

## 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - SARTELL

**Progressive. Change. Desirable.** Those adjectives describe the initiatives that Sartell has undertaken over the past ten years. Measures that have helped transform Sartell from just one of the St. Cloud area's bedroom communities into a distinctive, desirable place to live, a place that stands out for its parks and trails, a medical community and a sense of community.

But now what? Now that many of the initiatives and ideas captured during the 2003 Comprehensive Planning process have been implemented, what should Sartell do next? How do we maintain the momentum and culture that we have created?

The City of Sartell set out in early 2014 to meet these questions in a manner that had served it so well previously by looking at community-based planning. While citizen engagement has always been an important effort and has been an important component of many planning initiatives and task forces, this time, it worked to create a vision for the future through strategic planning. Citizen engagement provides the cornerstone for good community planning by ensuring that as many thoughts, ideas and opinions as possible are shared and discussed. While a strategic plan that attempts to be all things to all people may be desirable, it will fail. Successful planning requires that choices are made and that those choices are consistent with broader community goals and values. It is anticipated that the City and others will utilize this plan as "marching orders" to effectively and confidently implement the vision in ways that are progressive, game-changing and will continue to create a desirable place to live.



**What is a Comprehensive and Strategic Plan?**

**Our Sartell: Yesterday and Today**

**The Vision and Goals (Overall Strategic Plans)**

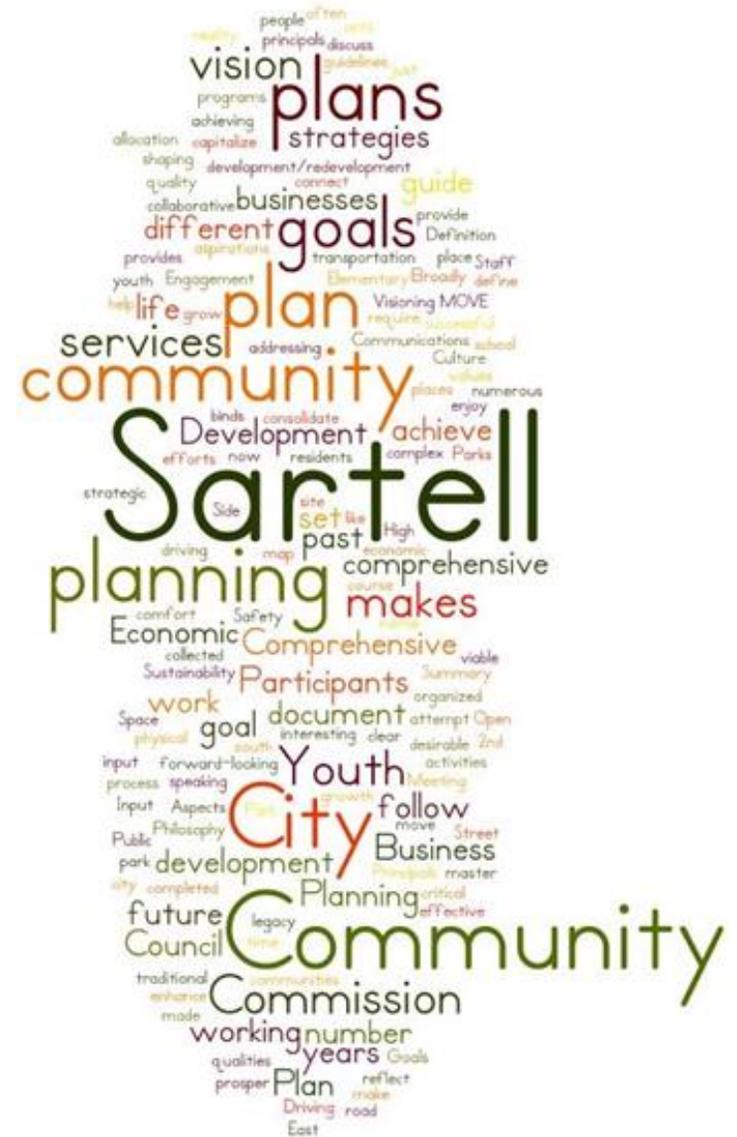
- Communications and Engagement: How We Connect
- Economic Development: How We Prosper
- Public Safety: What Provides Us Comfort
- Planning: How We Grow
- Community Culture: What Makes Us Interesting
- Parks and Open Space: How We Play
- Transportation: How We Move
- Sustainability: What Makes us Viable
- Community Facilities: What Makes Us Function
- Implementation

**Appendix**

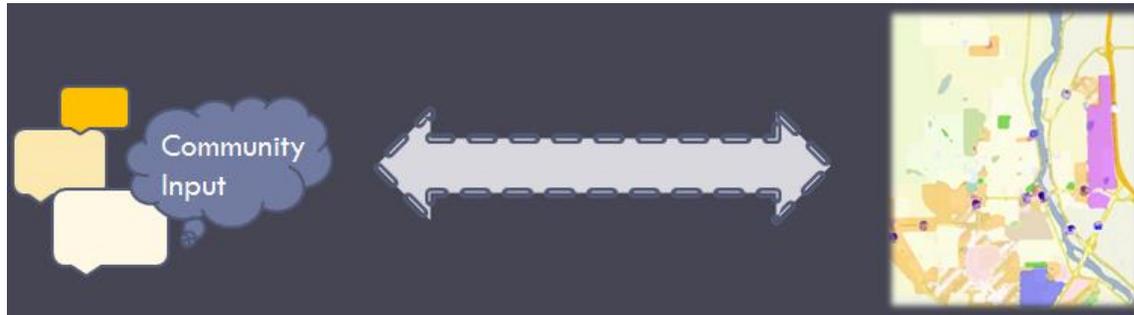
- Demographics
- Park Master Plan Adoptions
- City/School Findings on Amenity Needs
- Town Center Timeline

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: A DEFINITION**

Broadly speaking, planning is a way to guide investment, development and allocation of services in a community. However, communities are complicated places and often require a number of different plans to set a course for the future. Sartell is no different. Over the past 13 years, there have been a number of planning efforts such as a comprehensive plan, transportation plans (north and south), athletic complex study, numerous park master plans, economic development strategic plans and site-specific development/redevelopment plans.



This comprehensive plan will attempt to consolidate all the collaborative planning work that has been completed over the past 13 years and enhance the document by addressing other critical programs and services that help define a place, its people and the quality of life they enjoy. A few aspects of community life include the arts and youth services. Sartell has a legacy of effective planning, but until now, we have not had the important conversations about who we are and what binds us together as a community.



In addition to the physical planning and growth, this document will discuss what makes Sartell, Sartell! The time to this process has yielded a clear vision, a set of goals and guidelines for the City to follow to achieve this vision.

## Sartell Philosophy

Sartell is a progressive community, engaged in shaping its own future. The residents and businesses of Sartell are working to capitalize on the qualities and values that have made it a successful and desirable community.



## LINKING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO PRIOR WORK

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to bring all of the prior planning work in Sartell (and beyond) together under one guiding vision. As such, it is important that the 2016 Comprehensive Plan build upon prior plans. As these other plans focused on perhaps, special and specific issues with Sartell, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan is intended to help fill the gaps and connect the dots resulting in a comprehensive blueprint for the City. Each of the following plans and initiatives provided valuable insight and direction into the development of this plan.

APO Plan (2014)  
 Athletic Needs Study (2005)  
 Medical and Business Park Branding Study (2013/2014)  
 Transportation North Plan (2005)  
 Transportation South Plan(2005, 2009)  
 Sustainability Framework Plan (2010)  
 Town Square Master Plan (2007)  
 Regional Park Master Plans (2007,2008)  
 St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan (2010)  
 Safe Routes To School – Planning (2014)

LeSauk Drive Study  
 Sartell's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (ongoing)  
 Pavement Management Plan (2014)  
 Emergency Operations Plan(2014)  
 Wellhead Management Plan  
 Stormwater Management Plan  
 Railroad Quiet Zone Study – Sauk Rapids and Sartell, MN (2007)  
 Trunk Highway 15 Corridor Study (2007)  
 City of Sartell – Financial Management Plan (ongoing)  
 Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map/Information

Epic Center AUAR (Updated 2014)  
 Robert's Road/50<sup>th</sup> Avenue EA  
 Regional Active Living Advisory Group Transportation  
 Plan-November 2015

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan is a policy document intended to guide City decisions. Both timely and necessary, Sartell has established a record of success in the face of rapid growth. However, with the development slower than in early 2000, coupled with high development costs, Sartell faces the challenges of diversifying its economic base; maintain what is in place and further investing in improvements that provide the high quality of life that residents and businesses have come to expect. It was time to take a half step back, leave the doors of city hall and talk to people, and collectively define the next steps forward.

As things change, so must the planning and implementation efforts of the City. A fluid and flexible approach will allow the City to take advantage of new ideas or circumstances that may emerge as things progress. Ideas unforeseen today may have profound relevance for the future. The ability to incorporate them will keep Sartell vital and maintain the progressive and charming style that defines Sartell.

## TO REALIZE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE PLAN, IT SHOULD BE USED TO:

- **Guide City elected and appointed officials and staff to assist with a variety of tasks**

- Development and infrastructure decisions
- Acquisition and use of land
- Budgeting capital improvements
- Establishing regulatory changes

- **Guide residents, businesses, and property owners to assist them in:**

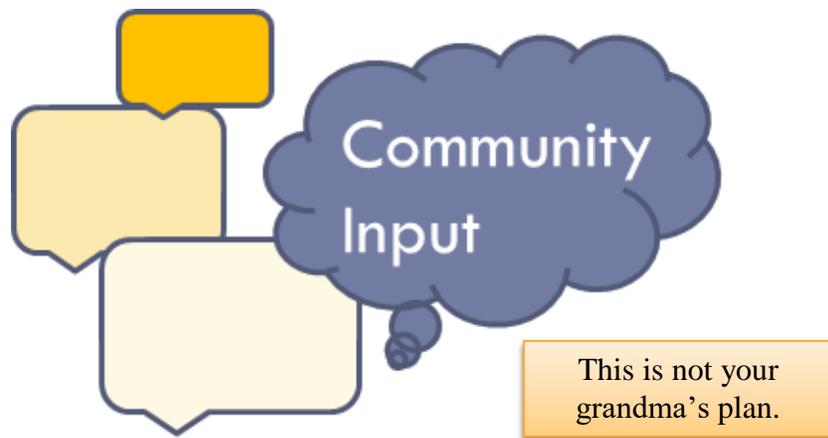
- Determining potential property use
- Understanding possible land use changes in the surrounding area
- Establishing reasonable land value expectations

- Guide developers in their property acquisitions and coordinating their development plans with City goals, regulations, and infrastructure plans

- Assist neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions to coordinate issues of mutual interest

While the Plan provides information and guidance, it depends heavily on appropriate exercise of individual discretion, interpretation, and initiative to fulfill this plan's overall goals, policies, and programs.

## APPROACH TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



### Focus Groups

- Sartell Medical Community
- Commercial Core Community
- 2nd Street South Business Community
- East Side Business Community
- Seniors Connection
- Youth (Pine Meadow and Oak Ridge)
- Youth (Middle school)

### Taking it to the Streets

- Celebration Lutheran Church

Country Manor  
 Westside Learning  
 Resource Training and Solutions  
 Celebration/Wilds/Woods Neighborhood

Sartell Chamber Community Expo Winter Market

Commission Discussions

Business Retention Visit Discussions

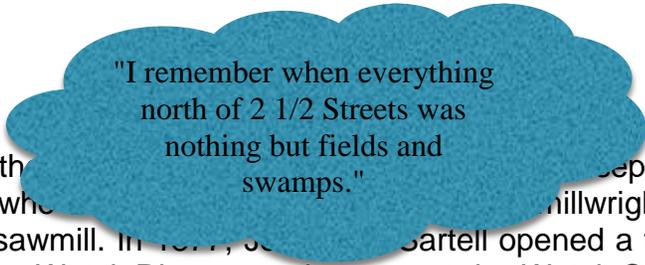
Development Summit

## OUR SARTELL: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

### Sartell Yesterday: How It All Started

Diehard Sartell residents are likely well aware of the City's historical roots, but more recent and casual residents may not be. Sartell is a City of almost two different histories. For nearly 80 years, Sartell was defined by gradual change and dominated by core community families (Traut, Then's, Dehler, Kruchten). This is very different from the Sartell that a majority identifies with today.

Sartell began as a small river town relying on lumber and a paper company for its existence. The present site of the City of Sartell was first known as "The Third Rapids," the French fur traders gave this name because it was the third "rapids" they would encounter as they traveled north up the Mississippi River from St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis.



"I remember when everything north of 2 1/2 Streets was nothing but fields and swamps."

One of the early residents of Sartell, who was a millwright at a local sawmill. In 1877, Joseph B. Sartell opened a flour mill on the Watab River, near the present-day Watab Creek Park, and in 1884, he and his sons started the Sartell Brothers Lumber Company.

In 1905, a dam across the Mississippi near the "third rapids" was begun and finished in 1907. Seven people were killed during the construction of this first dam. Also in 1905, construction began on the Watab Pulp and Paper

Company. The paper mill was completed and began making paper in 1907. This was to become the St. Regis Paper Company in 1946, Champion International in 1982, International Paper and finally Verso Paper Company.

At this time, residents decided it was time to incorporate. The "Village of Sartell" was incorporated in 1907. When the village was being incorporated, several influential people thought the name of the town should be "Wengert" after one of the businesspersons; another person was lobbying to name the town "Oberly" after himself. However, because of his many relatives and the fact he was a generous contributor to the community the village was named "Sartell" after Joseph B. Sartell. In fact, from 1907 until 1973 there was a Sartell on nearly every City Council. The most prominent being Ripley B. "Rip" Sartell, who was mayor for 31 years.

Another of Sartell's largest employers is the DeZurik Valve Company founded in 1925 by Matt DeZurik, who started as an employee of the Watab Paper Company, but then started his own shop to make valves and other products. In fact, during World War II the DeZurik Company

produced casings for tank tracks and valves for ships. Today, the company produces industrial valves for large plants, municipal applications, and valves for the paper industry.

The town continued to grow slowly and developed a number of businesses and "downtown" on the east side of the Mississippi along US Highway #10. In the 1960's US Highway #10 was re-routed and greatly contributed to the demise of the downtown area. Then the construction of the new bridge over the Mississippi in the early 1980's displaced the remaining businesses. This and Sartell's nearby location to St. Cloud's major retail center account for Sartell not having a traditional "downtown."

Because residents wanted to educate their children locally, Independent School District #748, Sartell-St. Stephen was created in 1969. Despite not having a downtown, the city continued to grow, and the pace of the growth started to pick up in the 1970's. From 1970 to the present, the city's population has grown from 700 to over 17,000. Sartell is known as a popular place to live and raise a family because of the fine school system, affordable and well-kept housing, proximity to work, active local organizations, and churches, and small town atmosphere. (Source: "Sartell: 75 Years of Progress.")

## Sartell Today:

For most residents today, Sartell is defined by change. The construction boom that washed over Sartell in 1990-2007 more than tripled the population and the creation of neighborhoods such as Morningstar, Pine Lakes, Sabre Oaks, etc. The last decade furthered the development of commercial, medical and professional offices as many started to view Sartell as more than just a bedroom community.

The City of Sartell covers approximately 10.4 square miles in the northern portion of the St. Cloud Metro urbanized area. The City of St. Cloud (2010 population of 65,842) forms most of the southern border of Sartell, and the City of Sauk Rapids (pop. 12,773) is located south and east of Sartell in Benton County. Sauk Rapids Township (pop. 584) is situated north and east of Sartell in Benton County, and Le Sauk Township (pop. 1,766) surrounds Sartell on the north and west in Stearns County.

Sartell is a community of 17,203 (2015 Population Estimate) located in the St. Cloud Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Benton and Stearns County. The St. Cloud MSA populations were 189,093 as of the 2010 census. Located on both sides of the Mississippi River, the majority of Sartell is located in Stearns County (land mass and population), but also contains a significant amount of people and employment in Benton County. Stearns County had a population of 150,642 while the Benton County population was 38,451.

Sartell experienced solid growth between 1960 – 1990; adding 532 people between 1960 and 1970 (67% growth), 2,104 people during the 1970's (159% growth), and 1,966 people in the 1980s (57% growth). Over the past two decades, Sartell's population has essentially tripled, adding 4,248 people in the 1990's (79%) and 6,235 people between 2000 and 2010 (65%). By comparison, the St. Cloud MSA population base expanded 12% between 1990 and 2000, which was followed by 13% growth between 2000 and 2010.



Additional demographic information is available in the appendix.



Like any community, Sartell has had its problems. Growth on the order that Sartell has experienced, even well-managed growth, has consequences. Traffic is a source of concern, within Sartell and along the roadways, which connect the community to St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids and beyond. There is a perceived split between the east and west side of Sartell and both often feel disconnected from each other. There are three different school districts, which provide education to different portions of the community. The increase in traffic has reduced the ability to cross as a pedestrian or bicyclist. The growth of an elementary school in the northerly portion of the projected growth, in advance of that growth, has resulted in inadequate transportation and

pedestrian facilities to that school causing issues with public safety and mobility. A strong desire to live in Sartell has created an influx of apartment construction, which is causing concern to many residents as to what those housing units will look like in 20-30 years - when the demand for rental housing may not be as high, and a glut is created. The high water table and expansive wetland systems make for difficult building and construction. We cannot overlook one of the largest problems that have occurred, the devastating incident at the Verso Paper Mill in 2012, which resulted in the loss of a life, many jobs, history and a 740,000 square foot building.

After decades of change, Sartell launched forward to become a regional leader with a distinct brand. For many it represents the perfect mix of rural and urban, active and secluded. Given Sartell's odd physical boundaries shaped by years of annexation, it is difficult to distinguish what is Sartell and what is not. The result is that Sartell's distinct physical place is less important as residents of the city and surrounding community tend to get involved whether they technically live in the City or not. Love or hate the decisions that been made in guiding City investment, people continue to choose to live here, work here and play here.





## What Makes OUR Sartell, SARTELL?

### Our People

People in Sartell care about one another and their community. Though it is difficult to quantify, a significant portion of the community devotes their time in making Sartell, a better place. Even students spend hours giving back to their community, and the desire is to do more (as said by one insightful eighth grader). There really is a sense of community, where people are passionate about their causes, which encourages others to be passionate and contribute. Whether its community gardens, dog parks, athletic fields and senior activities, these passionate people are our biggest asset. The citizens of Sartell will turn the vision for Sartell into reality.



### Our Community Culture

We value our family-oriented, yet fun attitude. There is always a lot going on in Sartell - with many 5k races and other types of events, which draw people from all over the City and beyond. Families with kids, young professionals, and empty nesters all make Sartell their home. Some of us hailed from the region while others come from all over. Our community is well-educated, forward-thinking and connected to one another.



### Our Schools and Education.

Excellent. Being served by three school districts (Sauk Rapids/Rice, St. Cloud and Sartell/St. Stephen), our community is privileged to have top-notch schools. It is no secret that many people choose to live in Sartell because of the schools and that continues to be a huge selling point in attracting new residents. The community actively supports and participates in the schools - volunteering in classrooms, cheering on athletic teams, teams escorted out of the City by a Fire Truck on their way to state playoffs. We also have access to local higher education institutions including St. Cloud State University, St. John's and St. Ben's, St. Scholastica, and St. Cloud Technical and Community.



### Our Parks and Trails

Our parks and trails are one of our greatest assets and part of our identity. They demonstrate the value we place on environmental preservation, recreation and healthy lifestyles. We recognize that open space is an essential component of the high quality of life we enjoy in Sartell. We are known for our parks and trails, which draw people out of their homes and

encourage people to meet neighbors and friends. The development of our park system is a key example of how things are done in Sartell.



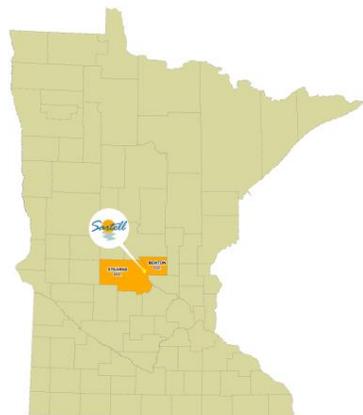
### Our Businesses

Our businesses are diverse. From unique and small to large and national, each business provides options for entertainment, employment and services. Sartell is growing out of the bedroom community it once was 20 years ago to a growing center of jobs.



### Our Institutions

Our institutions are strong assets that bind our community together. Our city services, including police, fire and public works departments, help maintain the high quality of life we are regarded for and this helps create our strong public image. They ensure that our neighborhoods and public spaces are safe and beautiful. Public safety is one of our greatest assets. Our social, community and religious organizations represent our varied interests and backgrounds and are the anchors that tie our community together.



### Our Location

Location is everything, and our location, which straddles the Mississippi River, shapes our City. Our location along Highway 15 and Highway 10 affects the type of development and businesses that locate here. We have benefited from the light industrial and tech businesses that setup shop here to take advantage of those resources. Our proximity to downtown St. Cloud also offers key benefits for businesses and residents, making Sartell the perfect combination of a place with a small-town community feel that also has access to bigger city amenities.

## SUMMARY OF THE DRIVING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

In January of 2014, the Planning Commission identified a series of driving principle and goals, which helped, formulate the driving principles and goals listed below. AS WE MOVE FORWARD - The goals and aspirations of this plan will guide city policy and provide a road map for achieving the Sartell Comprehensive Plan. The goals that follow reflect the work of the various City Commissions, City Council and resident and businesses owners input, collected through all of the traditional and

non-traditional outreach activities. Each goal in this plan includes a list of potential strategies which should be considered in working to achieve each goal and ultimately to make the vision of Sartell, a reality. The goals and strategies are organized into eight driving principals:

-  **Communications and Engagement: How We Connect**
-  **Economic Development: How We Prosper**
-  **Public Safety: What Provides Us Comfort**
-  **Planning: How We Grow**
-  **Community Culture: What Makes Us Interesting**
-  **Parks and Open Space: How We Play**
-  **Transportation: How We Move**
-  **Sustainability: What Makes Us Viable**
-  **Community Facilities: What Makes Us Function**



## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT: HOW WE CONNECT

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Creates Community

Sartell's approach to communication is one that values the opinions of citizens, whatever they may be and encourages citizens to be involved. There is a desire to have an active spirit of engagement, dialogue and a strong sense that Sartell is listening. Residents still view the community as small enough to pick up the phone and call the Mayor or Council Members with issues or ideas they may have. The City understands that to move forward in implementing this plan and others, to support what is working and improve what is not, a clear mandate for the community is crucial. The following goals are ways that the City can make its communications and engagement strategy even more comprehensive and inclusive so that all voices are brought into the conversation.

- Goal 1: Create opportunities for everyone to participate, in multiple forms and modes (social media, paper, web, videos)
- Goal 2: Encourage youth involvement
- Goal 3: Develop, promote and protect the Sartell Brand
- Goal 4: Develop or collaborate efforts in creating a community online calendar.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: HOW WE PROSPER

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Vibrant

The public input process determined that economic development was a significant issue on resident's (and businesses) minds. Groups discussed the need for attracting diverse and high-quality commercial development, supporting and strengthening local businesses and most importantly, recruiting job creating businesses that generate revenue for the City and ensure the future of the City. What can Sartell do to remain vibrant and sustainable? The following economic development goals respond to that question and provide important guidance for ensuring Sartell remains ahead of the pack.

Goal 1: Focus on quality of life for businesses and residents as an economic development strategy

Goal 2: Compete for the future by ensuring adequate transportation and utility facilities.

Goal 3: Continue to partner with regional efforts to become a jobs center

Goal 4: Recruit and develop a diverse and balanced commercial base

Goal 5: Attract and retain workers

Goal 6: Help small businesses thrive





## **PUBLIC SAFETY: WHAT PROVIDES US COMFORT**

### **Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Safe**

Sartell has a reputation as being one of the safest, if not the safest, community in central Minnesota. Overall, the Sartell Police Department and the Sartell Fire Department receives high marks from residents and businesses for being responsive, and the citizens appreciated the high visibility approach the City has taken. How the police department interacts with the community is different as compared to other places. Whether it is the SALT committee, Cooking with Cops, DARE programs or their assistance during the many community events throughout the year, the Sartell police department is a visible and positive force in the community. Resident's value friendly and engaging police officers with community ties. The Fire Department holds a popular and effective open house every fall. Having a strong police presence, and effective fire response improves quality of life, which is good for attracting and retaining residents and businesses. The following goals will attempt to continue the stellar public safety service, which contributes to a high quality of life.

- Goal 1: Partner with the community
- Goal 2: Educate and engage the community, employees, and employers
- Goal 3: Use targeted and combined police and fire visibility
- Goal 4: Embrace and/or continue to utilize new technologies efforts
- Goal 5: Support transportation and utility improvements to meet response needs





## PLANNING: HOW WE GROW

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Proactive

Sartell is often categorized as a suburban community. A characteristic of a suburban community often includes rapid growth, which can result in a "cookie cutter" development approach that undermines the ability to establish a unique identity. Throughout the process, residents made it clear that they approved the City's proactive and open approach, even if they did not always agree on specific decisions. As Sartell continues to grow, there appears to be a desire to break out of the traditional suburban mold and be progressive, innovative and proactive in its planning.

- Goal 1: Create and transform Sartell gateways
- Goal 2: Invest in a town square
- Goal 3: Balance growth and orderly development
- Goal 4: Ensure lifetime housing
- Goal 5: Ensure adequate business options
- Goal 6: Assess the adequacy of our community facilities
- Goal 7: Develop community friendly properties
- Goal 8: Develop according to the Comprehensive Plan





## COMMUNITY CULTURE: WHAT MAKES US INTERESTING

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Unique

Sartell believes it can and is a model community. A key factor in taking Sartell to that next level, in achieving that kind of quality of life is a commitment to the arts and opportunities to create “community”. Public art and activities not only enhances and drives public spaces, but also creates a broader sense of identity, initiates conversations, and is accessible to everyone. With the inclusion of the Sartell Chamber of Commerce Events, Summerfest, Apple Duathlon events, the various opportunities offered by the Senior Connection and the Winter Market/Market Monday, the sense of the potential of additional arts and activities, which enrich the experience residents have, is clearly evident. Participants felt that the City and all of its partners have started to be successful in arts programming and events. However, there was a distinct desire to have more family friendly events and unique happenings throughout the community 12 months out of the year.

Goal 1: Create partnerships that offer a wide and diverse array of local events and creating family-oriented opportunities

Goal 2: Capitalize on the city’s rich cultural assets

Goal 3: Evaluate ways to add public art in the City

Goal 4: Foster local arts programs and venues, along with recreation and athletic activities

Goal 5: Become an active living community





## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACES: HOW WE PLAY**

### **Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Fun and Active**

Not only do residents love Sartell's parks and trails, they also have many ideas on how and where to make them better. The City has been successful in developing extensive parks with different amenities, but the City's focus should also be to keep the parks in excellent condition, make the connections between them and the trail network (locally and regionally) and make park enhancements. The City's growing green space network defines Sartell as much as new development. Aside from being an integral part to the Sartell's quality of life, the City's commitment to environmental preservation and creating active and passive parks demonstrates its philosophy of responsible growth. With over 40 miles of trails and sidewalks, it has long been a goal to be able to step outside your home and walk to any given location in Sartell.

Goal 1: Value passive and active recreation

Goal 2: Prioritize existing parks

Goal 3: Ensure the parks and trails are safe

Goal 4: Expand the park connections and the trail network

Goal 5: Recognize the Rivers and natural areas as assets to the community





## TRANSPORTATION: HOW WE MOVE

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Connected

One of the most commented issues for the city is transportation, traffic, and roadways. The City's efforts are primarily focused on making and connecting destinations (jobs, services, schools) throughout the community. Exploring alternatives to the classic auto, while promoting active lifestyles to drive the desire and need for increased sidewalks, trails, and safe pedestrian crossings. There are a number of high traffic (and fast) roadways that also are in dire need for reconstruction.

Goal 1: Improve traffic management and safety

Goal 2: Make local connections

Goal 3: Focus on different ways to get around and continue regional transportation planning efforts

Goal 4: Design attractive roadways





## Sustainability: What Makes Us Viable Why Is This Important For Sartell: Be Healthy

We live in a time in which increased population growth, high levels of consumption and the desire to feed growing economies have created escalating demands on our resources -natural, human and social. These demands can negatively impact the natural environment, our communities and the quality of our lives. In the face of these challenges, people have begun to develop a growing desire to live sustainably. It is important to be cognizant of the decisions and developments that meet the needs of the present, while not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Goal 1: Promote a wise use of energy and natural resources
- Goal 2: Reevaluate orderly annexation agreements to ensure sustainable development practices and resource allocations
- Goal 3: Protect and improve surface and groundwater resources
- Goal 4: Encourage healthy citizens and businesses through partnerships and activities





## COMMUNITY FACILITIES: HOW WE FUNCTION

### Why This Matters For Sartell: Be Cooperative

The purpose of this section is to provide the goals and policies for community facilities within the City of Sartell and to identify future community facility needs to accommodate the demand for new services. Community facilities include the structures, facilities, and services administered by public and semi-public organizations that provide for the day-to-day functions of the City of Sartell. Community facilities have an impact and influence on the quality of life in Sartell and includes local government, fire, police, education, and utilities. The community facilities chapter describes policy recommendations for government services, schools, and community services.

- GOAL 1: Promote the usage, creation, and uniqueness of community facilities, while also soliciting creative funding sources.
- GOAL 2: Ensure high quality and effective public safety, education and civic services.
- GOAL 3: Plan and provide public facilities and services in a coordinated and economical manner on a basis that is consistent with the nature of existing and proposed development within the community.

