



MIDDLETON SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

It was no accident that the City of Middleton was named the “Best Place to Live” in America in August 2007 by *Money Magazine*. It took decades of careful city planning to achieve that accolade, including a commitment to open space and conservancy lands, encouragement of a diverse economic presence within the City limits, the embracing of innovative community design, the adoption of workforce housing assistance, and more. The foundation of a sustainable community has been laid through years of thoughtful planning focused on compact growth, resourceful design, and infill development.

We are a city of approximately 17,000 with a housing stock that is nearly 50% multi-family units. Density has been and continues to be a hallmark of the City’s land-use planning. The City has successfully used tax increment financing for economic development to meet environmental goals, including the improvements made to re-route and enhance the North Fork of the Pheasant Branch Creek, which created many acres of wetlands and prairie.

The City has also used TIF to accommodate many large employers, including Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC), which provides good-paying jobs to 500 area residents. Economic development has encouraged a broad base of local businesses, from high tech firms like Standard Imaging and Gilson Medical Instruments, to corporate headquarters for American Girl and Capital Brewery. The City has also worked to preserve the unique nature of our downtown, including the historic Middleton Depot Visitors Center, the Middleton Historical Society, specialty shops and eclectic restaurants, and the recently relocated National Mustard Museum. Middleton’s economic base serves both to employ many of our residents and to provide the goods and services they need close to home.

The City of Middleton is also the “Good Neighbor City”, a description we take seriously. From our outstanding school system and award winning local library to the City-supported and nationally accredited Senior Center, Middleton is committed to providing opportunities, information, and support to our residents of all ages.

While we are proud of our 2007 award, the City understands it must continue to innovate in order to become a truly resilient community. In many ways, it is 2009 that represents a watershed moment for the City of Middleton, as the City’s commitment to sustainability has been matched by momentum. While much remains to be done, the City’s accomplishments in the past 12-18 months will serve to both guide and accelerate our development as a resilient community with a sustainable future.

The hallmark of 2009 may well be the community’s work to develop a sustainable vision for the City of Middleton and to create a Sustainable City System Plan to guide us to that end. Over the years, the City has undertaken numerous “environmental” initiatives such as converting traffic signals to LED lighting, or installing occupant sensors for lighting in City facilities. Middleton has not, however, collected baseline information or identified specific indicators, developed targets

and prioritized actions, or methodically measured results **with a systems approach**. Throughout the latter half of this year City staff and the community as a whole has embarked on a process to apply that approach. Through a visioning session, surveys, the creation of a City Green Team, and the assistance of sustainability consultants, Middleton has made significant strides toward incorporating sustainability as a factor in every City decision. Public outreach and involvement has reached new heights with the assistance of a committed and enthusiastic Sustainability Committee; new programming and events offer residents many opportunities to educate themselves and take steps to become more sustainable in their own lives.

The City of Middleton cannot yet point to an impressive array of statistics showing all kinds of measureable results and targets reached, but through outstanding efforts on the part of City staff and volunteer community members, we have made great strides this year toward becoming a sustainable community. As a smaller city with limited resources, we believe Middleton's accomplishments to date are noteworthy because they demonstrate it isn't just the Portlands, Madisons or Austins of the world that can work toward sustainability. Cities and towns of all sizes have a stake in sustainability and building resilient communities; in 2009 the City of Middleton has laid the groundwork for such a community and looks forward to an even more sustainable future.

1. What sustainability efforts has Middleton undertaken over the last twelve months?

Energy Use:

The City of Middleton has fully embraced Governor Doyle's goal to generate 25% of our City's energy and transportation fuels from renewable resources by 2025. In July, 2009, the Common Council unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the 25 x 25 goal, and despite challenging economic times, the City has further shown its commitment to the goal by budgeting to purchase 25% of its energy in 2010 from Wisconsin and Iowa wind and solar power through the MG&E "Green Power Tomorrow" program. This commitment to renewable energy purchase will offset 436 cubic tons of CO² per year.

While meeting the 25 x 25 vision is the City of Middleton's near term goal, the City's long term vision is that of a "net zero" community. To further that vision, the City has been working with consultants and city residents since June of 2009 to create a Sustainable City System plan. One of the seven areas of focus in the plan includes Energy, and baseline measurements using 2008 data have been established for sixteen sub-categories of energy use which fall under the umbrellas of electricity use, natural gas use, renewable energy use and liquid fuel use. These baseline measures represent both overall city use and municipal use, and will be used in future years to determine whether target reductions or increases (in the case of renewable energy use) are being met. (See question 4 for additional information on the Sustainable City Plan.)

The City is also moving aggressively to identify potential energy conservation measures in its facilities. In July, 2009, the Common Council unanimously entered into a memorandum of understanding with Johnson Controls, Inc. for municipal building energy performance efficiency upgrade evaluations. The City has applied for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant to provide partial funding for municipal building upgrades recommended by the Johnson Controls Facilities Report, as well as conversion of 171 city-owned streetlights to L.E.D. In October, 2009, the Common Council authorized funding for the municipal building upgrade portion of the project as a match to the EECBG funds for L.E.D. streetlights. In total, this project

will save 245,290 kWhs annually and 4,378 therms annually, resulting in a reduction of 467,706 pounds of greenhouse gasses, a 14% reduction in municipal electricity usage for all operations and a 7% reduction in municipal natural gas usage for all city operations.

Water Use:

The City of Middleton's water focus has been predominantly on better managing storm water runoff in 2009. The City recognizes that our physical location on Lake Mendota, as well as our conservancy treasure, Pheasant Branch Creek require we devote significant attention to preserving and improving the health of these water resources by reducing sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen loading, and other pollutants.

A major streambank stabilization project was for the Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor, with installations of rootwad and stone revetments, seeding and erosion control blankets, stabilization of bridge areas and installation of bridges, and installation of footer stones and barbed structures in the creek bed as well as porous pavement on the trail. This stabilization project repaired 570 linear feet of severely eroded streambank, preventing approximately 240 tons of additional sediment from entering Pheasant Branch Creek and Lake Mendota.

The City utilized DNR Stewardship Grant Funds in 2009, to purchase 5.9 acres of degraded wetlands along Allen Boulevard adjacent to Lake Mendota, which will be restored as a functioning wetland in the future. In 2009, the City continued oak savanna, lowland forest, and wetland restoration work in the Lakeview Park area, including receiving an \$80,000 DNR Lake Protection Grant for additional streambank stabilization work in this area to be completed in 2010. Construction was also initiated of stormwater best management practices around Tiedeman Pond.

In 2009, the City also sponsored Plant Middleton! to educate and encourage residents on the value of planting native and rain garden plants. The City, in conjunction with Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries and EC3, offered discounted plants, a free workshop on how to install a rain garden, and full or partial reimbursing funds to qualifying applicants for the purchase and installation of rain garden plants. The City also installed rain gardens at Lakeview Park and Fireman's Park in 2009.

The City of Middleton's Sustainability Committee also included Sustain Dane at its April 2009 Clean & Green event to provide information on water conservation measures and to sell discounted rain barrels to city residents.

Waste Management:

A Zero-Waste community is, of course, the ideal and the City of Middleton has made great strides in 2009 in moving our community toward that vision. The City's Solid Waste Task Force concluded several years of research and planning in 2009, resulting in a new contract for automated waste and recycling collection that took effect on January 1, 2010. Automated collection has been shown to have numerous benefits, including a reduction in blowing trash and recyclables, an increase in the percentage of recyclables to other waste, and lower rates of injury to collection workers. In addition to implementation of automated collection, the City eliminated free curbside pickup of large items. Middleton residents for the first time now have a financial incentive not to throw away large items which might be able to be reused by others.

Perhaps most importantly, the Solid Waste Task Force developed an outstanding Recycling and Trash Guide. The Guide, which can be found at www.tinyurl.com/RecyclingGuide, built upon a booklet originally developed by the City of Fitchburg for its residents. Unlike typical community trash and recycling information that simply describe curbside recycling, the City of Middleton guide starts by asking the resident “Can It Be Used By Someone Else?” The goal of the guide is to reframe how residents and businesses think when attempting to dispose of an item, and to identify reuse and recycling options before sending an item to the landfill unnecessarily. The Guide provides:

- contact information on local charities that accept donations
- suggestions on where to post items for sale or to give away
- information on reducing junk mail,
- information on grasscycling and other yard waste reduction tips,
- details on items that are dangerous and/or cannot be placed in trash,
- an A-Z guide of recycling information for items that cannot be recycled in single-stream recycling but don’t need to end up in the trash, like athletic shoes, Brita water filters, and printer cartridges

The City also completed Phase One of a new downtown streetscaping project in 2009, adding ten recycling bins in addition to trash receptacles downtown to further encourage recycling.

As part of its public outreach and education efforts, the Sustainability Committee also held two Clean & Green Middleton events, and provided volunteers for two MedDrop events to encourage proper disposal, reuse and recycling. Please see Question 5 below for additional information on these events.

Transportation:

For many years, Middleton has been contracting with the Madison Metro Bus System to provide bus service between Middleton and Madison, and has worked to expand that bus service over the years to link major employers and job centers in Middleton as well as service to Greenway Center.

One of the City’s long term goals is to continue to provide affordable public transportation that minimizes the carbon footprints of those living, working and visiting our community while improving the convenience and speed with which individuals can move in and around our City. To that end we have continued in 2009 to work closely with County and State officials regarding regional transit opportunities including the potential for commuter rail service, as Middleton is ideally situated to take advantage of such a system. The City is planning for stops downtown and in the Greenway Center area in the event a commuter rail system is implemented in Dane County.

To further facilitate public transportation, in 2009 the City submitted a Federal Stimulus request for a TIGER grant to fund a Western Intermodal Transportation Center linking bus service, potential commuter rail, a park and ride, bike trails, and pedestrian connections. The Western Center project has enormous potential to facilitate job creation in key growth industries, to encourage transit usage, to create transportation choices, and to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to public transit, the City has long been committed to promoting pedestrian and bike systems both for the health of our residents and for the positive environmental impact of these alternatives. The City won a National Trails Award in 2004 and a Wisconsin Park and Recreation Award of Excellence in 2007 for work with the Pheasant Branch Conservancy Trail. These awards exemplify the City's long term commitment to quality trail systems. Improving pedestrian and bicycle routes also remains a key long term goal. In 2009, the City, with the assistance of MSA Professional Services, Inc, went through a rigorous process to update its decade old Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The 2009 plan, adopted by the Common Council in November, builds upon the previous plan to create a broader network of multimodal routes which will effectively accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the City's neighborhoods, business areas and projected growth areas. Toward that end, the planning process focused on challenging areas within the network where multiple transportation modes are competing for limited public rights of way, raising safety concerns. The comprehensive nature of the plan ensures "you can get there from here" safely by walking or biking regardless of your Middleton destination. Since the adoption of the 2009 plan, the City has been Nominated for several more awards related to its trail systems. These include the 2009 Midwest Greenways Award, the 2010 National Trails Award for Green Solution, as well as the 2010 Wisconsin Association LA Green Solution Category.

Biodiversity Protection:

The City of Middleton, a designated Tree City, is known for its acreage of protected and well-managed conservancy and green space. These natural areas and natural resources are especially valuable because they protect, enhance, and improve biodiversity for us all!

In 2009, a number of biodiversity projects occurred simultaneously in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. One such project was a monitoring exercise to determine whether the Blandings Turtle, a state threatened aquatic turtle, could be found in the area. The City's Conservancy Lands Committee, in conjunction with Thompson and Associates Wetland Services, trained 22 volunteers who spent 92 hours in April-May, 2009 surveying for the Blanding's Turtles. There were 6 sightings of the turtles in Pheasant Branch Conservancy, and more importantly, nesting sites were able to be identified in June, 2009. With that information, volunteers were able to create protective cages around the nests, protecting the eggs from predators. Additional work was done in the nesting area to make it more conducive to successful nesting in future years as well.

Also within Pheasant Branch Conservancy, the Bock Community Forest restoration moved forward in 2009. With the assistance of BioLogic Environmental Consulting, the City of Middleton developed a restoration and management plan which was adopted in March and amended in July, 2009. What had been a 1-acre hayfield has now been planted with large caliper native trees to jumpstart the restoration process of what will eventually be a restored oak woodland. Invasives have been removed in the remainder of the restoration area, in preparation for planting to return those areas to oak woodland oak savanna and prairie. In addition, an area has been cleared of invasives in preparation for a unique community garden and native nursery space (see the section on Food Systems below for additional information.)

Lastly, as part of the Pheasant Branch Creek stream stabilization project mentioned previously, approximately 2 acres of invasives were cleared and the area replanted/seeded with native species for wildlife benefits.

City of Middleton volunteers play a key role in helping to restore and preserve biodiversity in these public lands as well. On average, the Public Lands Department receives over 500 volunteers to perform over 4,000 hours of park and conservancy work per year. The Friends of Pheasant Branch, Friends of the Kettle Ponds, Madison Fishing Expo, Dane County Conservation League, Yahara Fishing Club, and many neighborhood associations are actively involved in public lands projects each year.

Food Systems:

The City of Middleton has no actively farmed land within the City limits. However, the City has planned cooperatively with the Town of Springfield and the Town of Westport to preserve many acres of productive farmland in areas of the townships that might otherwise be considered within the City's growth areas and/or be subject to development pressure.

While there may be no actively farmed land in the city limits, gardening can be a key to food security, good nutrition, seed preservation and diversity, and relaxation and exercise. In 2009, the Sustainability Committee embarked on an effort to create the first public community garden space the city has had in quite some time. When the Committee was unable to identify a permanent site in time for the 2009 growing season, the City was approached by The Blettner Group, which offered a vacant parcel for community gardeners to use this year. In a matter of weeks, the Community Garden Task Force prepared the site, secured donated mulch and tilling, addressed water needs, advertised the community garden opportunity to Middleton residents, and raised donations to cover costs for low income gardeners. An official Twine Cutting ceremony was held in May, 2009 for this temporary location and 36 plots were quickly filled, yielding produce throughout the summer and fall.

The Sustainability Committee and the Conservancy Lands Committee also identified an opportunity for a permanent community garden space as part of the Bock Community Forest restoration. A one acre parcel at the far edge of the conservancy was created within the restoration area and cleared of invasives this fall. This unique community garden will be devoted in part to standard vegetable gardening but will also include a significant space for native plant cultivation (primarily shrubs and trees) which will ultimately be used in other areas of the Bock Forest restoration. Community gardeners will tend to both their personal plots and specific natives, giving them an even greater stake in the success of the restoration. Additional components of the garden design call for elements such as compost bins and raised beds to be built from invasive trees removed from the site. A children's garden area will include both a naturalized play space and the opportunity for kids to actively participate in gardening activities. Officially adopted as part of the Bock Forest Management plan, the Bock Forest Community Garden will open in the spring of 2010.

Community Health:

Encouraging healthy behaviors, ensuring community safety, and working to further residents' adequate access to healthcare are all important goals for the City of Middleton. In March 2009, we took a sizeable step forward for the health of the community when the City became smoke-free. The smoke-free ordinance applies to all enclosed, indoor areas of restaurants and taverns, common areas in apartment buildings or other multi-unit residential facilities, public buildings, places of employment, outdoor seating areas at stadiums, and within fifteen feet of any primary entrance.

Opportunities to safely walk or bike to destinations throughout the City also contribute to residents' health. Please see Transportation above for additional details on the Pedestrian and Bicycle plan.

The City of Middleton is also the primary funder of the Middleton Senior Center, which coordinates programs and services for older adults that help maintain their dignity and independence. One of the services provided through the Senior Center is Meals on Wheels and in 2009, in a nod toward sustainability a new service call Meals on Two Wheels was started. Six bike riders currently participate in the program on a regular basis, delivering meals to the elderly by bicycle.

The Senior Center has also been the recipient of funding generated by cell phone recycling. To date, the center has collected over 150 cell phones and raised over \$1200 to serve older adults in the community while keeping electronics out of the landfill.

Economic Development:

You need look no further than page one of the City's Economic Development brochure to see the phrase "sustainable development." Over the past decade, the City has embraced the New Urbanist subdivision of Middleton Hills, characterized by smaller lots, narrower roads, mixed use areas, and planned open spaces amongst its many sustainable features. Sustainable development was drafted into the City's TIF #5 language as well, specifically referencing stormwater quality improvements, correctly redeveloping already-improved land, providing the lead in building or retrofitting public buildings with alternative fuels, using green materials, and providing workforce housing incentives.

In 2009, the City continued to work towards its goal of sustainable development, receiving a Better Urban Infill Development (BUILD) grant from Dane County which funded the preparation of the draft University Avenue Corridor Plan.

Additionally, in late 2009 the City applied for EECBG General Innovation Funding. This funding would facilitate the City's strategy to modernize its business park and competitively position the local industrial sector in the new green economy. The City will use this funding to invest in greater energy efficiency, offering small- and mid-size businesses financial and technical resources in a timeframe and with financing these businesses can afford. Measurable short-term goals of this GET SMART (Green Energy Today – Solutions in Middleton for Advancing Research & Technology) Initiative include:

- Assisting time- and resource-constrained small- and mid-sized businesses in identifying and implementing opportunities for smarter, more efficient energy use
- Reducing businesses' energy use per square foot of facility space
- Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions
- Reducing dependence on fossil fuels
- Generating jobs in the energy efficiency service sector (e.g. technicians, installers) and in related supply chain manufacturing
- Retaining and creating jobs at existing industrial businesses by facilitating more efficient operation.

Longer-term objectives and benefits for the community, industry, and workers include:

- Reinvesting in a community's existing business park, protecting the community's historic investment and a key source of jobs and tax base;

- Creating a self-sustaining program offering continued opportunities for local industry to implement and finance energy improvements;
- Demonstrating the value and opportunity for local community facilitation of industrial energy efficiency improvements; and
- Positioning local industry to be prepared for anticipated greenhouse gas emissions regulation.

Lastly, the City also took care to incorporate sustainability in our 2006 City of Middleton Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan, including an emphasis on reducing dependency on cars. The next large scale development on Middleton's horizon, Tribeca Village, will feature mixed use residential, office, and shopping to comply with this directive.

Other:

An engaged citizenry is important both in a democratic society and in developing a resilient, sustainable community, yet it can be difficult to communicate effectively through the media, and expensive to communicate directly with citizens through mailings. To better address education and outreach needs, in 2009 the City instituted an electronic E-Government Email Subscription Service. Through this free service, residents and business can subscribe to emails from specific city departments or committees of interest. The Sustainability Committee established two lists, one associated with committee business, and the other to relay news about sustainability events in the community. In less than a year, nearly 300 individuals have subscribed to the sustainability events listserv, providing the Committee with a no cost, no carbon footprint method to invite interested individuals to lectures and events.

Middleton's library has also been at the forefront of the community's sustainability efforts. In February, 2009, the library adopted an Environmental Policy based on the four tenets of the Natural Step. Library employees have been systematically identifying areas of unnecessary waste, right down to the little slips printed with book due dates. As a policy, they no longer print these slips unless a patron specifically requests one. In addition, the library has added a large "Green Collection" prominently located by the check out area. The collection, consisting of books, audios, videos and magazines geared toward sustainability, has proven extremely popular. The library's website also features a logo on the home page for the Green Collection where one can easily view titles and read descriptions of the books.

2. How has the City measured and reported Middleton's progress towards sustainability?

The Green Team Committee has spent the past several months collecting baseline data on a variety of sustainability indicators. From transportation data like the total number of Metro bus trip rides, to energy data like the total amount of wind energy purchased by Middleton residents from MG & E, to solid waste data, like the percentage of solid waste that is recycled, the Green Team Committee now has a system in place to measure Middleton's progress towards sustainability. The sustainability framework is an organizing tool for Middleton to connect our vision for a sustainable community to the indicators that will help us understand if we are making progress towards our vision. Please see attachments for additional information on the baseline data collected. The Committee will update the baseline data annually to ensure progress is being made.

As annual updates are made, the information will be reported on the Sustainability Committee website, the E-Gov Subscription Service, and will be presented to the Middleton Plan Commission.

3. What type of sustainability planning effort is the City undertaking?

In past years, the City's efforts at sustainability have been laudable but somewhat scattershot. In 2009, the City's Sustainability Committee recognized that we lacked a broad, community-based vision which would assure sustainability is a factor in every decision-making process within the City. The City applied for, and received, a grant from a consortium of local sustainability experts from Seventh Generation Energy Systems, MSA Professional Services, Inc. and GDS Consulting to partially fund the development of a Sustainable City System Plan. In June 2009, the Common Council under the leadership of Mayor Kurt Sonnentag and Council President Howard Teal, unanimously approved city funding and staff time for the development of a Sustainable City Systems Plan and work began in earnest.

The first step of the plan was to identify areas of focus from which baselines would be measured and targets would be created. These areas of focus were broadly identified as Energy, Transportation, Solid Waste, Water, Land Use, and Economy/Food/Fair Trade, and specific and measureable indicators were then identified under each area of focus. This summer and early fall, baseline data was gathered for each indicator. A "Green Team" representing virtually every city department was assembled to provide input, review baseline indicators, determine targets, and identify appropriate action steps to achieve those targets; these efforts continue amongst City staff and stakeholders and will result this spring in a Sustainable City System Plan for adoption by the Common Council.

Concurrent with the efforts above and just as important, the Sustainability Committee sponsored a community-wide visioning session to elicit from Middleton residents as to what a Sustainable Middleton should look like. This feedback was then condensed to seven vision statements, one for each of the focus areas above, as well as one for public education and outreach. On-line surveys were also created for residents and business owners to complete, soliciting additional information on what ordinances and policies, education and information, and rebates and other programs the City should undertake to move sustainability forward. Both the vision statements and the survey feedback have and will continue to guide development of the first draft of Middleton's Sustainable City Plan.

Although the City looks forward to completion of the first draft of the plan, it is with the knowledge that this must be a living document, referred to and updated frequently so that it continues to meet the needs of the community as well as address environmental, economic, and social realities as they arise.

4. How has the City communicated our efforts to demonstrate our commitment to the environment?

The City of Middleton's Sustainability Committee has played a significant role in public education and outreach regarding sustainability. The Committee's focus to date has not, however, been on the City's accomplishments in the areas of sustainability but rather on information and actions individual residents can take to make their own lives more sustainable.

Throughout 2009, the committee has offered free monthly seminars at the Middleton Library on a variety of sustainability topics, from green cleaning to climate change, bike commuting to local recycling opportunities. These seminars are typically attended by 20-40 people, including Middleton-Cross Plains High School students who receive extra credit for attendance. This fall the City began taping and playing the seminars on the public access cable channel to reach an even broader audience.

The Sustainability Committee also held its inaugural Clean and Green Middleton event in April, 2009. This event was designed to offer “one-stop” recycling convenience to area residents, to provide educational information on water conservation, rain barrels, and renewable energy, to offer a fun outlet for kids to participate with a recycled art contest, and to raise the visibility of sustainability in our community. In just half a day the Sustainability Committee collected 7,729 lbs. of electronic waste, 151 used compact fluorescent bulbs, 81 lbs. of batteries, 13 lbs. of CDs and diskettes, 92 eyeglasses, 11 sets of lenses, and 91 cell phones. In addition, a trailer was filled with donations of durable medical goods and 15 feet of a trailer was filled with donations of clothes and household goods. Clean & Green Middleton was so successful that City staff and Common Council members requested the Committee hold the event twice a year. A second successful Clean & Green was held this past October, and will be a signature event for the Sustainability Committee in coming years.

In 2009, the City also facilitated participation in the MedDrop program. For the first time, Middleton had a drive through drop off location where area residents could safely dispose of unneeded medications which were then properly incinerated. The two drop off dates this year were very successful, with over 2000 pounds of medication collected and kept out of landfills or the water supply.

Middleton’s local paper, the Middleton Times Tribune, has been a valuable partner in providing information about these events to residents, as have the City’s E-Government Email service and Public Works Newsletters.