
Moderate	37.1
Liberal	36.4
Very liberal	16.3
What is your household income? (n=499)	%
Less than \$20,000	7.4
\$20,000 to \$40,000	9.1
\$40,001 to \$60,000	13.6
\$60,001 to \$80,000	12.4
\$80,001 to \$100,000	23.8
\$100,001 - \$150,000	15.3
\$150,001 or greater	16.1
Total Number of Respondents	594
*Respondents asked to check all that apply	

Table 2. As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

	The health of local lakes, rivers, and groundwater	Increasing native plant and wildlife habitat	Preserving farmland
	%	%	%
Not at all important (1)	0	4	6
Somewhat important (2)	2	9	12
Moderately important (3)	4	17	27
Very important (4)	21	29	31
Extremely important (5)	73	41	23
n	573	572	573
Missing	21	22	21
Mean	4.65	3.92	3.54
Median	5.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	5	5	4
Standard Deviation	0.668	1.155	1.148
Conservative mean(SD)	4.40(0.87)	3.46(1.29)	3.96(1.09)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	4.67(0.64)	3.97(1.13)	3.50(1.15)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table 3a. As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

	Plant shade trees in public parks and terraces?	Work with businesses, the school district, and residents to reduce solid waste?	Review ordinances and land use plan to promote more efficient use of land and infrastructure?	Expand efforts to educate the public about proper recycling and hazardous waste disposal?
	%	%	%	%
Not at all important (1)	3	4	6	5
Somewhat important (2)	7	6	8	9
Moderately important (3)	17	23	23	23
Very important (4)	32	33	33	35
Extremely important (5)	41	34	30	28
n	565	564	566	562
Missing	29	30	28	32
Mean	4.03	3.86	3.74	3.72
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	5	5	4	4
Standard Deviation	1.05	1.09	1.13	1.12
Conservative mean(SD)	3.54(1.24)	3.17(1.19)	3.19(1.25)	3.19(1.23)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	4.08(1.02)	3.93(1.05)	3.80(1.11)	3.77(1.10)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 3b. As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

	Provide incentives to developers to exceed energy efficiency standards?	Develop additional bicycle and pedestrian paths and lanes?	Install solar panels on city property (e.g. city buildings, parking lots, park shelters)?	Reduce city mowing by replacing some under-utilized city lawns with native grasses and plants?
	%	%	%	%
Not at all important (1)	8	10	11	11
Somewhat important (2)	8	14	9	14
Moderately important (3)	25	18	23	20
Very important (4)	32	22	29	24
Extremely important (5)	28	36	29	31
n	568	568	572	564
Missing	26	26	22	30
Mean	3.63	3.61	3.55	3.50
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	4	5	4	5
Standard Deviation	1.19	1.35	1.29	1.34
Conservative mean(SD)	2.85(1.14)	2.60(1.43)	2.42(1.18)	2.33(1.21)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	3.71(1.16)	3.71(1.31)	3.66(1.24)	3.62(1.30)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 3c. As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?

	Explore the feasibility of a community wide food waste composting program?	Install rain gardens in street terraces?	Create a Park-and-Ride for carpooling to Madison?	Install electric vehicle charging stations at different locations in the City of Stoughton?
	%	%	%	%
Not at all important (1)	12	12	13	19
Somewhat important (2)	14	13	18	16
Moderately important (3)	24	28	30	25
Very important (4)	23	27	25	24
Extremely important (5)	27	21	14	17
n	564	563	567	568
Missing	30	31	27	26
Mean	3.39	3.33	3.08	3.03
Median	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode	5	3	3	3
Standard Deviation	1.33	1.26	1.23	1.36
Conservative mean(SD)	2.46(1.15)	2.32(1.16)	2.31(1.13)	1.83(1.19)
Not Conservative mean (SD)	3.48(1.31)	3.43(1.23)	3.16(1.21)	3.15(1.31)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 3d. As we look for ways to become a more sustainable community, how important is it that the City tries to do the following?		
	Expand Madison metro bus service to Stoughton?	Establish a "no idling" vehicle policy to reduce emissions?
	%	%
Not at all important (1)	21	25
Somewhat important (2)	16	21
Moderately important (3)	23	25
Very important (4)	21	17
Extremely important (5)	20	12
n	570	566
Missing	22	28
Mean	3.02	2.69
Median	3.00	3.00
Mode	3	1
Standard Deviation	1.41	1.33
Conservative mean(SD)	2.21(1.44)	1.83(1.10)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	3.10(1.38)	2.78(1.32)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 4. Would you support or oppose sustainability measures that ...

	Are budget neutral for the City?	Would cost the City money in the short term, but save dollars in the long term?	Would cost the City money in the short term, and improve sustainability, but would have no monetary return on investment over the long term?
	%	%	%
Strongly support (5)	58	44	22
Support (4)	23	35	30
Not sure (3)	15	13	28
Oppose (2)	2	3	11
Strongly oppose (1)	2	4	9
n	559	559	557
Missing	35	35	37
Mean	4.31	4.11	3.41
Median	5.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	5	5	4
Standard Deviation	0.94	1.03	1.20
Conservative mean(SD)	4.00(0.93)	3.51(0.98)	2.62(1.15)
Not Conservative mean (SD)	4.35(0.93)	4.14(1.01)	3.53(1.21)

1= Strongly oppose; 5=Strongly support; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 5. Would you support or oppose the City of Stoughton adopting ambitious carbon reduction goals, such as achieving a 100% renewable energy supply by 2050?

	%
Strongly support (5)	41
Support (4)	26
Not sure (3)	15
Oppose (2)	8
Strongly oppose (1)	9
n	559
Missing	35
Mean	3.81
Median	4.00
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	1.30
Conservative mean(SD)	2.38(1.25)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	3.96(1.22)

1= Strongly oppose; 5=Strongly support; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 6a. In your opinion, what should the goals be for a city-wide sustainability initiative? Please check all that apply.

	Improve the health and well-being of community residents	Reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill and ensure that all waste is disposed of properly	Ensure sustainability is considered in decision-making processes by the City of Stoughton	Ensure sustainability is considered in the City budget process
	%	%	%	%
Yes	69	67	66	63
No	31	33	34	37
Conservative				
Yes	60	54	44	42
No	40	46	56	58
Not Conservative				
Yes	73	71	71	68
No	27	29	29	32

Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 6b. In your opinion, what should the goals be for a city-wide sustainability initiative? Please check all that apply.

	Increase Stoughton residents' awareness of sustainability	Increase use of sustainable building practices, including net-zero.	Connect to state-wide or nation-wide efforts to reduce carbon emissions
	%	%	%
Yes	62	58	53
No	38	42	47
Conservative			
Yes	46	27	19
No	54	75	81
Not Conservative			
Yes	66	63	59
No	34	37	41

Table 7a. Would you or anyone in your household be likely to do the following if information and resources, such as assistance, rebates, or financial incentives, were available?

	Install a smart thermostat or LED light bulbs for greater efficiency?	Plant shade trees on your property?	Convert some of your lawn to native plants and grasses?	Upgrade windows, furnace, or other parts of your home for greater energy efficiency?
	%	%	%	%
Definitely yes (5)	54	44	40	37
Probably yes (4)	31	29	21	41
Not sure (3)	7	14	15	12
Probably no (2)	3	7	12	7
Definitely no (1)	6	5	12	3
n	510	511	513	411
Missing	84	83	81	83
Mean	4.25	4.03	3.65	4.04
Median	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	5	5	5	4
Standard Deviation	1.083	1.148	1.413	1.013
Conservative mean(SD)	3.76(1.34)	3.48(1.42)	2.58(1.42)	3.37(1.20)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	4.30(1.04)	4.06(1.11)	3.75(1.37)	4.09(0.97)

1= Definitely no; 5=Definitely yes; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 7b. Would you or anyone in your household be likely to do the following if information and resources, such as assistance, rebates, or financial incentives, were available?

	Conduct a home energy audit?	Install rooftop or backyard solar?	Upgrade home appliances for greater energy efficiency?	Install low flow shower heads or faucets?
	%	%	%	%
Definitely yes (5)	36	31	29	23
Probably yes (4)	41	32	44	33
Not sure (3)	13	16	14	19
Probably no (2)	6	12	9	16
Definitely no (1)	4	9	4	10
n	512	511	511	511
Missing	82	83	83	83
Mean	3.99	3.64	3.86	3.46
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	4	4	4	4
Standard Deviation	1.052	1.277	1.064	1.259
Conservative mean(SD)	3.19(1.22)	2.60(1.18)	3.17(1.29)	2.70(1.28)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	4.07(1.00)	3.74(1.24)	3.92(1.02)	3.51(1.23)

1= Definitely no; 5=Definitely yes; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 8. Would you be willing to do the following, if the infrastructure in Stoughton made this possible?

	Take public transportation between Stoughton and other communities?	Commute to work by biking or walking?*	Participate in ride sharing to Madison for work?*
	%	%	%
Definitely yes (5)	21	26	11
Probably yes (4)	23	14	15
Not sure (3)	19	9	16
Probably no (2)	20	17	27
Definitely no (1)	17	33	30
n	554	357	388
Missing/Not applicable	40	237	206
Mean	3.11	2.83	2.52
Median	3.00	2.00	2.00
Mode	4	1	1
Standard Deviation	1.393	1.640	1.357
Conservative	2.33(1.37)	1.88(1.43)	1.92(1.27)
Not Conservative	3.19(1.37)	2.94(1.63)	2.58(1.35)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$; *Note that both questions about commuting had "not applicable" as an answer option. These were tallied with the missing responses.

Table 9. Is sustainability a priority in your household? Should it be a priority for Stoughton?		
	Is sustainability a priority in your own household?	Should sustainability be a priority for the City of Stoughton?
	%	%
Definitely yes (5)	46	55
Probably yes (4)	37	29
Not sure (3)	9	7
Probably no (2)	6	5
Definitely no (1)	3	4
n	545	544
Missing	49	50
Mean	4.15	4.25
Median	4.00	5.00
Mode	5	5
Standard Deviation	0.995	1.071
Conservative	3.44(1.20)	3.56(1.17)
Not Conservative	4.25(0.94)	4.32(1.04)

1= Not at all important; 5=Extremely important; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 10. *The average house in Wisconsin uses about 700 kilowatt hours of electricity each month. If your house used the average amount of electricity, and you could buy electricity made from renewable sources at an extra monthly cost of \$1 for every 150 kilowatt hours, how much renewable energy would you be willing to purchase each month?*

Assume that \$1 would buy 150 of the 700 kilowatt hours your house uses and \$5 would buy all 700 kilowatt hours that your house uses. - Amount I would be willing to add to my utility bill for renewable energy

?

		%
0		7.3
\$1.00		3.3
\$2.00		6.7
\$3.00		14.2
\$4.00		3.6
\$5.00		64.9
n		450
Missing		292
Mean		3.98
Median		5.00
Mode		5
Standard Deviation		1.59
Conservative mean(SD)		3.26(1.79)
Not Conservative mean(SD)		4.06(1.54)

1= Strongly oppose; 5=Strongly support; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Table 11. *The average home has 67 light bulbs. If your home had the average number of light bulbs, and you were able to purchase high quality, energy efficient LED light bulbs for \$1 each, how many light bulbs would you be willing to replace?*

Assume that 1 LED light bulb would require \$1, five light LED bulbs would cost \$5, and replacing all 67 would cost \$67. - Number of light bulbs I would replace?

	%
0 - 9	6.7
10-19	4.1
20-29	8.3
30-39	6.8
40-49	3.4
50-66	5.7
67	65.0
n	49
Missing	103
Mean	53.11
Median	67
Mode	67
Standard Deviation	21.73
Conservative mean(SD)	45.57(26.25)
Not Conservative mean(SD)	53.77(21.18)

1= Strongly oppose; 5=Strongly support; Note that 10% of the sample self-identified as conservative or very conservative. Differences in conservative/not conservative are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$

Comments

Q1 - Is there anything that you would like to share with the committee as we are working toward making Stoughton a more sustainable community?

1. - our house wouldn't work for solar panels unfortunately -we would LOVE a composting program - a city trolley would be AMAZING, electric and just loops through Stoughton consistently from one end of town to the other -increase our recycling capabilities and provide bigger recycling containers to residents, consider every week pick up for recycling
2. For god's sake use the train infrastructure that's already here! 2) Make the recycling and trash rules easier to understand and follow: the various resources (John's Disposal website, the city website, mailed handouts and flyers) give incomplete and/or contradictory information. 3) Storm drains & water collection: the neighborhood I live in has very few storm drains. Figure out a way to harvest all our rainwater. Create incentives for residents to collect rain & gray water and runoff (water used in home laundry, shower, outdoor rain barrel systems etc.). 4) Disallow car washing in driveways.
3. A lot of people making some changes, and learning to do it efficiently and effectively, will create a bigger difference than a few large cities/corporation/countries doing it all. Thank you for helping us all do our part.
4. A proactive approach and careful planning for sustaining our community and its residents is strongly encouraged. Thank you!
5. Air quality is important to the health of our citizens. The "burnt rubber" smell coming from the Uniroyal plant on a regular basis does not fit with a healthy and sustainable community. Even if it does meet air quality standards, I also believe this detracts visitors from coming to or returning to Stoughton. I would support exploring tax incentives to have the Uniroyal plant move to the industry park near Stoughton Trailers. This would clean up the air in the city while protecting jobs.
6. All of it is extremely important and I commend this group for going forward with making Stoughton more sustainable. I feel we have a unique community and could get support and traction in all areas with the many different groups; it would be finding the commonalities and enthusiasm for each area. More articles in The Hub, more events, social media, news channel outlets and more surveys like this will help educate our diverse community. I hope members of the group will be part of the February 20th meeting with Stoughton Trailers as many of these initiatives listed seem like common ground. Thank you so much for forward thinking, moving Stoughton in the direction to being a model for other communities, and making our community a better place to live in the future.
7. Allow individuals to make choices for themselves based on their individual preferences. Don't spend taxpayer money that you don't have, then keep asking for more and more as you hand it out to a select few, while complaining that you don't have enough. Focus on the priorities and basic obligations government should provide, and focus on doing that well. We always hear there's not enough money for cops, teachers, school facilities, healthcare, repairs to roads/pipes/power grid/bridges, etc., and yet here you are asking how government can give more money away. Get back to taking care of the basics.

Stop forming useless committees that do nothing but give away taxpayer money when you can't even fund your basic government functions.

8. An important issue, but great consideration needs to be given to the added expenses that could be incurred to so many households that are already financially strained, particularly following covid. Reaching a solution that adds little or no additional costs, while this balance may be difficult to achieve, would be the optimum goal.
9. As a small business owner in downtown Stoughton, we are actively looking for ways to be more sustainable and reduce our waste, both in our businesses, and in our household. Thank you for conducting this survey!
10. As citizens we need to be responsible with our resources and their sustainability. The suggestions proposed have already proven to be not only unsuccessful in attaining the outcome desired, but also an ongoing expense that is a heavy burden. I do not think that it is the government's place to use tax dollars for all these different initiatives. Private businesses are already installing charging stations. Philanthropic organizations could offer assistance to individuals relating to programs that are important to them.
11. At a community level, I think Stoughton should make sure all of the City operations are completely sustainable. I think it should encourage community-level improvements to sustainability e.g. greater bikeability/walkability in Stoughton, more green space, better public transit to popular areas. I think it should educate and provide technical assistance for residents who want to improve their own sustainability. I believe the Stoughton water and electric utilities should have expert staff to assist residents with things like solar panel purchase and installation, connectivity, efficiency recommendations, and landscaping recommendations. I do NOT think the city should be in the business of incentives. There are much better funding sources (e.g. state energy office, Focus on Energy, feds) for that.
12. Be realistic about what is attainable. Homes are made of horrible materials...e.g. vinyl siding. How about the toxic insulation that blows around the new homes being built? Or the garbage left behind by the commercial and residential builders? I see city officials driving by garbage all the time. Enact meaningful policy like building material requirements. Make builders plant trees and rain gardens. Start with root cause and work from there. Please do not act as if the commercial farms that surround Stoughton do not have a huge impact versus a handful of residents who are sustainability hypocrites. I have solar all over my neighborhood... On the tops of houses where people drive 2-3 suvs, fill their garbage and recycling to the top every week, and dump commercial chemicals on their lawns. Their kids eat garbage and the packaging blows everywhere. Houses are full of toxic chemicals... You cannot safely walk to the highschool from Nordic and Westview ridge developments. Let alone ride a bike there... EV charging stations? In Stoughton? I can count the # of families in this community that can afford Teslas and other evs. What kind of bs use of tax money is that. Stoughton has 1 maybe 2 places where executives can build homes. Everyone else is middle class. Middle class families don't buy \$50k evs. Think long term not political purple squirrels.
13. Better manner publicizing resources available to residents and visitors. We have no way to delineate what is available here and how to obtain them.

14. Bicycle lanes to lessen auto mobility and increase trail access to as many residents as possible in new constructions, and lanes like large cities do for bikes in green and reflector street separators.
15. Bike lane on Main Street would be nice
16. Building materials should move towards being more sustainable in general, with efficiency added into new builds. Retrofitting doesn't make financial sense in most cases for cost of upgrade vs long-term savings.
17. Busses please! More bike paths.
18. city living and neighbors make food/compostable material natural disposal not the easiest thing. Alternative options and education of not filling up your trash can with these items would be awesome
19. Concerned that although we separate recycle from garbage, are those items really getting recycled?
20. Consider smart growth and sustainability in new developments. Not using farmland to create multiple housing developments at one time. People move to Stoughton for the small town community and clean environment.
21. Consider using themes of "conservation of non renewable resources" when you describe sustainability, resiliency, and topics like carbon reduction when you talk with members of the community. Some are resistant to change, they tend to also be people who hunt, fish, or recreate outdoors in some fashion. Sustainability is embraced by the left, conservation is mildly accepted by the right, and would probably spark more positive discourse
22. Continued education and outreach regarding sustainability throughout the city would be nice to see!
23. Cost effectiveness and data driven projects should be the key to any decisions made by the city council.
24. Daily (Electric) Bus service from Stoughton to campus & major shopping & back. Find a way to save wasted food in our school lunch programs & donate to farmers & reduce amount going to landfill or find a way to compost it. Work to find a way to reroute heavy truck traffic from going through our downtown. The heavy truck traffic creates so much noise pollution & air pollution a person can not enjoy leisurely walking on the sidewalks or having a coffee outside Fosdal's or a beer outside Viking Brew Pub. Make the downtown more friendly & desirable to attract more businesses & consumers to help our community grow & thrive.
25. Do this now or get left behind. Stoughton has gained momentum and visibility. Let's keep moving forward.
26. Don't mess with the Yahara River at the Fourth St dam.
27. Don't replace green spaces with concrete!!
28. Don't use city tax dollars on one sided surveys or for incentives that only a few people will use to feel good. I would much rather just continue to have good basic city services, infrastructure and reliable / safe utilities while helping to develop and grow our city with more businesses / industry and entry level homes/apartments which will help bring in young families to reverse declining school enrollment.

29. Don't forget us out here in the country. Respect our boundaries. We provide land for food and trees and habitat for animals. The town of Dunn has worked hard to protect its land from development. Let us be an enclave against the onslaught. We could be a jewel in your crown!
30. During this time of existing and anticipated inflation increases, you should be focusing on reducing costs to the residents of this community. Contemplating new ways of spending more money doesn't seem productive right now. Middle income and low income residents are struggling to put food on the table and gas in their cars while the city is trying to think of more ways to spend more money. "C'mon people, what are you thinking?"
31. Encourage business/industry to make these same sustainability changes. Create "Green/sustainable" incentives to attract sustainable industry/business practices. Make Stoughton a "Sustainable First" community. Make this a high-value to attract businesses / producers of Green/Sustainable products and systems to Stoughton. Create incentives to attract these kinds of businesses. Like Verona is known for Epic (pros & cons). What if Stoughton was known for Sustainable business/industries. This is smart growth.
32. Encourage growing native plants.
33. Encouraging biodiversity in lawns and native wildflowers for pollinators on the sides of roads would be awesome! Also enforcing a recycling option for landlords. I hate that I can't recycle because I live in an apartment building. I also strongly support the community composting and would encourage people who have yards to learn about composting as well.
34. Ensure that all programs/offerings consider equity.
35. Frugality is a form of sustainability. Save on water, power, heat bills is sustainability that has been around forever. We put biodegradable food waste in the trash to keep it out of the water treatment system. Composting would be fine if the CITY picked it up and took it to a central location but unwanted on our site. Idle or not is personal decision not rule of law material. Solar if it is not worse for the environment than not having it. Mining and processing and fabricating must be included in considerations.
36. Give info in regards to programs & what benefits/ incentives are available.
37. Giving incentives towards home owners or land owners who convert mowed green spaces into native plant no mow spaces would be a step towards reducing chemical use.
38. Good for Stoughton in pursuing these ideas! I applaud this, the renewing of the blighted riverfront, the whitewater park, and the fact that Dane County bike paths will extend into our city. We have lived here 30+ years and it's SO good to FINALLY have city leadership looking at creative, forward thinking change and growth for us all. Nobody moves or remains in a city because it has a super Wal-Mart. Time for Stoughton to join the future instead of hanging so tightly onto 1950's nostalgia!!
39. Good luck! It's very difficult to get people to change their habits. For example, I know people who drive less than 1/2 mile to work and wouldn't consider walking. Others I know in Madison, who would never consider taking a bus. But, good good luck. We support your efforts here in Stoughton.
40. Good luck. The loudest voices you will probably hear will be opposed to anything new that is suggested. The 5th generation locals hate that new ideas are being looked at. I am familiar with a city that was very

similar to Stoughton that has accepted the new ideas and has flourished. Look at Valparaiso, IN and what it has become. I hope to see similar changes and improvements come to Stoughton.

41. Great survey!! Can't wait to see what comes of it.
42. Green parking lots. New parking lots and improved parking lots should be done with green technology.
43. Happy you are looking into this!
44. How can we include volunteers into this process?
45. I absolutely love that Stoughton is truly considering going green. I'd love to attend a board meeting and/or a planning session and bring up possible options that the city could explore and hopefully execute.
46. I already have all LED lights in my house, so some of those questions needed more alternatives for answers.
47. I already have solar panels with battery storage, drive an EV, changed lights to LED, compost food waste, and have taken action on many areas described here so fully support the initiative.
48. I am in support of any and all efforts to make Stoughton a more sustainable community!
49. I am NOT happy with the trees being put in on the properties. For one I get this is Cities property, then take care of the dang things! Mow around them. I don't have trees in my front yard for a reason. City should be trimmin/raking these leaves. If I wanted a tree I would plant one and take care of it! I get go green and all that, but then maybe you should save the woodlands instead of building more houses and apartments! Leave the woods alone for the trees! and not park row in the city! As long as the owner/renter has to take care of this little space it should be up to them if they want a tree or not planted.
50. I am PRO sustainability but I do not feel or like the idea of being forced too. It should remain a choice. I also believe that economical growth should be included/highly considered if a community is considering raising taxes for the residents. The more growth brings more jobs, and more taxpayers, which then helps too offset/lower taxes. I feel bike paths/lanes should be a separate issue, I do not ride or plan to ride a bike, if people want to ride then they should be the individuals to pay for that. I don't expect other people to pay for my choices!! AML
51. I am very concerned about all the farm land that is being sold and the development going on. If we keep destroying all this land how will farmers grow food for us? What about all of our natural habitat being destroyed, where are all of our animals supposed to go? People complain about the wildlife coming into town, it's the developers fault. This is so very concerning.
52. I am very pleased that this committee was formed and that a thoughtful and community-focused plan is being formulated. I hope that you find effective ways to get the community to buy in. I think this is the key. The idea that we can strive to live in harmony with nature by planting more trees and native plants, mowing less and eliminating chemical applications of pesticides in Stoughton, is something that I personally support without reservation. It could be implemented almost immediately. Your plan gives me hope and that seems to be in short supply in our present time.

53. I applaud your effort in this critical venture for the sustainability for future generations.
54. I appreciate that these questions are being asked!
55. I appreciate the City of Stoughton working on sustainable issues to decrease the use of valuable resources. Clean water is also an important issue and not wasting water, our most valuable resource. Thank you for this survey.
56. I appreciate the survey, but in the last part about household changes, you didn't have a box to check if we had already implemented some or all of the changes. I checked "definitely yes" but I feel that is misleading. For example, we have already installed solar panels. I also thought you combined two questions in one in this part of the survey, one about incentives/resources, and the second about things that you'd change if you had those resources.
57. I believe the most important initiatives must be public policy. I doubt the interest of my neighbors in investing any time or money in sustainability. Any efforts by individuals would have to yield a near term financial benefit or convenience to be adopted widely. How about light rail in Dane county???
58. I definitely notice whoever is in charge of agreeing to all these new buildings and land developments, well, they are an eyesore from the highway. Why are we building super tall buildings right next to roads blocking any kind of natural views. Especially the huge storage facility that got built in front of the lakes on hwy 51. Very poor planning. So many areas in fields, parks, even along the river trail that we could clean up and plant natives. Especially river trail if full of invasive. Also, why have they cut down so many trees along the river lately? OH and the SMELL coming from whatever plant is on 4th Street is toxic/noxious.
59. I don't care much about green power or reducing solid waste (landfill). I find those to be problems, but much smaller problems than emissions, or the destructive of native ecosystem. I personally believe the amount of lawn mowing we do to be a crime against humanity. And while I'm sure it makes my neighbors angry "it doesn't look clean" the point is that I absolutely hate mowing my lawn and it's absolutely awful for the planet. I would support ordinances or policies where we agree to not mow our lawns.
60. I felt like some of the questions needed an other box. For example, I'm not interested in carpooling or taking public transportation to work because I work from home. But if I did work in Madison, then I'd be interested. Also a lot of questions about being willing to switch to LED lightbulbs. We already have them everywhere in our house, so those questions weren't really relevant. Same with energy efficient appliances and smart thermostats.
61. I guess it all comes down to people caring about the issue. but with higher utility bills recently, I would think more people care! then it's about habits. you can put in bike lanes, and initiate recycling programs, and offer LED bulbs... but unless (the majority of) people really start to participate in the cause, not much changes. americans want their huge houses (w/ the heat set to 72 degrees) w/ huge yards & huge SUVs. we gotta change the culture. still, in 2023, how many people bring their own re-usable bags when they go shopping!?? it's ridiculous. hopefully stoughton can be ahead of the curve? (but it starts with a continuous, gentle, positive, public campaign promoting sustainability)

62. I have already installed LED light bulbs in my home therefore I do not need to purchase any. I do have many extra bulbs that I probably would not need so if it is possible to donate them to families who might need them??? Perhaps they could be given to the Stoughton Food Pantry? I live in the historic district and not sure if solar panels would be allowed or not. My yard can no longer add any more shade trees. Currently I have two very large trees providing shade at the west side of my home. I do have a smart thermostat at this point in time and a very energy efficient furnace and water heater.
63. I live near the old city dump. It is a contaminated, fenced off grassy field. Is this a possible site for a solar farm?
64. I love all of the ideas expressed in this survey. While it doesn't apply to my household, I'd be curious to know what kind of incentives or regulations are considered to increase sustainable farming practices in the area.
65. I saw something on a show a few months back about when all these solar panels need to be replaced, that they can't be recycled. For that reason, I would never install them in/on my home. And, I can't stand trees. The one we have left in our yard, we have to have Roto Rooter come, at least once, EVERY year. If I had my way, that one would be removed, also, but the hubby would not let me.
66. I think more affordable housing for seniors. our property taxes are so high, we won't be able to stay in our house much longer. and the cost of apartments are more than we can afford
67. I think one of the things that stands out to me weekly is how misinformed the public truly is when it comes to garbage recycling. It's either just pure laziness or they truly don't understand what can and can not be recycled. I get that it can be confusing but many recycle bins on garbage day are full of things that are not recyclable. I find it very frustrating. A simplified colorful chart mailed out would be very helpful to hopefully help people understand what they can and can not recycle.
68. I think the renewable energy cost should be absorbed by the facility/ corporations, not put on the consumer.
69. I think this is a horrible idea overall
70. I want to see sustainability promoted as a community mindset and implemented where it can be felt personally, rather than as a government project that most people don't feel impact from in their lives (solar panels on government buildings can be this way, they make sense and they are good to do, but their benefits/results don't impact the people in their lives. Ride shares or feeding household scraps to chickens, for example, are more impactful on an individual level, and I believe that will ultimately make sustainability initiatives more successful). I'm very interested in programs for composting, feeding food scraps to chickens, and for commuter ride shares to Madison. I have some experience in connecting good waste to farmers and I think there is a huge opportunity and desire to connect food scrap producers (schools, restaurants, households, etc) to farms to feed animals, for example. I am leery of significant long term financial investments because technology is changing so rapidly. I am more comfortable with upgrades that pay off within 5 years, and I'd rather do many lower budget programs than one large expensive program. More future-proof, adaptable, and can have "something for everyone". I'd love to see more sustainability initiatives around making thoughtful choices too, like instead of buying plastic bags for trash encourage reusing other bags or packaging. Or encourage and normalize bringing a container to a restaurant for the leftovers, rather than using single use disposable

plastics (especially styrofoam). I already have access to plenty of discounted LED bulbs and thermostats and such through other Wisconsin energy programs, so additional programs seem redundant. I do want to see Stoughton adopt more aggressive climate goals, though I'd rather see it worded as "phasing out coal and petroleum" rather than "becoming all electric" - the first leaves more room for innovation. I'd love to see sustainability topics in school, such as getting kids in touch with where their food comes from, where their waste goes (landfill), and including sustainability as a criteria for student decision making. Plastic recycling programs seem less useful, because facilities to do the actual recycling process are not readily available in the US, so "recycling" in the US often just means shipping it overseas, where who knows what happens to it. I'd like to see more happening with farmer's markets and affordable local sales opportunities. Garage sale weekends are also a simple way to reduce landfill waste by encouraging reuse and giving items a second life (beneficial for financially struggling households too). Item-fix-it events to teach people to repair small household goods or stitch up a hold on a sweater also seem interesting to keep stuff out of the landfill and promote skill development.

71. I was not not sure of all the terminology use but some of the descriptors helped.

73. I wish Stoughton were more bike friendly! I bike frequently and feel unsafe biking here.

74. I wish the incentive to grow native plants and not treat lawns was very compelling. It is a big let down when trying to have a yard that I can forage plants in, but then my neighbor sprays their yard in close proximity.

75. I would be concerned that "sustainability" for many Stoughton residents can become another way of saying "Stoughton should not grow." There has long been a very vocal minority of people in Stoughton, who also have an out-sized voice in City government and the School Board, who oppose population growth in Stoughton. Because the State's current system of funding municipalities and schools is very dependent on growth, "sustainability" can't be allowed to stand in the way of Stoughton growing larger. If it does, our community will eventually become a retirement community with all that entails. I believe we can both grow and encourage practices that are good for the environment in the long run, but it will likely necessitate balancing the two needs.

76. I would like more education/information about what I can do with my yard. I hate that so many of us pour so many chemicals on our lawns to make the grass look perfect. Yet, we don't want our lawns to be overrun with weeds. What can we do that won't look horrible but will be sustainable/healthy for our community?

77. I would like to know if you are about sustainable energy why would you want to take out the historic dam that used to give the city free sustainable energy and replace it with white water activities instead of putting back in a water wheel for sustainability energy?

78. I would like to see incentives for residential and commercial geothermal heating.

79. I would like to see the retention ponds and water collection ponds be planted with native plants instead of grass that gets mowed multiple times a year.

80. I would like to see the Uniroyal moved somewhere that it is not an eye sore or smell fest to the downtown residents and businesses.

81. I would love to see some sort of community composting option! I also appreciate this survey, the fact that Stoughton's showing that initiative is already a step in the right direction.
82. I would rather the city have money for proper equipment and equipment replacement than have to spend extra money to make it sustainable. Vehicles are a great example of this, some city departments have vehicles that get used enough around town but get replaced on a cycle. If you went with hybrid vehicles or all electric vehicles, you would be spending double the price for a vehicle without getting any return of investment because it would get replaced long before you would get that return. Personally, I would much rather see the city spend their money on less sustainable vehicles and other things if it meant they had extra money for projects around Stoughton. Bettering the city as a whole with projects and additions would be much more important than making some things sustainable.
83. I would support, or not support, a number of the initiatives based on the details of each.
84. I would use buses or ride share to Madison all the time if they were available! I also love the idea of having more native plants around Stoughton
85. I'd love to see better connection of bike routes to the Madison area bike routes like the capital city trail as a strategy to improve biking between Stoughton and other communities
86. I'm concerned not only about sustainability, but the health of our water and air. I'm concerned about the air pollution and emissions from the vinyl factory in town. I'm concerned about how manufacturing in town affects our ground water as well.
87. I'm for common sense solutions that will not put additional burdens on the tax payers in the city of Stoughton. There are way too many so called "sustainability initiatives " that do very little if anything to actually accomplish what they claim to do. Most of them are just feel good trendy things that ultimately costs more with little to no actual net benefits. Be very cautious when deciding to place any additional mandates, regulations, ordinances that will increase costs or turn Stoughton into a nanny state.
88. I've heard talk quite a few times about bringing Madison metro to Stoughton. I am dead set against it regardless of cost impact or sustainability, just to stay separated from Madison. We are an outlying community, if we connect ourselves to Madison's public infrastructure we'll become a suburb of a city rather than our own city. Otherwise I would be supportive of sustainability projects, as long as the cost impact is manageable.
89. I'd love if people could install solar panels on their homes to save money and provide clean energy but our landlords a hack
90. If it is going to cost the taxpayers more money, then don't consider it. Many of us are at or even over what we can afford to pay now.
91. If the bus system was convenient and made easy, that would be a huge boon for Stoughton-Madison connections. I'm all for more biking and walking in Stoughton. Lastly, getting developers to build sustainably and WELL from the beginning would be an excellent goal. I see Madison having so many huge buildings that are so expensive - that isn't viable for Stoughton. Making all of these sustainable ideas public, and convenient, and easily understood is paramount to success. I'll keep my eye out - I want to help!

92. I'm a senior citizen ready to sell my house
93. In favor of everything possible to create more sustainability in Stoughton!
94. Instead of building new, please redevelop current buildings. Offer incentives for landlords and homeowners who own rundown houses to upgrade. (Similar to the historic district.) Enforce safety standards in rental units for healthy environments. There are rental homes and apartments that should not be habitable, yet landlords charge up to \$1000, with no property upgrades.
95. Investigate EV vehicles for city owned or rented vehicles and look into setting up a city transit with electric vehicles
96. Is there anything that you would like to share with the committee as we are working toward making Stoughton a more sustainable community?
97. It is our responsibility and opportunity, right this very moment, to give our future generations the best possible environment we can for them to deal with. Otherwise, history will tell them that we just didn't care.
98. It seems as if you are trying to mirror the Democrat talking points. The problem is overblown by the Greenies. And "Climate Change" is an unreal mental disease. I already have solar on my roof, but I have no battery for storage. When we moved in in 2019, we upgraded the furnace, water heater, washer/dryer, gas stove and dishwasher. The windows and roof had been replaced by the previous owners. We need Stoughton to become more conservative/logical. The further we get from Biden's policies the better off we will be. UW and Madison are horribly liberal and you can see it in the State more and more every day. So don't work on this project very hard.
99. It was great to see the recent roundabouts being pedestrian friendly. The recent light crossings and ability to walk and bike around town is important to my family and I. I would support the placement of a solar farm in the Stoughton area and have my utilities be harvested from this. I am concerned that the Stoughton Utilities lines its pockets first.
100. It would be great if the school district had the resources and ability to offer a summer community garden class/opportunity for students. It could teach the importance and reason for composting food waste, where produce comes from, and that they can actually grow it themselves. The knowledge/confidence and satisfaction of producing even just a small portion of your own food.
101. It would be nice for Stoughton to have cab service that is more affordable, has longer hours on the weekends, and has drivers that are friendly and kind. Some of the drivers are quite harsh and disrespectful to people with disabilities.
102. It's important to remind those who will be against these because they will "raise taxes" that all of these measures are investments in the future. Implementing any/all of these objectives will create a city people will be proud to live in and want to live in, which will raise property values and benefit the community both from financial and health perspectives.
103. Keep it up.
104. LIMIT the developments! They are going up like crazy, and the expensive, empty houses are sitting!

105. Make the city more bike and pedestrian friendly. We would bike a lot more for errands if getting to the newish shopping areas was more accessible.
106. Make the river accessible with parks and landings.
107. Many of the ideas listed we have already completed in our home, so we don't need assistance with them. Some of the ideas listed have small or questionable impacts on sustainability so I'm lukewarm on those options. The balance in regard to development and sustainability is a reasonable goal. I don't see any references to one of the most ridiculous ideas that the community is implementing, the removal of the dam to create a poorly conceived water park. This project shows how special interests weigh in despite community goals of sustainability or the desire to create cost-effective projects that are in the best interests of the entire community as a whole.
108. Many of the questions in the last 1/3 of the survey have already been completed in our home, such as led lights, energy audit, high efficiency furnace and appliances. This survey is a waste of taxpayer dollars since it was been queried in the past.
109. Many of the things mentioned in your questionnaire are already being done at our home. Not because it is more sustainable but because it is cost effective in the long run. Regarding the city of Stoughton, I would like to think cost effective sustainability is already part of the city's decision making process. Sustainability costs just for the sake of saying Stoughton is more "sustainable" is questionable. For example, placing bike paths in a few strategic places and NOT most places. We already have lots of little used paved streets that bikes can use safely. (I bike them all year.)
110. Many questions you asked, whether I would take certain sustainable action (like buy more efficient appliances) are confusing to answer because I've already done those measures. So how do I answer would I replace my windows when I've already installed efficient ones. I'm not going to do it again. Also would I buy a \$1 LED bulb? It depends on the quality or specifications of the LED bulb. Would it fit my application? It is also not feasible for utilities to become 100% renewable because there will not likely be energy storage available to make that possible. However, there could be nuclear power made available to support the power demand when renewable is not available. Nuclear is not a "renewable" source but it does not emit greenhouse gases and for that reason it could be considered sustainable. Do you consider nuclear to be renewable? Many UW experts consider nuclear to be part of the solution to global warming and I consider it as a more feasible alternative to batteries. I worked as an engineer in the utility industry XXXXXXXXX am well read on the subject.
111. Money talks - local decisions can have a quicker impact vs county, state or national. Give homeowners incentives.
112. More affordable housing and stores are needed to increase school enrollment
113. More bicycle lanes and paths. Complete the sidewalks for more and safer pedestrian traffic.
114. More bike lanes
115. More city vehicles become electric over time. Creating educational videos that help residents better understand composting, solar panels on your house, whatever the city is promoting to help all understand why... in the paper or internet or library.

116. More shaded and park land with less ball fields. More public gardens
117. Most of the answers to the questions I provided, are due to the cost's (Not financial but rather punishments) that are caused by this kind of program implementation. I would also have chosen to give different answers to many of the questions asked, that were not provided. Many of them would potentially even be yes, if there is no social cost or pressure to do these things, also being sustainable is not friendly to the elderly/seniors in our community. Another issue is that many of these "solutions" to being sustainable, are also very ugly. We should NOT put such a priority in our world to things of this nature, until we better understand them, and they can be done in a way that does not hurt nor punish those that do not want to participate. We do not want to be unable to get home heating because of wind or solar failing, and many of these "sustainable" products cause more damage to the environment or humans than they do provide any benefit, and are not actually efficient in delivery, nor are they as clean as they claim to be. Most of this is fictitious in nature at this moment in time. We should not be a social experiment and have catastrophic failures like so many before us.
118. Most of the energy saving efforts listed for homeowners have already been done in our home in the past five years.
119. Move Uniroyal out of town Community events matter Films and talks are great Having fun together while making Stoughton better is a win
120. My dream would be for high speed commute to Madison from Stoughton. An elevated rail. Near a park and ride. I strongly feel Madison should create better commute options to surrounding communities including Stoughton. The city bus and carpooling might not be efficient enough to promote widespread buy in. If I could actually save time and money it would be worth it. Also if I needed to get home from work for my kids, I don't feel the bus or a carpool would be reliable options - I would feel stranded.
122. My tax dollars should be spent on city services (plowing streets, clearing public sidewalks that have been left snow/ice covered this winter, filling potholes that have been left unfixed). Not spending my tax money on energy efficiency options that should be left to property owners and homeowners. This is not the role of city government. Stay out of it. Fix the streets I use every day first.
123. No whitewater park on the river.
124. Nope
125. On main street, we have public garbage cans with covers labeled with 2 or 3 openings, but the garbage bag inside collects all items in 1 bag — it's seems weird to signal to person throwing something away that they could deposit item thru a particular opening but then watch everything collect in one bag..... I know sustainability is a concern of youth and would love to see high school students invited to weight in and have a role with thinking thru potential strategies and how to implement
126. Perhaps they could consider adding edible landscapes/plantings in addition to native plants/prairies.
127. Please attend to the poisons emitted into the air by Uniroyal. 1995 Toxic Release Summary: "If the amount of releases per facility is calculated in each industry, SIC group 45, represented by only one facility, General Mitchell Airport, has the highest release per facility at 590,000 pounds. SIC 22, with two firms*, is second with 385,000 pounds per facility." * Rapid Die and Molding Co. Inc. of Cassville and

Uniroyal Engineered Products of Stoughton. <https://p2infohouse.org/ref/23/22613.pdf>
tinyurl.com/uniroyalepa

128. Please continue to prioritize bike friendly city- surrounded bike path and lower yahara bike trail to madison and to Oregon
129. Please don't raise our taxes anymore. Find other ways to raise the funds just like you did with the high school football field.
130. Please no heavy handed regulations or burdensome costs added. Common sense and Low cost initiatives.
131. Please reference www.strongtowns.org for examples on how the development of walkable, mixed-use buildings and spaces benefit the economic and ecological strength of a city. This is also a good resource for cautionary evidence showing how the expansion of car-dependent infrastructure only serves to drain resources from cities. On a personal note, unprotected bike lanes on roadways are not an acceptable solution. Lanes on roadways must be physically protected when separate bike paths are not available.
132. Please review how the school can utilize or donate food waste. It's such a shame to just throw it away.
133. Promote replacing lawn/yard turf grass with native planting. Restrict spraying of fertilizers and pesticides on lawns. Support cultural change to devalue turf lawns through education and other means. Make alternatives to turf grass (native plantings, sedges, etc.) more available and affordable Support farmers markets, CSA's and other local food endeavours. Plant oak trees...the top host plant supporting insects, birds, etc. and other native trees. Support diversity of plantings versus monocultures. Support residential conversion to solar panels. Change zoning/building requirements for more sustainable/energy efficient housing. Support mass transit bus and rail.
134. Public transit via bus or rail to Madison, as an increasingly weighted jobs center for Stoughton residents, will be increasingly important for all walks of life. City operations (buildings, fleet, etc) moving to net zero should be the primary focus and educating residents to make personal choices, not subsidizing personal matters. Stoughton's branding & investment incorporating a green focus will attract younger generations to help build tax base.
135. Public transportation to Madison and surrounding communities would be very helpful to many and would reduce traffic congestion on already congested roads around town. New subdivisions =big messes on highways We need to keep our farmland and not turn it all into concrete. Removing the Fourth Street dam would be catastrophic to landowners and wildlife in Stoughton and surrounding townships. Encourage/make it easier for people to buy/renovate older ,existing buildings and make them energy efficient, instead of building new, unnecessary structures that waste our land (businesses AND homes) Do not demolish our historic buildings that can be maintained and brought up to code ,instead of building new.
136. Public transportation to Madison would be great. Making a nice bike path that connects with other towns and cities.
137. Publicize the good and the bad results of your efforts. Keep asking the public for input and suggestions. Make it a part of the community's legal reports and efforts. Look for easy things each individual can do as a part of living here.

138. Put a vote on removing dam and putting in water park. This was pushed through and will hurt the river. Trees in the park rows, ruin the sidewalks, which the residents have to pay half of, every time the roots break them. The city has to pay for crew's to drastically trim these trees to keep from garbage trucks and plows hitting them. Anything other than grass in the park rows, looks junky after a while and prevents passengers from exiting cars on the right side. Any bike lanes on streets other than main arteries, causes parking disputes between neighbors, slower garbage collections, bin placement troubles and too narrow driving lanes for the minimal bike use of these streets.
139. Rather than pursuing wind and solar at the expense of migrating birds and farmland, I am more interested in using water power to generate electricity. The dam is in very good condition and was used for that purpose in years past. There are also other innovative uses for it, including water purification with uv light and algae harvesting for biofuels. It would be a huge waste of an asset to take down the dam for an amusement venue of dubious value. We would be destroying any future opportunities as technology develops before we finished paying for its 2009 reconstruction. Most importantly, the wildlife habitats and current outdoor recreational uses would be destroyed from the millpond to the Yahara Bay. Preserve, sustain, but don't destroy.
140. Regulate less. Save Stoughtonites' money. Buy American. China is a far greater polluter than we'll ever be.
141. So many of our larger trees were cut down with main st road repairs in the past few years. They were replaced with small ornamental trees rather than larger shade trees. Let's replace with real trees oak, maple etc
142. Solar panels is not a perfect renewable source. They create a lot of waste, we just don't see it. Take that into consideration before throwing them up everywhere.
143. Some "sustainable" solutions can cause health concerns. Thinking of flooring put into a new school in another city. Asthmatics had a difficult time being in the school. Similar issues in new "weight rooms" in several schools.
144. Some of the answers to the questions need to be clear. I answered NO to more than three because my house already has smart thermostat double pane windows and doors and all my appliances are energy efficient. Also to the question to plant shade trees in park rows is out of the question! The trees grow and lift the sidewalks thus making more work and possibly hire more employees to care for the trees and fix side walks... this issue will add to the home owners payment of half of the cost of sidewalk repairs. More shade trees in parks are fine but who will pay for them and now who will trim them? I think ANYTHING that will increase home owners taxes should be off the table. After each question ...ask will this increase taxes?? If answer is NO go ahead and get it done. If the answer is YES then get a clear breakdown show that to us and ask us again. Owners need to be informed that they will have to PAY if a tree damages the sidewalk and have the choice of having a tree planted there. Parkrows need to be wider than 10ft to plant.
145. Some of the questions were difficult to answer because my spouse and I are not in agreement on all of the topics in the questions.
146. Some of this survey was hard to answer because of the format. I couldn't accurately answer if I would replace furnace, windows, or install solar because we have already done that! We also have most of our

light bulbs LED. Thank you for doing this. It is important and I am happy to see Stoughton moving in this very positive direction!

147. Some things, like solar panels and updates to my appliances, I would absolutely do if I could afford them. Lightbulbs are already replaced with the lower energy ones, but not sure if they're LED. I think a lot of focus should be on what larger businesses can do to improve their sustainability. I also think our new housing developments should be based on walkability and smart growth, which Nordic Ridge is definitely not.
148. Sounds like higher taxes no matter how the spin is made.
149. Start considering wildland restoration as part of the development process. "Green spaces" such as baseball fields, small parks with a couple of tables, etc. are minimal, environmentally inadequate developmental concessions.
150. Start your surveys with definitions! Not sure what you mean when you say sustainability! Also, make the water much more clean! I installed a water filter for my whole house and within 4 days, the filter went from white to dark dark rusty brown! This needs attention and it's good for the health of all of us.
151. Stop taking up farmland and woods for more developments. Pretty soon there will be no farmland and woods. Very sad at what has happened on Hoel Ave and what is currently happening on Highway 51 north. Leave the farmland alone.
152. Stoughton has an opportunity to be a model of efficiency in our area. I would love to see us make changes in our parks trails and transportation to be better humans to our planet. I would fully support any decisions that lead us towards those goals.
153. Stoughton has been known as a retirement community but I believe its population is becoming younger with the new housing developments that have been popping up. It's very important to keep our community fresh and healthy for both the elderly and younger residents alike through sustainability. Also consider teaching sustainability in our schools, even if it's just through practice. Have businesses promote it through each one's specialty. Get everyone evolved!
154. Stoughton is called "home" for thousands of people for hundreds of years. We must save and sustain every part so the next generations can call Stoughton "home". Don't change what isn't broken, but sustain and help what we have. Love this little town, keep it strong.
155. Stoughton is growing too fast, Destroying what's left of our farmland for housing is not creating sustainability. If we don't grow our own food we become dependent on other countries who don't have the same regulations as the US and therefore gives us a lower quality source of food.
156. Stoughton needs to slow the spread of urban sprawl and discourage the degradation of farmland and green spaces. It's hard to take Stoughton at face value and serious in sustainability while watching the continued concrete jungle grow.
157. Stoughton would greatly benefit from a nature area park with a paved path for walking, running, biking, and dog walking activities. Oregon Wisconsin has a good example with Keller Alpine Meadow park adjacent to the new public library.

- 158.Sustainability and Entitlement are close relatives, be careful. Do not mandate but create incentives to invite change.
- 159.Sustainability can mean different things to everyone so it will be important to get the message out that this is not just an individual choice but a holistic choice for our community and beyond. In other words, people should not think, hey I raise chickens so I did my part.....It's much bigger than that.
- 160.Sustainability conversations need to consistently be on the table. Big goals are needed and transparent, consistent communication on progress is vital.
- 161.Sustainability needs to be affordable, equitable, and inclusive- this survey does not give the impression or hard cost data that identify the purposed efforts are affordable to the residents of Stoughton. The city has more pressing priorities that need to be reviewed and planned for ahead of sustainability.
- 162.Sustainable isn't effective nomenclature for a goal of reduced negative environmental impact.
- 163.Taxes are currently ridiculously high. Just leave us alone.
- 164.Taxpayers have been getting hard lately,we have not seen any returns or breaks in Taxes.TIF is not always the answer.
- 165.Thank you
- 166.Thank you
- 167.Thank you for asking!! I would also support a 'no plastic bags" ordinance if not precluded by state law (I think Walker got that one in but I forget) and also take a closer look at how we behave towards recycling and how we can do it better along with John's waste service.
- 168.Thank you for doing this survey, and for moving forward with sustainability. Ignore the naysayers!
- 169.Thank you for providing the residents with the opportunity to complete this survey. In addition to the number of ideas included in the survey which I support, I believe Stoughton is long overdue to have public transportation to Madison, Janesville and Milwaukee. I hope you will take a serious look at implementing that.
- 170.Thank you for the good work you are doing! Increased connectivity via bike paths, both within Stoughton and between Stoughton and neighboring communities (including Madison), would be highly beneficial. Perhaps even adding community bikes, like Madison has? Not sure if you need a bigger municipality to support this initiative. Another comment - Connecting Stoughton to Madison transportation-wise for people to commute to work would be extremely beneficial, both environmentally and in creating sustainable work opportunities for people, giving them a means to get there.
- 171.Thank you for this survey and continue your good work on this very important issue.
- 172.Thank you for working to connect with the community on this! As a newer resident, it excites me to see the city's commitment to becoming more sustainable.
- 173.Thank you for your efforts

174.Thank you!

175.Thank you! Looking forward to supporting any and all initiatives!

176.thank you.

177.Thanks for the survey! I am excited to see that the city is looking for public input. As Stoughton grows, it is critical that we don't become a wasteland of big-box stores, acres of paved parking lots, and cheap construction. Native plants, wildlife habitat preservation and expansion, pollinator habitat, reducing or eliminating the chemicals we dump on our lawns and fields, eliminating toxic "pest control" methods, and preserving open spaces for nature and recreation are huge priorities for me. In my house we are really hoping for more - and more connected - walking and biking paths for exercise and errand running. Finally, it is a huge priority for me to preserve, utilize, and improve our historic downtown. The buildings on Main Street are irreplaceable and a key part of our history. I would like to see those spaces maintained and improved and filled with local businesses such as coffee shops, restaurants, and unique retail. We must support small businesses. It would be horrible to see Stoughton balloon into a sprawling expanse of cheap national dollar stores and national chain restaurants in areas of new development and neglect investment in our downtown. It has enormous potential! In terms of growth, less is more and I'm willing to pay more in taxes to support smart growth and sustainability.

178.The 164 units of independent living condos within the Skaalen complex all have electric heat which is inefficient and very expensive. Is there something the City and Skaalen could do to reduce our energy impact and costs?

179.The biggest obstacle for residents is affordability. I would love to have a sustainable household, but the cost is prohibitive. I make \$1,400 a month as XXXXXXXX employee, barely enough to pay my bills let alone to make sustainable upgrades and improvements. Residents will need major financial support to improve their properties, particularly as there are many old homes in the city. For example my house was built in 1904, I have plaster walls and zero insulation, I would love to be able to reduce my heating bills, but I can't afford to have my home insulated. I think many residents are in similar situations. The city has an aging population, old homes, and a very conservative attitude towards raising taxes. Stoughton is not a very forward thinking city, we barely support our schools, and Walmart is our answer to economic stability and employment opportunities. The elected officials and city council members are more interested in preserving historic, yet blighted, properties or fighting over property values when adding sidewalks, than in being sustainable. New leadership needs to happen before progress takes place.

180.The current Mayor & Stoughton City Council is untrustworthy. They have hidden agendas and refused public input on the most recent Stoughton Dam water park project. Water parks of this nature have had deaths occurring around our nation. They are arrogant and wildlife/water destroyers. They have disregarded property owners and lied under the auspices of Zoom meetings during COVID. Stoughton City Taxpayers are over taxed. Solar projects do not weigh the long term costs involved with waste removal and involve pollution in third world countries making the lithium batteries. They are taking out best lands from agricultural use. Education is the key- reuse, recycle and reduce.

181.The first question was confusing: Maintaining farmland is not necessarily 100% important to me however, having large areas of open land is 110% important to me.

- 182.The metro bus system between Madison and Stoughton would be a great resource for older teens, young adults and elderly who may not have reliable transportation but would like more options regarding jobs, doctors and visiting friends/family. It would give them greater independence and allow for more access to greater education that they may not get now due to cost of living.
- 183.The role of government is not to redirect taxpayer or public utility money to fund pet projects. It is to provide infrastructure that all can use.
- 184.The Schools should work more closely with the City to make this a priority.
- 185.The science is clear. We are running out of time. Not doing these things will inevitably cause a lot of pain and suffering at some point in the future.
- 186.The tire factory downtown reeks and is ugly.
- 187.There are long stretches of sidewalk along HWY 51 coming through town that NEED to have shade trees planted on their south sides - to make walking on those sidewalks tolerable during hot weather. People who need/have to walk to the grocery store shouldn't have to fry themselves to get there. These trees can also beautify the path through Stoughton ... especially some parts that are regrettably blighted. Trees can make a huge difference. Mount Horeb has done a great job with trees. Let's surpass what they've done!
- 188.There are so many other issues that the city of Stoughton could invest resources. Employment. Post high school educational assistance. Sustainability isn't on the mind of but a few people in these trying economic times
- 189.There is a need to inform the community about options for recycling electronics and other electrical appliances available, and maybe to make recycling or appropriate disposal of these items easier.
- 190.There were no questions asking if we were already practicing sustainability. It may be beneficial to survey residents to see if they are already carpooling/WFH, using LED lighting, smart thermostats, low-flow shower heads, replacing lawns with native grasses, composting, etc. to help gauge the importance of sustainability of Stoughton residents. Our household already does all of these things and we would fully support city-wide efforts. Also, thanks for planning to make Stoughton a sustainable community!
- 191.This community needs a safe bicycle route to connect with the madison paths.
- 192.This survey was a pretty blunt instrument with deceptive terms such as using the word "important" for most of the answers. Also no way to factor in the current situation in my home. For example: I already have mostly LED lights, so I wouldn't buy any no matter what the cost. Similarly I have no intention of replacing appliances etc if they don't need to be replaced, just to feel good about sustainability. I don't necessarily object to incentives, but why would they be needed if more efficient appliances and habits will save money in the long run anyway?
- 193.This survey was difficult to answer because so many questions were generic. I am for "sustainability" in general but generally don't trust the government to get involved in these things. For instance, a tax credit for something sustainable means a greater tax burden for everyone. There are no "free"

incentives or tax credits. The benefit/cost trade off is certainly debatable and I am afraid that power given to the government over these things can turn into an unstoppable self-righteous zealotry.

- 194.To really make Stoughton more sustainable we should do our business in town instead of looking outside or on the internet for better prices. The more business done in our own town keeps the money and residents sustaining their town.
- 195.Very interested in switching to brine vs. salt for treating roads, and encouraging citizens to dramatically reduce their sidewalk salt use (or find alternatives). So much salt going into the water table.
- 196.We already compost and recycle as much as we can. We saw a \$40 decrease in our electric bill every month roughly 7 years ago by switching to LED lightbulbs. I hate mowing and I hate listening to my neighbors mow nonstop every summer-I would plant any kind of grass to avoid listening to constant noise pollution. I love the nature path at Bjorn park, I walk it every year with my dog and kids and would love more. My dog currently gets skin rash from the water at the dog park. I wish we had walking only streets like state street in Madison-or community events that temporarily close public avenues for local events, like a community bike day. I already walk to work when I can and when applicable. I love that Stoughton is looking into this, there is a lot we can do as a community.
- 197.We already do a lot of the things in this survey. Two questions about Rain Gardens; who plants them and who takes care of them. We are not physically able to do either.
- 198.We already have incorporated many of these efforts in our own home. The cost to the community and homeowner, without assistance, would make a difference in decision making.
- 199.We are already doing some of the items in the survey — installing solar, converting lawn to native plants, etc. in the future allow survey respondents to indicate this?
- 200.We are running out of green spaces and farm land. That's where we walk and clear our heads, grow food, celebrate life. Let's try to keep our environment clean and preserve it for the future. My kids, your kids, and so on...
- 201.We believe that in order for a successful sustainability program to become a reality, you have to set it forefront in your policy(s) and set big goals. Communication is also a critical component of the success of a sustainability program. Transparency regarding progress of the program is crucial.
- 202.We could promote a handling facility for recyclables, since China isn't accepting many of the recyclables the US used to send there.
- 203.We had an Ash tree in the terrace that was cut down due to Ashbore threat. We were told replacement trees could not be planted in the terrace. This "rule" would need to change as it runs in contrast to ideas asked in this survey about shade trees in the terrace. The city should host shred events for disposing of sensitive papers. I have never seen one hosted here, not even the banks.
- 204.We have already done many of the lower cost items, like light bulbs, water reducing shower head new furnace,and one new kitchen appliance. Small steps are good.
- 205.We have replaced all of our light bulbs with LEDs. We have rooftop solar, a programmable thermostat, and we use only 1 car for travel. We have converted about 1/3 of our yard to gardens with mostly native

plants. We try to recycle as much as we can. We are very interested in further options to build in sustainability in our lifestyle.

206. We have to take a stand regarding who we are as a community and I would like that to include sustainability. We're in a period of lots of growth and development and could position ourselves as a sustainable choice when people are choosing which suburb to live in. We need to attract more young families.
207. We like to be more sustainable as a family, and are working towards that, but meaningful change can't be made simply at the household level. Broader community commitment to sustainability is required to achieve the necessary goals, and Stoughton should lead in that effort!
208. We need to have recycling pick up weekly. We should have community wide compost and more restrictions on what goes in our landfills. We have a compost in our backyard. We have energy efficient light bulbs, faucets, air Conditioners and furnace. We also received a quote for solar
209. We need to include other species as having the right to a healthy ecosystem, not just humans. So many species are in decline because of habitat destruction. Don't let housing cover every square foot of open land — that is home to untold numbers of rodents, insects, small mammals, and is the hunting grounds of hawks and owls. We need other species.
210. We need to increase bussing capacity and extend boundaries for students to get to school, this would greatly reduce emissions.
211. We support any and all sustainability initiatives!
212. What was very easy to take care of:
213. When I walk through the neighborhoods surrounding our beautiful downtown, I notice several empty or underutilized lots. It seems like instead of adding on housing to the outskirts, we should be adding it to more central areas to avoid unnecessary developing farmland, and natural land. Secondly, the best time to not use a car in Stoughton is during the yearly Syttend de Mai festival, when several areas of our downtown are pedestrianized. Not only is this more sustainable, but the increased walk ability helps out downtown local businesses immensely, as some of their highest sale periods are when pedestrians have safe and convenient access to their shops. Maybe a pilot program where some downtown areas are pedestrianized once monthly would be a good way to test this.
214. When planting shade trees, please use native species whenever possible including fruit and nut bearing trees. Please consider stormwater management, taking into consideration current and future changes in precipitation patterns due to climate change. Please consider regional transit options (e.g. between Stoughton and nearby surrounding communities), especially community / senior centers -- not just to / from Madison. Please also work with farmers and the County to support sustainable farming practices / limiting runoff to lakes.
215. When the City plans for any redevelopment, or street and sidewalk improvements, the plans should include ways to save as many existing healthy trees as possible, doing whatever is needed to keep them growing and healthy. Right now Stoughton tends to just draw up their plans and then remove any existing mature trees they feel are in their way, as they think it's ok to just replace them with small immature new trees. Trouble is the new trees will need several decades or more of growth to even begin

to provide the shade and other environmental benefits of the existing trees. We are told to plant trees for shade, etc. and yet the City will cut down healthy shade trees they deem are in their way. They tell us this is "progress". Just doesn't make sense!

216. While I answered probably in some categories, it is because we already do some version of sustainability noted in the question. We own an older home (built 1920). We have made many upgrades, but replacing windows to accommodate energy is not something we can do because we value the look of our home. Also, we don't have a yard that can accommodate solar panels - the same for our roof (not enough sun exposure for roof-top solar). We support these sustainable measures, however, some don't work for our house and/or yard.
217. While I believe it's important to encourage larger businesses and developers to plan and operate sustainably, most of those entities have the resources and options to do so without financial incentive. The individual households, who to be fair make far smaller impact to overall sustainability than large business and development, currently struggle with affording sustainable options and often have to make hard choices every day on where to spend vital income. Therefore, individual households need those incentives to make changes in their lives. Perhaps if sustainability was more accessible in individual households, it would better promote an overall culture of sustainability where individuals can, from experience, bring their ideas and practices their places of employment, or their business.
218. While many of the ideas/activities contained in this survey would likely improve the climate change concern, the City should come out with a strong statement/policy that indicates a desire by the City to be proactive toward climate issues vs being reactive.
219. Work to add requirements to developers if they ask for TIF money to increase sustainability in their new houses, apartments, buildings etc. That include more insulation, LED lights, better windows, solar ready roofs, EV charging, shade trees, community gardens, larger parks. And as social justice is part of sustainability that housing developments are inclusive and welcoming to all.
220. Would love to see a food/household waste composting option in stoughton
221. Would love to see more bike friendly roads/ trails as well as places to park your bike. Biking is a cost effective way for people to get around.
222. Yes please also recognize that historic preservation measures are also sustainable. Historic windows are a system that works together with the rest of the house to keep the historic buildings materials viable and the environment comfortable. Repair instead of replace and they'll be good for another 100 years. Don't forget that torn down and replaced building materials also end up in landfills. Thank you
223. Yes, as XXXXXXXXXX I think it is important to work together as a community like you are doing with this survey. I feel the "WHY" you are doing this is a very important message. If I could ask one question of the Sustainability Committee it would be "why are you doing this". When you answer this question for yourself it helps the community members focus on - why they might want to do this, and why they might want to join in the effort. They may come up with their own "why's" which is exactly what we want them to do. In this way, we approach people by attraction rather than promotion. People as me why I put solar on my house. Why I drive an EV. Why I have an electric lawn mower, snowblower, leaf blower and other battery operated equipment. Obviously you don't have to convince me about the importance of sustainability because I am an early adapter and adopter. The people you need to convince in our

community are one the righthand side of the "law of diffusion and innovation" that are know as the Early Majority. These folks will not try something until someone else has tried it first. Just showing people what could be done is not enough. See this Ted Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp0HIF3SfI4&t=678s> about leadership. I could go on and on.... so let's end it here. Thanks so much for doing this very important work. And thanks so much for the easy

224. Your definition of sustainability would have been helpful in answering these questions.

225. Your survey doesn't take into account those that have already installed led lights, low flow shower, etc. It also skips replacement of older toilets which use 2-3 times the water of new toilets.

226. Your terms are unclear i.e. what is sustainability? Details that matter to me are left out such as, How much will the taxpayer absorb to provide cheap lightbulbs for everyone? Each question should give opportunity to qualify our answers. It's kind of a leading questionnaire because of this. I am very conservative personally, but I don't want to force any business to follow sustainability rules. The rules imposed on developers are often overreaching. This was a frustrating questionnaire. But it's great we're talking about it.

227. Farmland converted to restore original prairie and woodland would increase air and water quality and increase native plant and wildlife habitat! Brazil farming the Amazon = USA farming the Midwest.

228. All things are possible. Making Stoughton sustainable is a process. Not everything has to be done at once. Make a list of priorities. Set some goals and tackle each one. It will never be perfect but improvements are needed and wanted. There will always be new challenges in the future generations to come.

229. Do not promote electric vehicles and solar has limited time frame benefits. Also limited benefit areas in Wisconsin. When I worked, I walked as much as possible. When I had a strong cash flow, I did the windows, purchased efficiency and strive to live in my home in retirement. Many are trying. Do you understand what we can afford?

230. The most recent issue of Mother Earth News features an "intentional farm based community." I would love to see that here instead of more \$500,000+ homes being built. I'd like to see more "gray water" systems in our community.

231. We need to save our farmland. We need more greenspace and wildlife habitat. We are losing all that.

232. Strongly opposed to using farmland for solar panels.

233. Solar, wind turbines, and batteries can't be recycled. They're buried. The toxins go into soil and water. Solar farms raise the temp around them by about 10 degrees. Wind farms on land or water are killing wildlife. Batteries have cobalt, killing the people in Africa working the mines for a few pennies a day. We will still need natural gas, oil, and other energy to make and keep them going. Food waste program will raise our already high taxes that many elderly struggle to pay.

234. To be deployed within the city at least, a part-time employee will have to be given key responsibilities. It will not happen well with just a plan adopted by city council. There should be a permanent sustainability advisory committee. Need great website and appearances at public events.

235. We need lending libraries (i.e. plant seeds, tools, kitchen equipment, etc.). We should have “Picker’s Day” a few times per year. People would place items on terraces and anyone can take what they want. John’s would come out only once that month. Smaller lots with smaller homes and two-flats, create a composting site – use eco-friendly asphalt (white/light) in new developments, rain, butterfly gardens on all city property and solar streetlights.
236. Yes – wondering how we as a community welcome some expansion and development without hurting the environment and established neighborhoods. Last fall a developer purchased land south of us. The city did not contact us, and we live 1 block away. They tore down a beautiful small woodland forest at the end of our street to make a cul de sac for new condos and homes. It was tragic to me. I complained to the city, but it was, of course, a done deal. The saddest thing in our neighborhood ever.
237. Eliminate the drag strip from Roby Road to [unclear]. Hit speeders and reckless drivers in the wallet.

-END-

Stoughton Sustainability Committee Community Dialogue Summary Report

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Overview

The Stoughton Sustainability Committee hosted a community dialogue on September 21, 2022 regarding how to advance the goals of sustainability in the City of Stoughton. Participants:

- **Learned** about the Sustainability Committee and reviewed the vision and goals for each of the sustainability plan focus areas: energy, transportation, water, solid waste, land use & development, and community engagement & education.
- **Heard** about the City's sustainability initiatives. Stoughton has already implemented several efforts to move toward a low carbon future and to protect valuable natural resources.
- **Shared** ideas for how to make Stoughton a more sustainable city.

What is sustainability?

- Sustainability is defined commonly as, "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland Report, 1987)
- Sustainability includes a healthy environment, a just economy, and equity & social well-being. ([Sustain Dane](#))
- For a video overview, click here - [What is Sustainability?](#)

The City of Stoughton's Sustainability Committee is writing a Sustainability Plan, which will identify actions and policies to improve the community's environmental, social, and economic health. The development of the sustainability plan considers the suggestions and concerns of residents through community dialogues, survey findings, and other forms of public engagement.

This report is a summary of comments and ideas generated at the Community Dialogue on September 21, 2022. Prior to the Community Dialogue, Committee members have learned about sustainability topics from City Departments, County Departments, and other communities within Dane County. Committee members collaboratively identified six focus areas (Energy, Water, Solid Waste Management, Land Use & Development, Transportation, and Community) and developed a vision and goals for each of these focus areas. At the Community Dialogue, participants discussed the vision and goal statements in small group discussions, and were asked to provide comments and ideas to make these goals reality. The ideas shared by participants are summarized below, by focus area. Note that there were several specific actions that were suggested in multiple focus areas, underlining the interconnectedness of these issues. Participants also addressed challenges that the Sustainability Committee may face - such as apathy, cost, and implementation.

While everything in this report may not be within the Sustainability Committee's scope of work, the ideas shared during the Community Dialogue should be used to understand the community's values towards sustainability in Stoughton. The Committee will then evaluate these ideas and determine how they can be turned into action.

There will be additional opportunities for community input through a community survey, educational display and a virtual dialogue.

How this report is organized

At each table conversation (tables were organized by focus area), comments from participants were captured on flip charts and simultaneously written by a committee member or volunteer. The comments were reviewed, grouped, and synthesized by the editors.

The report is organized first by focus area. Within each focus area, we provide the questions that were posed at the table discussion and a summary of responses.

In reviewing comments from participants, the editors recognized that suggestions followed some fairly consistent themes. These include:



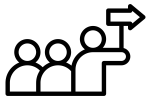
Educational Opportunities: Educational opportunities were identified in each of the issue areas. While it was not specified who should conduct the education, the City or Sustainability Committee could coordinate educational opportunities with other organizations.



Advancing Solutions: Participants suggested solutions in each issue area, often recognizing that current efforts were underway, while suggesting ideas that the Sustainability Committee could put forth to increase the adoption of sustainability practices.



Reducing Barriers: A number of solutions could pose significant challenges for community members and businesses. This category of responses focused on ideas for the Stoughton Community to help overcome those obstacles.



Fostering Community Leadership: There were many ideas given which would empower the community to make informed decisions about, and to be involved with the future of sustainability in Stoughton



Collaboration and Partnerships: Community members provided a number of suggestions about the need to work with different organizations in and outside of Stoughton to ensure that the goals of the Sustainability Committee are met

Energy

Vision:

The City of Stoughton reduces its operational impact on energy resources that contribute to climate change, and supports business and community efforts in doing the same. The City achieves this by embracing energy efficiency and conservation, while decreasing the use of fossil fuels.

Goals:

1. Reduce total greenhouse gas emissions
2. Achieve 100% renewable electricity supply
3. Reduce total energy consumption.
4. Decrease energy intensity (quantity of energy/unit of activity). This will allow for decreases in energy while allowing for growth

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

1. **What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presented appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?**

Support/Positive: there was general support for the vision and goals. These broad goals (such as written) allow for specific actions to follow. There were questions about the intent behind goal 4 (and the intent of the term ‘energy intensity’). Participants identified specific actions that would support the goals presented, with widespread support for efforts that increased energy **efficiency**.

Questions/Concerns:

- a) The main concern with the goals as written is that there are challenges with reaching 100% renewable energy, and potential disruptions to continuous electricity provision if all sources of energy were renewable.
 - would that jeopardize reliability when wind/solar aren't going?
 - is there need to mix renewable with nonrenewable supplies, to assure continuity of energy supply?
- b) Switching to renewable energy will require sourcing materials globally, which could have negative impacts on people and places beyond Stoughton. A participant pointed out that materials for solar panels, batteries, and other devices depend on a global supply chain, and that current production and extraction methods are environmentally and socially problematic.

- c) The goals, as written, place responsibility and action with the City of Stoughton, making it difficult to see how the community will be engaged in meeting the goals.
- d) While the vision and goals are ‘beautiful,’ the cost of implementation must be considered.
 - What is the return on investment?
 - How will these be achieved (who will pay)?
- e) Participants noted that the City will grow. A participant asked: “What things does the city invest in that are force multipliers?”

2. What incentives and planning should we do to conserve or generate energy? What can the city do to plan for energy conservation and generation?

Education opportunities: Participants encouraged education programs on energy generation (rooftop solar or wind) and on opportunities for energy conservation. There is untapped potential to generate energy using rooftop solar. Numerous homeowners spoke to the challenge of both knowing the process and identifying companies to work with to install solar. Education programs could include: how to find and evaluate contractors, how to establish a buy-back from the utility company, how to tap into financial incentives, and whether one’s home is a candidate for solar energy. Energy conservation can have a big impact if practiced by the majority of households and businesses. Several participants emphasized the importance of educating community members on energy intensity and on common practices to improve at-home energy efficiency, including home retrofits; upgrading appliances to more energy efficient units; drying clothes on lines outside; and reusing and reducing purchases.

There is also opportunity to provide education to contractors to introduce energy efficient options in new construction or in home retrofits and updating. Specific suggestions included European style on-demand electric hot water systems, heat pumps, and white roofs to reflect heat.

Advancing Solutions–Solar energy generation: The city has an opportunity to promote solar by providing financial incentives such as grants or loans (or tap into existing incentives) for households to build solar rooftop capacity or other energy generation capacity (wind). Beyond incentives, the city can advance energy generation by prioritizing solar installation on large buildings, such as schools.

A consideration about externalities: Concerns expressed regarding the promotion of solar were threefold: (1) Life cycle efficiency and analysis: Participants were concerned with the life-cycle aspects of solar components (energy use in construction, materials used, disposal) and suggested that there be mechanisms to evaluate companies and materials, (2) Impact on countries that produce components or provide raw materials: oftentimes the labor and environmental conditions under which component parts are manufactured or extracted are invisible to consumers.

Advancing Solutions–Wind energy generation: Rural neighbors may have the capacity to generate energy from wind. The utility and city could work with landowners to establish wind turbines. To encourage wind energy, the city can establish ordinances that treat turbines like an appliance, making it easier to permit.

Advancing Solutions–Conservation and energy efficiency: The city can encourage energy conservation and efficiency by using incentives as well as mandates (requirements). Incentives could be offered for energy efficient building and appliances (new buildings), retrofitting heating/cooling systems. The city can also impose requirements, such as that all new construction be 100% electric and have solar rooftop, or that larger buildings (such as schools), be required to upgrade to more efficient lighting, heating, and cooling.

Participants generated numerous options for resident involvement in energy efficiency, including:

- a) Stoughton Utilities uses on-peak/off peak metering. They could provide metering incentives and promote the program more widely.
- b) Manufacturers should add cost of disposal to goods produced, which would reduce the life-cycle cost of materials production and to encourage materials reuse.
- c) To get more people involved in the effort of energy conservation, consider ways to make convincing arguments beyond environmental sustainability (such as cost effectiveness). Make the right choice the easy choice!
- d) Replace appliances (only when necessary) with more energy efficient options.

Reducing Barriers: The barrier mentioned most often by participants was the barrier to installing rooftop solar, due to the complexity of the process, the limits on how much energy the utility can buy-back, and the difficulty of finding a viable and reliable contractor. These barriers can be reduced through educational programs and partnership between the City and Stoughton Utilities (see below, collaboration and partnerships).

Fostering Community Leadership - Business sustainability initiatives: The business community can play a role by setting a leadership example, in adopting energy conservation practices for their own businesses. Additionally, technology and innovation companies should explore development of new technologies such as solar cells as roofing.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Participants recommended that the City work with Stoughton Utilities to promote rooftop solar as cost effective, and make it easier for homeowners to install solar. Participants indicated that there were restrictions on buying back solar energy generated from rooftop solar (eliminate the ceiling on how much can be sold back), and suggested that the City of Stoughton work with Stoughton Utilities to eliminate the barriers to solar rooftop expansion. Additionally, Stoughton Utilities gets its power supply from [WPPI Energy](#) (a member owned, nonprofit that serves 51 locally owned electric utilities). WPPI's fuel mix portfolio (2021) includes coal contracts that they are locked into. The City and Stoughton Utilities should look for another energy provider or put up their own solar facility, with or without WPPI.

The City can also work with the Stoughton School District to prioritize energy generation on larger school buildings, and to prioritize energy conservation in any building rehab (especially heating and cooling systems).

The city can also work with local nonprofit organizations or with Stoughton Utilities by communicating opportunities for conservation with residents. Programs that recognize people and businesses that are doing a good job with cutting back on energy use encourage such activity, and inform others of how to reduce energy bills.

3. What should the city itself do to reduce energy use?

Advancing Solutions: The city has a large role to play in energy generation and conservation, both in its own internal operations and in support of residents.

- a) To demonstrate leadership, the City should install solar on all city facilities (buildings, park shelters), and develop solar powered stations for charging electric vehicles.
- b) The City should do an assessment of what lights are needed, and where. While LED lights in buildings are a good step forward, they might not need to be on all night. Use of movement sensors could cut back on energy use significantly. Soft lighting in buildings and parking lots would also support dark skies. Participants noted that there is significant light pollution generated by businesses with lights on all the time.
- c) Increasing tree canopy through planting of shade trees (discussed under land use more extensively) can reduce building energy use by providing natural cooling.
- d) The City and RDA can also promote energy efficiency along with the development of affordable multi-family housing, by requiring energy efficient building and equipment, by developing on infill, allowing housing on smaller lots, and allowing ADUs (accessory dwelling units)

Reducing Barriers: The City can examine zoning policy (covenants) that might discourage sustainability practices (e.g., hanging clothes outside on a line)

Land Use, Development and Building Codes

Vision:

The City of Stoughton acknowledges that land is a precious resource and strives to increase developed areas conservatively, only as needed to meet the needs of its growing population. The encourages compact, efficient growth that incorporates mixed use development, diversity of housing types, thriving businesses, and preserved and restored natural habitats.

Goals:

1. Provide housing for all income levels
2. Promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and business districts
3. Increase the density of housing and population.
4. Protect environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Increase tree cover.
6. Increase land area in natural & native vegetation.
7. Increase use of sustainable building practices, including net-zero.
8. Supporting local sustainable agriculture

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21/22 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presented appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?

Supportive/positive: There was general support for the vision and goals. Specifically there was support for the mixed use development.

Questions/concerns: For clarification purposes, participants asked for definitions of local and sustainable agriculture. There was a comment to increase bike-ability along with increasing multi-use trails that provide opportunities for hiking, biking, and interpretation. General curiosity of how these goals will be achieved was discussed. A few comments also expressed the need to partner with neighboring towns on these goals, explicitly state where the boundaries of this work are, and develop boundary agreements with townships.

Dane County has some of the best farmland in the state. Land in cover (grassland, prairie and forest) is critical for water infiltration and carbon sequestration. What land use tools would you support to preserve farmland and natural areas?

Educational Opportunities: Various educational opportunities were identified including educating on the importance of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations and the benefits of native plants. Specifically, the following ideas were provided:

- a) Coordinate a garden tour throughout Stoughton that displays lawns that were converted to native grasses.
- b) The City can have a native plant sale and utilize the sale as an opportunity to educate about the benefits of native plants.

Advancing Solutions- Enhancing farmland: The City should first work to prioritize which farmland should be preserved. For an approach of how to do this, Stoughton could work with neighboring communities and see approaches they've taken. The City should work with farmers to help them utilize conservation practices that prevent soil erosion and protect the land for future generations. Participants debated on whether or not the best use of land would be either for solar farms or keeping it as traditional farm land. This is something that participants urged the City to consider and evaluate the value of both. While solar farms can provide a renewable energy source, there is a loss of farmland, which is important to Stoughton's identity and heritage.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations are important to the community and participants urged to support the use of CSAs. The City could also help support getting another co-op for farmers to use or advertise vegetable stands in the community. This would make it easier for the community to buy from local farmers. The current community gardens in Stoughton are not full, and the City should promote the use of gardens and increase them as Stoughton grows.

Advancing Solutions-Development: Participants expressed support in mix-used development (of housing and businesses) in order to utilize small city lots, and preserve area farmland. The intent should also be to make this housing affordable. There was also interest in rethinking the use of buildings downtown, and could use existing buildings for hotels or housing. As Stoughton continues to grow, participants expressed the need to understand if new developments are being built as efficiently as they can be. If not, the City should work with developers to promote efficiency in new development with strategies like rooftop solar installations.

Advancing Solutions-Increasing natural areas: Participants shared the many opportunities to increase natural areas in Stoughton by converting lawns into native grasses. They felt that the easiest strategy would be for the City to plant terraces in native grasses. The City could also encourage the conversion of lawns at larger spaces like churches, schools and parks. Within parks, participants expressed interest in more trees that are either fruit bearing or large shade trees. There could be a map that educates the public on different types of tree species and their benefits. A comment suggested to re-establish native plantings along the river. For promoting the conversion of homeowners lawns, the City could change noxious weeds ordinances, restrictions on grass lengths, etc. The City could also host a grant program, provide a stipend, or provide a tax credit to assist homeowners in the conversion of lawns. Additionally, the City could promote the use of electric lawn mowers to reduce emissions.

Increasing the tree canopy can reduce heat islands, thereby decreasing energy use during the summer. What can the City and public do to promote more tree planting?

Educational Opportunities: Participants expressed the need to educate on the overall benefits of trees and their ability to save energy. The City has the tree commission and the City Forester as resources and the City should make the community aware of these resources. Some specific educational opportunities were identified:

- a) Specifically target developers in education on the value of trees so that they can increase tree canopy as Stoughton grows. Guidelines could be created that outline best practices for increasing tree cover in new development. This information should be shared with developers and their customers.
- b) Residents may want to plant trees on their property, but they may not know how to maintain it. Participants suggested having a demonstration site in a park that would have certain recommended tree species at ages 5, 10, and 20 years to educate residents on different tree species and the maintenance required at these ages.

Advancing Solutions–Increasing Tree Canopy: First, the City should assess current tree policies for developments and homeowners. From there, the City should determine which species of tree should be planted, and ensure that plantings are coordinated with solar so that trees aren't inhibiting areas for generating renewable energy. When determining which species of trees should be planted, the City should be considering what people would prefer near their home. Participants shared that they felt the City has preferred smaller trees, but larger trees may provide more benefits. In order to support tree growth across the community, the City can support the following:

- a) Bury wires and use alternatives to asphalt to help promote tree growth
- b) Require businesses to plant a certain amount of trees in their landscaping
- c) Revise tree policies for developments to encourage planting large shade trees and encourage owners to maintain the tree canopy throughout ownership.

Advancing Solutions–Increasing Tree Canopy in Public areas: There was general support among participants for more trees in public parks. An idea shared was to have more natural plan areas in parks where children are interacting with nature. Besides parks, participants discussed the opportunities to grow trees within parking lots, street medians, and terraces. Although the size of medians or terraces could be an issue for large shade trees, the City could provide tax incentives to assist with maintenance and planting.

Transportation

Vision:

Create a multi-modal approach to transportation for the City of Stoughton that emphasizes the wellness of the community, reducing pollution and improving livability, making clean, energy-efficient transportation a more desirable option for city employees, residents and businesses.

Goals:

1. Decrease use of fossil fuels, including increased use of electric and alternate fuel (eg., fuel cell, hydrogen) vehicles.
2. Increase electric and alternative fuel infrastructure.
3. Adopt “green streets” planning approach to new and modified roadways.
4. Increase connectability of cycling routes.
5. Develop transit alternatives to the one-person, one-vehicle model currently used.

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presented appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?

Supportive/Positive: The vision and goal statements were roundly accepted. Participants proposed elaborated strategy ideas for the goal statements.

Transit alternatives should be explored, as there are no public transportation options between Stoughton and Madison. Participants supported efforts to use the existing railroad to reestablish the train route between Stoughton and Madison, and to increase access to regional rail transportation. Options for intra city transportation via train, trolley, and bus should be supported. Efforts to establish a Park and Ride (linking to ride share and/or public buses) would be worth considering, even though not successful in the past.

While transit alternatives are the preferred option to solve the dilemma of the one-person per car model, participants recognized interim steps, including roundabouts (which reduce stop and go traffic), green streets (roadways that are not just driveable but bikeable and walkable), and improving bikeability.

Questions/Concerns: It may be challenging to make transit alternatives (to the one-person, one-vehicle model) more attractive to residents. Many residents commute to Madison and have

few to no transportation alternatives. A second challenge is for people living in rural areas around Stoughton, where there are no transportation alternatives and even school buses have limited routes. Due to these constraints, the committee should focus on more sustainable personal vehicles.

How can the city support multimodal transportation options?

The City has the opportunity to support multimodal transportation options, with attention to multi-city public transportation, developing a robust bicycle infrastructure, and promoting pedestrian friendly streets/sidewalks/paths.

Advancing Solutions & Reducing Barriers: All of the opportunities for supporting multimodal transportation options fall simultaneously under ‘advancing solutions’ and ‘reducing barriers’ - in that the solutions reduce the barriers to utilization of public transportation and other multimodal transportation options.

Specific suggestions regarding multi-city transportation options:

- a) Plan for and invest in current and future infrastructure (e.g., park and ride, train, trolley, bike paths, bike lanes).
- b) Ensure that pedestrian and bicycle safety are prioritized.
- c) Connect Stoughton and surrounding rural areas to Madison and other nearby communities, in order to reduce necessity of commuters relying on personal vehicles.
- d) City fleet should be all hybrid electric, in order to set an example for vehicle owners.
- e) Develop an infrastructure to support hybrid electric vehicles and bikes (charging stations).
- f) Establish a Park and Ride and develop a City/employer partnership to address ‘last mile’ transportation alternatives (to get people downtown or to their places of employment).
- g) Encourage the development of ride share programs. Use technology (apps) to coordinate ride scheduling.
- h) Support employer/employee transportation programs. Stoughton Trailers currently buses in workers; Verona also provides transportation to Epic workers; these models could be studied.

Specific suggestions regarding the bike infrastructure include:

- a) Develop more bike paths to outlying communities, as well as creating more bike paths to Madison.
- b) Increase the connectability of cycling routes, especially through the industrial area
- c) Provide programs that make biking more affordable (bike maintenance support, bike rental).

- d) Increase bike lanes on roads, including Hwy 51.
- e) Establish bike routes to and from Stoughton Schools.
- f) Incentivize kids to walk or bike to school, using 'safe routes to school'.
- g) Be attentive to safety, with the development of crosswalks (with flashing crossing signals), night lights for bike paths.
- h) More bike racks, and use of bike racks as art.
- i) Bike and electric bike group trips

Specific suggestions regarding developing a pedestrian friendly infrastructure:

- a) Be attentive to safety of pedestrians, with crosswalks and night-time lighting.
- b) Develop sidewalks and pedestrian pathways.
- c) Work on connectivity with existing paths.

Should the city partner with Madison to provide bus routes?

Participants supported partnering with Madison to provide bus transport, but with caveats, and recognizing the fiscal difficulties of doing so. In order for a program to work, service must be regular and reliable, even in inclement weather. Workers, commuters, and young people would benefit from this service. Several participants suggested that it would be beneficial to also connect with McFarland, Oregon, and other close-by communities. Madison is very much a hub for many communities, and all cities, towns, and villages surrounding the Madison hub could be connected with a 'wheel and spoke' model of regional transportation.

Water

Vision: The City of Stoughton, including residents and businesses, conserve, protect, restore, and advocate for groundwater and surface water resources, ensuring clean water is available for drinking, recreation, fishing, and the support of healthy aquatic habitat.

Goals:

1. Conserve groundwater by increasing water use efficiency and taking actions that decrease the wasteful use of water
2. Protect groundwater from potential contaminants
3. Protect local waters by managing surface runoff quantity and quality
4. Manage riparian land use so as to protect surface water quality and enhance aquatic habitat.

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21/22 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presents appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?

Supportive/positive: There was support for these vision and goals and the emphasis of protection of water sources. Participants were appreciative of the community engagement and involvement of business.

Questions/concerns: Some participants felt that the goals were too broad and wanted measures for evaluating success. When communicating these goals to the public, it was suggested to simplify these issues. Participants encouraged the City to consider the fact that Stoughton is connected to the Yahara watershed and these efforts will have to go beyond City boundaries. These goals should also be shared with the wastewater treatment plant to ensure that their goals align. As the discussion progressed, participants suggested the addition of the following goals:

- a) A goal around water education that is done in an inclusive manner
- b) A goal that includes policies towards consequences for individuals or entities who are impeding progress on these goals.

There were many questions from participants on ground and surface water quality in Stoughton. While these are not directly related to the vision and goals, these questions will likely come up again, and the City should keep these questions in mind:

- a) Is lead a concern in Stoughton's water supply?
- b) There has been historical industrial pollution in Stoughton, including two superfund sites. Where do these stand now and should there be goals to support clean up efforts?
- c) From a water treatment perspective, are these efforts focusing on all contaminants in ground and surface water?

Stoughton relies on groundwater – deep wells – for its drinking water supply. Groundwater is a finite resource. How can we incentivize water conservation by homeowners and businesses?

Educational Opportunities–Groundwater topics: Participants identified a need to understand more about groundwater that services Stoughton. Topics within groundwater education should include:

- a) Where Stoughton gets its water from
 - b) The safety of Stoughton's water
 - c) Recharge areas for municipal wells
 - d) Education on municipal wells vs private wells and any plans to drill more municipal wells
 - e) Actions that homeowners can take to conserve and protect groundwater like rain barrels, rain gardens, and low flush toilets
 - f) Millpond Dam concerns, and if removing it will affect Stoughton's groundwater.
- Education on these topics could be done at specific events or have posters near drinking fountains or sinks in public buildings.

Educational Opportunities–Water Conservation: Participants had many different ideas on strategies that the City could use to improve understanding of groundwater in Stoughton and water conservation strategies. The following ideas were provided:

- a) Rain barrels and rain gardens could be used at parks or public places with signage to teach about the benefits of these practices.
- b) The City could host a neighborhood competition to decrease water use. This should be paired with strategies homeowners can do to conserve water
- c) Involve the high school and youth-led community groups to assist with creating outreach materials and programs. Youth can also be used as a way to bring education to their families.
- d) Events and signage in public places, and social media campaigns around water conservation.

Reducing barriers: Besides education, participants expressed that water conservation does have some barriers. If anything should be done to water prices, participants stressed that it should be done in an equitable manner and to be mindful of how raising prices could affect low-income

communities. The City could provide incentives for residents to purchase water saving toilets and on-demand hot water heaters.

Advancing Solutions–Groundwater protection: In order to protect our groundwater resources, the City could plant native species in public spaces to protect groundwater. The City could incentivize residents for native plants on private property.

Severe storms and heavy rainfall have become more common. This increases the risk to property from flooding, and contamination of the Yahara River, which is central to Stoughton’s identity.

**What can the City/residents do to decrease risk of property damage from flooding?
What can the City/residents do to decrease contamination of our waters (the Yahara River and its tributaries) by stormwater runoff?**

Educational Opportunities–Reducing stormwater runoff: Participants had various ideas of opportunities with the goals of increasing awareness about water quality concerns and helping residents adopt best management practices to reduce runoff.

- a) Educate and provide resources to the community about rain barrels. Rain barrels can be put at community gardens and youth groups could paint the rain barrels so they are attractive.
- b) Engage the community through a service day where community members clean storm drains of leaves. McFarland has done something similar to this.
- c) Educate around best practices for lawn management. This could include conversion of lawns into native grasses, establishing rain gardens, and mowing frequencies. Assist homeowners by providing resources on specific native plants for reducing runoff, and allowing for different lawn lengths year round.
- d) Stormwater ponds will likely increase in communities as Stoughton grows. Residents should be educated on the purpose of these ponds and the water quality of stormwater ponds. Within new developments, consider the need for sump pumps and alternatives for sidewalks as they are an impervious surface that can contribute to runoff.

Educational Opportunities–Surface water: Participants expressed the need to provide and support educational programs that would increase awareness around local surface water quality concerns.

- a) Support citizen science for stream monitoring and aquatic invasive species detection. There are many state and regional programs to link to in this effort.
- b) Educate on the process of wastewater treatment and how it relates to the vision and goals of the Committee.
- c) Inform the community about Millpond and the effect taking out the dam will have on local wildlife and water quality.

Reducing barriers: Practices to reduce runoff require an upfront cost. The City can provide tax incentives, and work with developers to build stormwater management practices into their budgets from the beginning of development. Additionally, the City could consider strategies that will infiltrate water naturally rather than installing storm sewers.

Solid Waste Management

Vision:

The City of Stoughton supports the 3 R's - reduce, reuse, and recycle, in that order. The city will reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, while decreasing the amount of waste generated overall, and ensure that all waste is disposed of properly.

Goals:

1. Reduce wasteful consumption and overall quantity of waste generated.
2. Reduce the use of toxic products and materials that have negative impacts on environmental and human health.
3. Support the use of quality products that retain their value, usefulness and function so they can be reused and repaired.
4. Ensure systems are in place to dispose of all waste properly, including hazardous waste, recyclable materials, and compostable items.

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21/22 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presented appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?

Supportive/Positive: There was general support for the vision and goals. Specifically, participants appreciated the prioritization of *reducing* and the focus on alternative handling strategies for waste.

Questions and concerns: For clarification purposes, there were comments on the need to define 'who' within the vision and goals—is it the city or households reducing waste? Participants also wanted to see a higher prioritization of food waste with the vision and goals. Although there was support for higher quality products, participants recognized that higher quality products can be more expensive, and this can create a barrier for people. A comment was made that as the City is looking to support these goals, the City needs to understand the waste regulations and opportunities and work within those spheres rather than recreating the system. There were general concerns about apathy within the community regarding solid waste management.

What are options for reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill?

Education opportunities: Many participants identified the need for education on waste reduction strategies, including recycling. General comments were made that people may not know how to reduce waste, what happens to waste in Stoughton, or that certain products are toxic and should not be thrown in the dumpster. Specific ideas shared:

- a) The City can work with John's to understand what the community is recycling incorrectly, and then forming education programs based off this information.
- b) The City can work with John's to educate community members on how to handle items that don't belong in trash or recycling in a responsible manner.
- c) Educational programs that teach skills like mending, composting, or host fix-it clinics
- d) Schools could teach recycling, composting, and establish gardening programs.

Advancing Solutions- Recycling: Participants shared that they understand we aren't recycling as efficiently as possible. While this does take education, there are some additional incentives that participants identified to help making recycling more efficient in the community:

- a) Establish fines or fees for entities who do not recycle
- b) Connect with Marc Inc. to assist with sorting recyclable materials
- c) The City can work with the community to create a recycling identity, advertise more widely what can be recycled and items that community members can take in and receive money for.
- d) Incentives should be given to larger organizations for recycling

Reducing barriers: Participants recognized there are a lot of systemic barriers in place that make landfilling waste the easiest option. In order to reduce waste going to landfills, participants identified the following to address some of the barriers:

- a) Trees that are taken down could be milled and used for lumber.
- b) The City could host a 'Reuse page' or 'Free-cycle page' for community members to post items that they do not want anymore and find someone else to take and reuse those items
- c) Centralized collection place for metal, food waste, and clothing swaps. Having centralized locations for these can make waste reduction convenient for the community.
- d) Community-wide composting that includes curbside collection
- e) The City of Stoughton could host a Clean-Sweep for hazardous waste collection.
- f) The City should have water bottle refill stations in all public buildings.
- g) Schools in Stoughton are in need of assistance with reducing food waste. For example, students are required to take all items given at lunch, when they may only eat one or two items. All the other items then go to waste. Providing education on food waste and composting in schools can help reduce the amount of food waste.
 - i) Referendum funding should include funds to improve the cafeteria to create systems to reduce food waste.

Collaboration & Partnerships: Businesses within Stoughton have specific waste management needs, and the City should go to local businesses to understand how businesses are managing their waste. The City can also help create partnerships between businesses to find use for specific items that are taken to a landfill. Many businesses within Stoughton are environmentally conscious in other aspects, such as local foods, but maybe aren't thinking about waste reduction. The City can help promote waste reduction along with encouraging 'no-packaging' businesses in the community.

Advancing solutions– waste in construction: Participants shared that the City should take responsibility for handling construction waste. This includes providing contractors and home-owners guidelines to help them be more responsible with home construction and repair waste. Additionally, the City could provide rebates when more sustainable materials are used such as metal roofs.

What are ways that the City's Department of Public Works can increase resident support for recycling?

Educational Opportunities: The City can take the lead on education regarding recycling. This includes educating on the steps for recycling, and clarification on what materials can be recycled. Additionally, participants identified that there was some distrust in the community with regards to John's and if they are recycling materials that are put in recycling bins. The City can also use Syttende Mai as an opportunity to educate and increase the amount of recycling at the event. Volunteers could be used to assist in the sorting of recyclable materials at events like Syttende Mai.

Reducing barriers: The City can take a leadership role in reducing barriers to increase recycling within the community. This can include many strategies such as hosting events and establishing partnerships:

- a) Establish community drop-off sites to recycle items that cannot be collected curbside such as batteries and appliances.
 - i) These sites and dates should be added to the community calendar so residents can plan ahead.
- b) The City can partner with File 13 in Madison to recycle electronic waste
- c) Work with second-hand stores like St. Vincent DePaul's to have them outline what items they can and cannot accept.
- d) Increase frequency of curbside collection of recycling to every week.

Foster community leadership: The City could create a committee that is responsible for harvesting house items like appliances and furniture that could be reused. The City can also encourage restaurants to allow customers to bring their own take-home containers. Restaurants can sign a community promise or charge customers to use a single-use container.

Community Engagement & Education

Vision:

The City of Stoughton promotes an ethic of sustainability by encouraging and empowering residents, businesses, and community groups to take actions that improve environmental and human health. Through learning and engagement opportunities for residents, schools, businesses and organizations, sustainability is a part of life for all in our community.

Goals:

1. Increase collaboration and connections among citizens, businesses, schools, city government, and organizations to promote sustainability awareness & engagement.
2. Increase the sustainability awareness of Stoughton residents and businesses through innovative programs.
3. Increase the number of residents and businesses that have implemented sustainable practices, such as those listed in other focus areas of this Plan.
4. Ensure sustainability is considered in decision-making processes by the City of Stoughton, including the city budget process.
5. Support high quality of life through promotion of wellness activities, healthy local food, safe walking and bicycling, and reduction in environmental toxins.

For the complete list of comments from the public collected at the 9/21 dialogue, see [HERE](#).

What aspects of the vision and goals that the Sustainability Committee presented appeal to you? What aspects do you find potentially problematic?

Supportive/Positive: Participants strongly supported several aspects of the vision and goal statements. Participants appreciated that the vision statement emphasizes that there is opportunity to increase sustainability across age demographics. Participants also indicated that they appreciated that all sectors of the community (government, business, community) were included in advancing actions. Businesses need to be at the forefront of sustainable practices. Participants want to see the City of Stoughton as a role model for residents and for other communities. All sectors can demonstrate how to be more sustainable and can set baseline standards for operations, events, and sustainable living.

Questions and concerns: While the word ‘residents’ is in the vision statement, one participant indicated that the word ‘neighbors’ is missing. Likewise, the vision and goals are inward-facing; as such, they do not communicate to those outside Stoughton (other communities, visitors) the need and expectation that these practices will be honored and followed.

The primary concern voiced regarding the vision and goal statements was regarding whether they are feasible. Actions taken must be realistic and achievable. There is a cost to making change happen, and

any initiative needs to be cost effective. Implementation of actions will require leadership and personnel - does the City have funds to implement these recommendations? Reaching out to all ages of students with sustainability education and actions will require resources from the school district. To achieve all that is set out in the goals, there may be a need to provide either incentives or policies that lead to desired actions.

An additional concern regards public acceptance of lifestyle changes and how to motivate residents to make necessary changes in their own practices (such as recycling and composting, low energy living, reduction in consumerism).

What educational and program opportunities would support efforts to empower residents to make sustainable choices?

Participants shared ideas about programs that would increase household and community sustainability efforts. These ideas included both process considerations and specific areas for action. Process considerations identified included education programs; city, business and community organization leadership and modeling of sustainable practices; policy initiatives; engaging youth; and connecting residents. Specific areas for action included local food, pedestrian safety, plastic bans, recycling, composting, water conservation, rain barrels and rain gardens, tree planting, vermiculture, and waste reduction. Specific ideas are detailed below.

Educational Opportunities: To make change easy, residents need to be given the knowledge and the resources to change behavior. Providing knowledge through educational programming is the first step across all generations. The Sustainability Committee (in partnership with nonprofit organizations and educational institutions) could provide free classes on how to engage sustainability at the household level (for all the areas of action mentioned above). For community events that are encouraging recycling and zero waste, the public should be provided with educational resources about why this is being done, and how to promote these practices.

Advancing Solutions- Modeling sustainable practices: City, business, and community organizations should lead through modeling of sustainable practices. Businesses that initiate or expand sustainable practices set an example and introduce options to other businesses. Participants felt that it is important to recognize sustainable businesses publicly, to encourage other businesses to try new ideas and practices. Community organizations should also model internal sustainability practices while also supporting community through their sustainability efforts. A specific suggestion for the City (perhaps in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and nonprofit organizations) is the development of an information packet for new families, new businesses, and visitors with information about Stoughton's sustainability plan and ongoing initiatives.

Advancing Solutions- Policy Initiatives: While some changes can be adopted easily, other practices may be too widespread, ingrained, or costly to implement without policy incentives or mandates. Policy opportunities mentioned specifically included a ban on single use plastics and requirements for recycling and composting at local events. Businesses can also be mandated to reduce waste and recycle products that they sell.

Fostering Community Leadership- Engaging Youth: Participants were especially inspired by youth participation and encouraging of efforts to increase youth actions toward sustainability. Partnerships with

the school district and environmental clubs would provide opportunities for youth to implement sustainability practices within the school (reducing food waste, sustainable food choices, creating composting and gardens within school grounds) and within the community (working with the Downtown business community, planting trees, donating produce to the food pantry).

Fostering Community Leadership- Connecting Residents: There was quite a bit of discussion about the importance of personal connections and presence in sharing information and motivation to live sustainably. Connections can be within an aged demographic (seniors getting together to share ideas) or across generations (senior/youth activities).

How could the City or sustainability organizations work to build collaboration and connections among citizens, businesses, schools, government, and nonprofit organizations to promote sustainability awareness and engagement?

Educational Opportunities: Opportunities for hands-on learning would encourage residents to repurpose items (perhaps at the proposed [Innovation Center Stoughton](#)) (composting and sewing were mentioned specifically).

Collaboration and Partnerships: There is a great deal of room for collaboration between and among the City, the School District, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Association, and nonprofit organizations in promoting sustainability awareness and engagement.

Schools would be a great locus for initiating sustainability actions. Support from the community and school board, and student engagement in reducing, reusing, repurposing, recycling, and composting, would provide valuable education and practice that then can be shared throughout the community. One participant proposed a school referendum that would couple school renovations with increasing opportunities for recycling, composting, and trash reduction.

Stoughton already has very popular community events, such as Syttende Mai. A great starting point for the community would be to engage all entities mentioned above to make this event sustainable. As Syttende Mai attracts visitors from near and far, this would also serve to have Stoughton set an example for other communities.

How can residents continue to be involved in decision making about sustainability initiatives of the City, including the City budget?

Advancing Solutions: Participants encouraged the City Sustainability Committee to continue to report on the progress being made by the committee (through media, social media, events). Residents want continuing input on initiatives. The committee was encouraged to provide incentives for individuals, households, and businesses to set and meet personal challenges and goals (including a recognition program). The committee was also tasked with researching what other communities are doing, in order to identify initiatives appropriate for Stoughton.

Reducing Barriers: Engage youth in deliberation and decision-making! Youth are not able to vote, so they need to have a voice in decision-making bodies. Students (especially members of environmental clubs) can be involved in the Sustainability Committee, and can serve to advertise committee events at the

schools. High School students from the Environmental Club can encourage youth participation by creating opportunities for middle school and elementary aged students to get involved in clubs or sustainability activities.