

# Chapter 1:

## Demographics

This is the first of nine chapters in the Town of Saratoga Comprehensive Plan. This chapter reviews the demographics of the Town of Saratoga including trends, forecasts, and comparisons for some basic demographics including population, households, employment, age, education, and income. Forecasts typically cover the 20-year planning period, except in cases where the only acceptable data sources had lesser time periods for their forecasts. Official data sources include the WDOA Demographic Service Center and the U.S. Census Bureau.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Town of Saratoga is located in the southeastern corner of Wood County, Wisconsin. The Town is bounded by the City of Nekoosa and Town of Port Edwards to the west (across the Wisconsin River), the Village of Port Edwards and Town of Grand Rapids to the north, the Town of Rome (Adams County) to the south, and the Town of Grant (Portage County) to the east. In 2020, the Town of Saratoga had a population of 4,954. Most of the Town consists of woodlands, with scattered residential and business development throughout as well as frontage along the Wisconsin River.

### **Planning Process**

The Comprehensive Plan explores potential issues that may have an impact upon the development of the Town over a 20-year planning period. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law – 66.1001 – plans must be updated every ten years. In the Spring of 2022, the Town initiated a process to update its previous plan. Several meetings with the Plan Commission have been held and a draft plan is expected in the Spring of 2023. Running concurrently with the comprehensive planning process was the development of the Town's first economic development strategy. This was done to incorporate its findings related to economic development and land use development into the comprehensive plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held on DATE to review the final plan and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board.

### **Public Participation**

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like addressed regarding the future development of their town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See the adopted Public Participation Plan in Appendix A. The Town of Saratoga posted all Plan Commission meetings to invite the public and held a Public Hearing to collect public input.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Population and Households

### Historical Trends

Table 1 shows 2020 population estimates for the Town, County, and State. The Town grew by 8.23 percent between 1990 and 2010 but lost 4.14 percent of its population since 2010. Despite this, the number of households grew since 2010 at a rate of 2.19 percent, which is considerably lower than the growth rate of 27.53 percent between 1990 and 2010. Compared to the state, both Saratoga and Wood County are growing at a slower rate, and the average household size is decreasing at a faster rate. This could be partially due to empty nesters remaining in the Town as their children move away for school or work. It is important to note that Saratoga’s household size was considerably larger than county and state averages, but now it is closer to county and state averages.

Table 1: Demographic Change 1990-2020						
Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990-2010 % Change	2010-2020 % Change
<b>Total Population</b>						
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	4,775	5,391	5,168	4,954	8.23%	-4.14%
<b>County</b>	73,605	75,555	74,749	73,112	1.55%	-2.19%
<b>State</b>	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,790,716	16.26%	1.82%
<b>Total Households</b>						
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	1,613	2,012	2,057	2,102	27.53%	2.19%
<b>County</b>	27,473	30,135	31,598	32,332	15.01%	2.32%
<b>State</b>	1,822,118	2,084,556	2,279,768	2,358,156	25.12%	3.44%
<b>Average Household Size</b>						
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	2.96	2.66	2.51	2.36	-15.20%	-5.98%
<b>County</b>	2.65	2.47	2.34	2.23	-11.70%	-4.70%
<b>State</b>	2.61	2.5	2.43	2.39	-6.90%	-1.65%

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2020

The average household size has been decreasing steadily across the nation over the past few decades. This is due to a multitude of factors including longer life spans, less people having children, and people having fewer children.

### Projections

Figure 1 shows population projections for the Town of Saratoga and Table 2 compares projected population in the Town to Wood County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Town of Saratoga is

expected to experience an increase in population through 2040 at a rate of 1.23 percent. Wood County is expected to experience population loss at a rate of 2.39 percent through 2040.

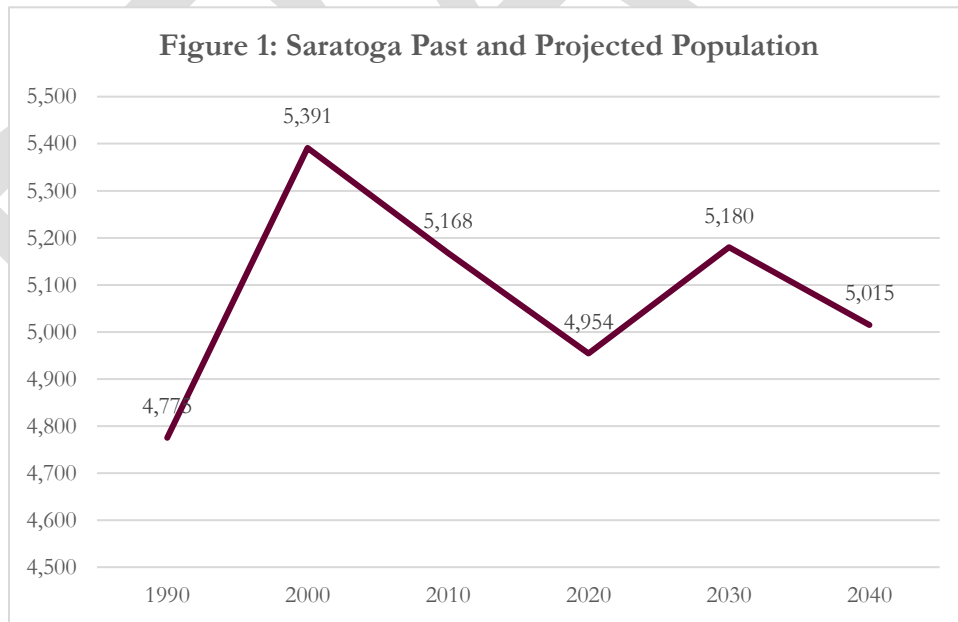
Figure 2 and Table 3 include household projections completed by the WDOA. Projections indicate that although both population and number of households are expected to increase through 2040, the growth in households will be faster than the overall population growth. This is likely due to the trend of decreased household size. The number of households is expected to increase 5.8 percent for the Town of Saratoga and decrease 0.45 percent for Wood County through 2040. Household size has been steadily decreasing through the past few decades and this trend is expected to continue. The average household size was 2.36 in 2010 and is expected to decrease to 2.25 by 2040.

<b>Table 2: Population Projections, 2025-2040</b>						
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>% Change 2020-2040</b>
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	4,954	5,190	5,180	5,150	5,015	1.23%
<b>Wood Co.</b>	72,892	74,370	73,930	73,270	71,150	-2.39%

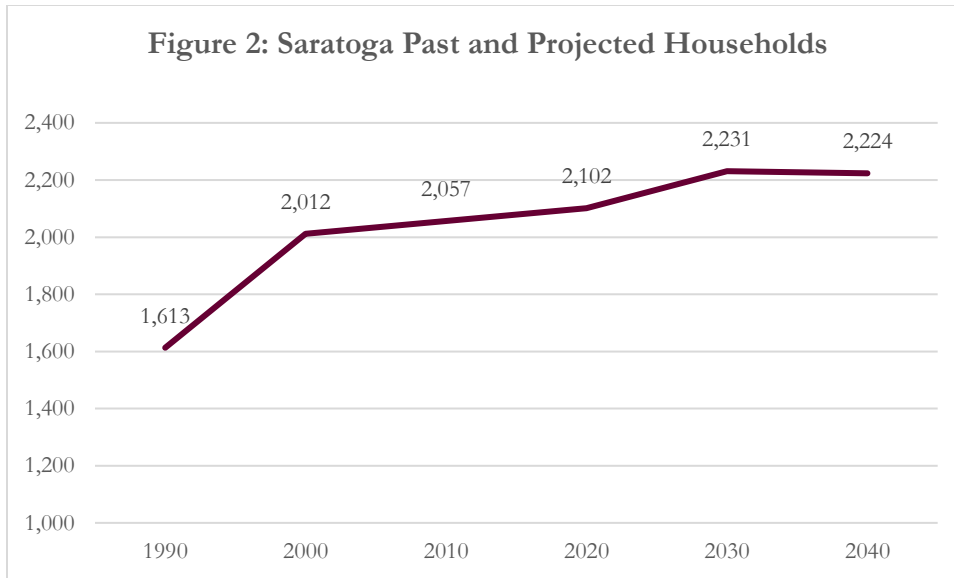
Source: ACS 2020, DOA 2025-2040

<b>Table 3: Household Projections, 2025-2040</b>						
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>% Change 2020-2040</b>
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	2,102	2,206	2,231	2,253	2,224	5.80%
<b>Wood Co.</b>	32,707	32,861	33,043	33,175	32,561	-0.45%

Source: ACS 2020, DOA 2025-2040



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2020; DOA 2025-2040

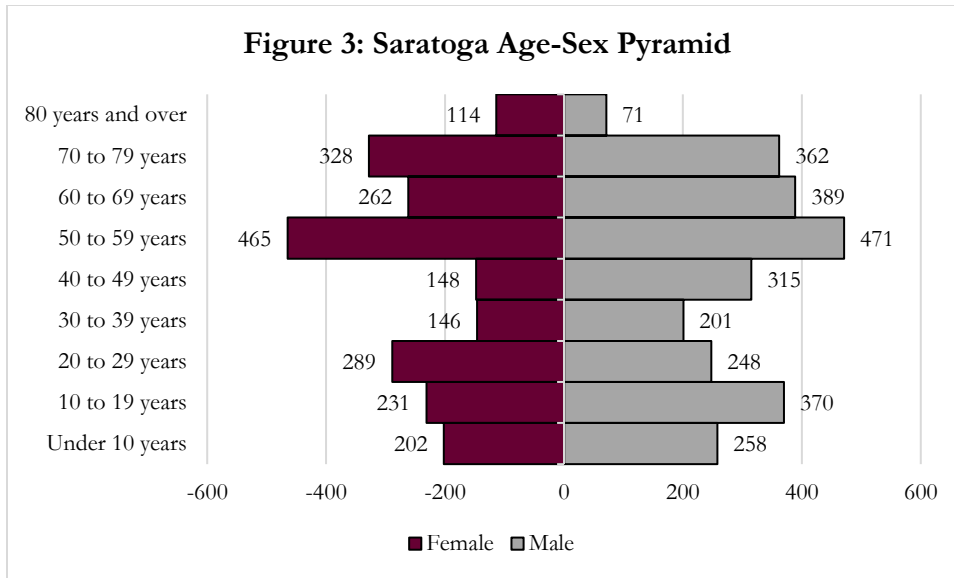


Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, & 2010; ACS 2020; DOA 2025-2040

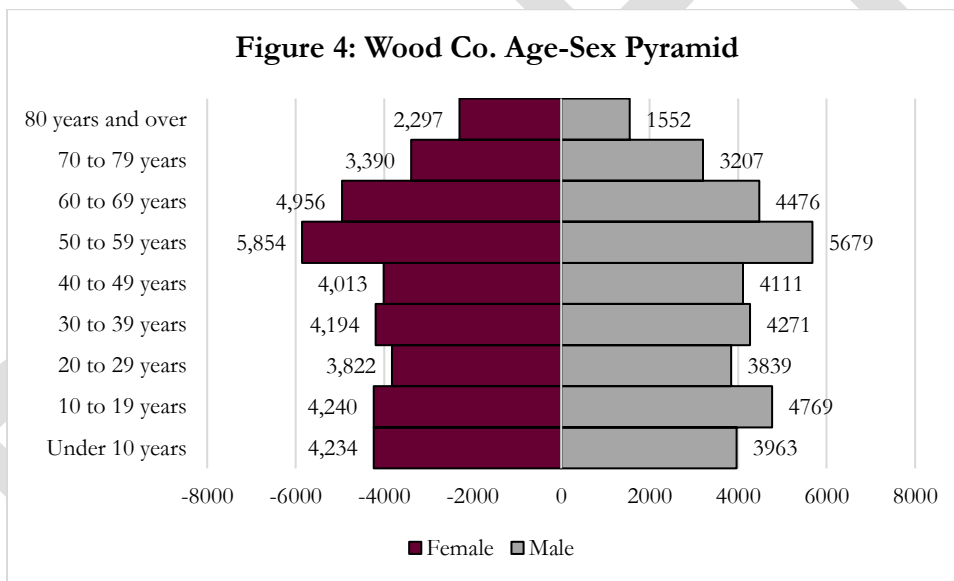
## Age

Figures 3 and 4 compare the distribution of age group for the Town of Saratoga and Wood County. Wood County’s population pyramid is stationary with similar numbers across all age ranges. Stationary population pyramids are characteristic of areas with low birth rates and long life expectancies. This is indicative of slow, steady population growth. In contrast, the Town of Saratoga has a greater share of residents both over 49 and under age 30. Since the 30 to 49 age group often is a large share of a community’s labor force, this could impact the availability of workers to fill jobs. Most males in the Town are in the 50-59 year old age category and most females are also in the 50 to 59 year old age category.

In 2020, the median age in the Town was 49.9 years, up from 46.0 in 2010. The county’s median age was 43.9 in 2020, up from 42.0 in 2010. The median age for both the Town and the county was significantly higher than the state which had a median age of 39.6 in 2020.



Source: ACS 2020



Source: ACS 2020

Population distribution is important to the planning process. Two age groups are of note, those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations, but each have different needs. For example, the younger group requires schools and childcare and the older group requires increased levels of medical care.

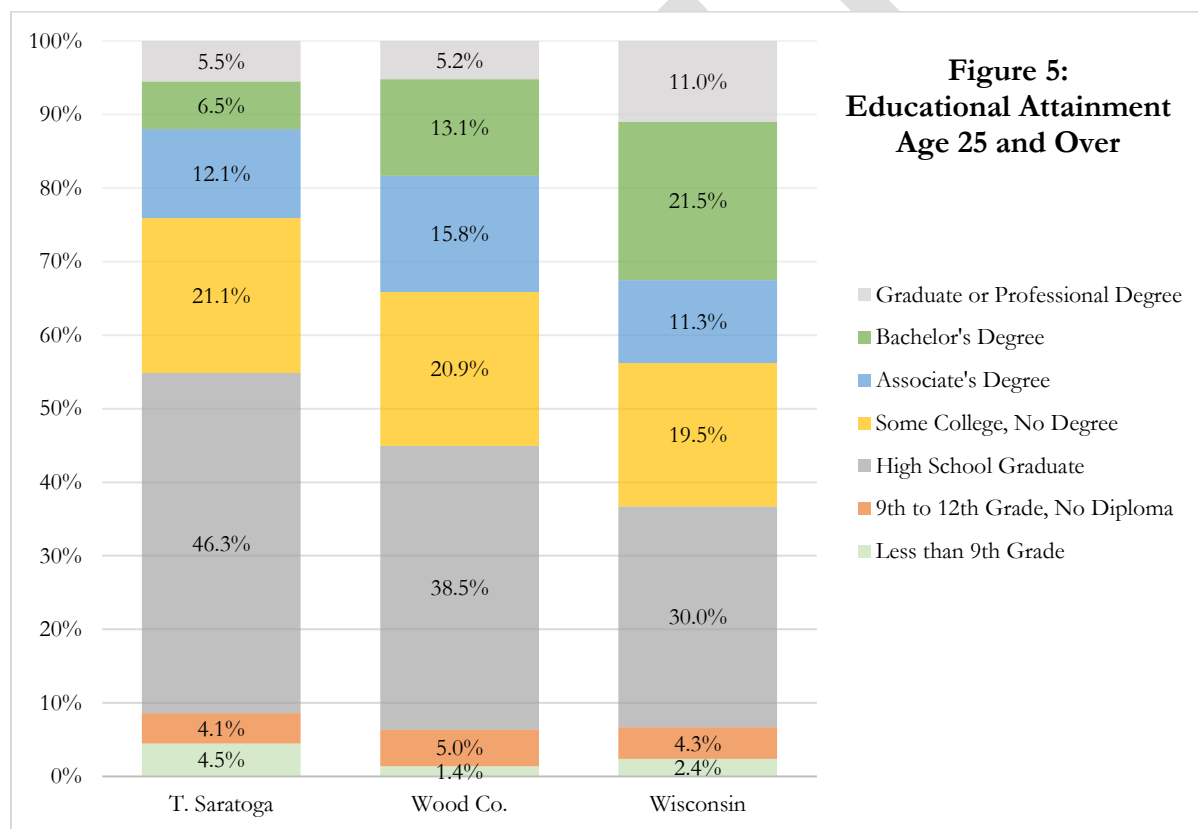
From 2010 to 2020, the population of 17 and younger group in Saratoga decreased from 23.4 percent of the population to 18.8 percent of the population. This was a net loss of 282 people from this age cohort. The population percentage of those in the 65 and older group increased from 15.3 percent in 2010 to 22.6 percent in 2020, with a net gain of 326 people. Due to longer life expectancy and the size

of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.

## Education and Income Levels

### Education

Figure 5 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Saratoga to the county and the state. In 2020, 91.4 percent of town residents ages 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 2.2 percent lower than the county average and 1.9 percent lower than the state average.



Source: ACS 2020

In 2020, 12 percent of Town residents ages 25 years and over had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This was lower than Wood County at 18.3 percent. Both the Town and the County had much fewer bachelor's degree or higher recipients than the state at 32.5 percent. Education and how it relates to economic development will be discussed in the economic development chapter.

## Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, meaning half of all households have income above that amount, and half have income below that amount. Per capita income is the average income earned per person.

Adjusted for 2022 inflation, the median household income for Town of Saratoga residents was \$71,879 in 2020. Table 4 shows that this was higher than the whole of Wood County but slightly lower than the State of Wisconsin. In 2010, the Town of Saratoga median income was higher than the county and the state. When adjusted for inflation, the median household income in the Town has risen 1.68 percent between 2010 and 2020. This was slightly higher than the county at negative 0.62 percent, but only about half the state’s rate of 3.34 percent.

Table 5 illustrates that in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars, income per capita in the Town of Saratoga was \$39,264 in 2020, which was higher than the county and slightly lower than the state. This was not true in 2010, where per capita income in the Town was lower than both the county and the state. Per capita income in the Town has risen significantly at a rate of 33.49 percent even when adjusting for inflation from 2010 to 2020. This rate of increase is higher than both the state at 9 percent and the county at 8.62 percent.

Minor Civil Division	2010	2020	Net Change	% Change
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	\$70,689	\$71,879	\$1,189	1.68%
<b>Wood County</b>	\$64,103	\$63,702	-\$401	-0.62%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$70,070	\$72,407	\$2,337	3.34%

Source: ACS 2010, 2020

Minor Civil Division	2010	2020	Net Change	% Change
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	\$29,414	\$39,264	\$9,850	33.49%
<b>Wood County</b>	\$33,805	\$36,719	\$2,914	8.62%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$36,155	\$39,411	\$3,255	9.00%

Source: ACS 2010, 2020

## Employment Characteristics

Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Saratoga in 2010 and 2020. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older. There was a decrease of 189 people in the labor force from 2010 to 2020 in the Town. This is likely due to the rise in median age, whereby more people are entering retirement. This decline contrasted with the

marginal labor force growth seen the state. The decline was similar for the county, which had a negative 5.3 percent change in the labor force from 2010 to 2020.

Labor force participation indicates the percent of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased 4.0 percent in the Town of Saratoga from 2010 to 2020. There was a decrease in the county and state during this period also, but to a slightly lesser degree.

<b>Table 6: Labor Force</b>					
<b>Minor Civil Division</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>			<b>Labor Participation Rate</b>	
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2010-2020 % Change</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	2,746	2,557	-6.9%	65.2%	61.2%
<b>Wood County</b>	39,534	37,454	-5.3%	66.5%	63.7%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	3,078,465	3,096,518	0.6%	69.0%	66.1%

Source: ACS 2010, 2020

In 2010, the Town of Saratoga had an employed population of 2,514 people. This number increased by only 5 people to 2,519 by 2020, for an increase of 1.5 percent. From 2010 to 2020, the employed population decreased in the county at a rate of 2.6 percent and increased 4.0 percent in the state. The U.S. census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Town was 1.5 percent in 2020. This was lower than both the county and the state at 4.0 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively.

<b>Table 7: Employment</b>				
<b>Minor Civil Division</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2010-2020 % Change</b>	<b>2020 Unemployment Rate</b>
<b>T. Saratoga</b>	2,514	2,519	0.2%	1.5%
<b>Wood County</b>	36,924	35,964	-2.6%	4.0%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	2,869,310	2,983,277	4.0%	2.3%

Source: ACS 2010, 2020

As shown in Table 8, in 2020 most Saratoga residents were employed in the areas of production, transportation, and material moving occupations. This is similar to in 2010, though numbers have shifted slightly between occupations. In 2020, the second sector most represented was the area of sales and office occupations, followed by management, business, science, and arts occupations. From 2010 to 2020, the most significant increase was seen in service occupations. The most significant decrease during this time was in sales and office occupations.



<b>Table 8: Resident Occupations 2010-2020</b>		
<b>Occupation Sector</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
Management, business, science, and arts	422	445
Service occupations	306	410
Sales and office occupations	669	539
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	354	381
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	763	744
<b>Total employed</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>2,519</b>

Source: ACS 2010, 2020

## Demographic Snapshot

- The population has decreased since 2010 and the number of households has increased since 2010. This has likely been due to the notable decline in household size over the past few decades.
- The Town of Saratoga is expected to experience a slight increase in population through 2040, with the number of households growing at a faster pace than the overall population.
- There are a large number of people in the older age categories and the median age is higher than the county and the state.
- The median age rose 3.9 years from 46.0 in 2010 to 49.9 in 2020.
- In 2020, 91.4 percent of Town of Saratoga residents aged 25 and over had a high school diploma or higher and 12 percent of residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. The Town had more high school graduates than both the county and state, but fewer bachelor's degree recipients than both the county and state.
- Both the 2020 average household income of \$71,879 and per capita income of \$39,264 were higher than the state and the county.
- The labor participation rate is lower than the county or the state. However, the unemployment rate is lower than both the county and the state.
- Most people working in the Town of Saratoga work in the areas of production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Each of the following chapters of this comprehensive plan includes a set of goals, objectives and policies, which the Town Board will use to guide the future development of the Town over the next 20 years.

For the purposes of this plan, goals, objectives, and policies are defined as follows:

- ✓ Goals: Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.
- ✓ Objectives: More specific than goals are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. Accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.
- ✓ Policies: Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Decision-makers use policies on a day-to-day basis.

Three overall goals identified in the Town's 2006 Comprehensive Plan are still important today:

- Protect and improve the health, safety, and welfare of residents in the Town of Saratoga.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Saratoga.
- Protect and preserve the community character of the Town of Saratoga.