



# BELOIT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2045

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Plan serves as a guiding document for City leaders, institutions, and community members to shape Beloit into the community it hopes to be for the next 20 years and beyond. The following executive summary provides the plan's key strategies. Each strategy is described in greater detail within each chapter and directly aligns with the action items listed in Chapter 10. Chapters 1 and 2 outline the City's driving vision statement, overarching goals, and key issues and opportunities, which provide the framework for the strategies listed below. [Appendix A and B](#) detail existing conditions, data analysis, and public input received throughout the planning process. [Appendix C](#) includes all supporting plan maps.

## KEY STRATEGIES

The following is a brief summary of the key strategies in the plan, organized by chapter. The City invites you to read the full City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan to explore each in greater detail and the context in which they were prepared.



### Chapter 3: Livability, Sustainability, and Health

- Advance the City's role in sustainability and climate resiliency.
- Increase public health awareness and collaboration.
- Expand equitable and inclusive community engagement opportunities.
- Encourage the use of local and healthy foods in Beloit.
- Preserve and enhance Beloit's historic and cultural resources.
- Establish a consistent community brand.
- Advance community goals through public art and placemaking.
- Improve public education in collaboration with Beloit School District.



### Chapter 4: Agricultural and Natural Resources

- Advance the City's role in climate resilience and sustainability through the protection and preservation of natural and agricultural resources.
- Foster a compact development pattern within the City's boundaries.
- Preserve natural resources and connect them with recreational opportunities and tourism.
- Support regional farmland preservation efforts to preserve productive agricultural lands.
- Improve and preserve urban biodiversity through well-integrated and connected greenways, forests, vegetation, native plantings, and gardens.





## Chapter 5: Land Use

- Identify, plan for, and actively pursue infill development and the redevelopment of key sites and corridors.
- Utilize design standards to ensure high-quality new development that is well integrated into its surroundings.
- Integrate Traditional Neighborhood Design and mixed-use opportunities in new and infill development and redevelopment.
- Ensure land uses support the community facility, transportation, economic development, and other objectives of this plan.
- Require detailed site, neighborhood, or area plans prior to the platting and development of land.
- Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to ensure predictable and high-quality neighborhood and site design, improve mobility options, increase land use and housing format options, and provide increased opportunities for compact development and mixing of land uses.



## Chapter 6: Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities

- Improve multi-modal transportation accessibility, safety, and connectivity throughout the community.
- Prepare for transportation technology changes through adapting policies, information sharing, and infrastructure improvements.
- Adopt an Official Map and a Complete Streets Policy to align transportation and land use strategies.
- Implement existing transportation, utilities, infrastructure, and community facility plans.
- Coordinate and cooperate with regional entities on development of bus and rail services.
- Incorporate climate resilience and adoption into infrastructure planning.
- Continue to work with the Beloit School District on future land use planning decisions.



## Chapter 7: Housing

- Provide a wider mix of housing types, sizes, and costs.
- Develop a city-wide housing approach.
- Advance initiatives to address the city's unhoused population.
- Promote traditional neighborhood design principles.
- Take steps toward improving the existing housing stock.
- Leverage programs, tools, and resources to increase the amount of attainable housing units.



## Chapter 8: Economic Development

- Strategically utilize tax incremental financing (TIF).
- Increase access to affordable, quality childcare.
- Foster entrepreneurs and small business start-ups.
- Spark economic development by building on Beloit's arts and culture.
- Collaborate on regional and state economic growth initiatives.
- Build and maintain relationships with the business community.
- Attract diverse new businesses and prepare the local workforce.
- Explore opportunities to create an eco-industrial park within the City's Gateway development area.



## Chapter 9: Intergovernmental Opportunities

- Collaborate and take a leadership role in regional initiatives.
- Develop, implement, and enforce long-term intergovernmental agreements with neighboring municipalities.



# 1. INTRODUCTION





# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan is intended to help the City guide, promote, and foster public health, safety, and welfare, with particular attention to equity, inclusion, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility. The plan aims to accomplish this through guiding community change, growth, and development to ensure continued and enhanced community prosperity in the future.

The Comprehensive Plan is distinct in that it confronts the City's important issues in a high-level, big-picture way. While other adopted plans deal with specialized topics such as parks, transportation, natural resources, or specific neighborhoods or areas, only the Comprehensive Plan lays out a 20-year vision for the community as a whole and truly acknowledges how Beloit's people, places, values, and aspirations are interconnected and interdependent. The Comprehensive Plan steps away from fine-grained details and overly specific issues to serve as a guiding document for City leaders and residents. Additionally, it should be recognized that the City is not the only agent influencing change within the community and region. As such, its efforts and powers alone are not sufficient to achieve this plan's vision. A collaborative effort will be required between the City, its neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, community partners, and its residents to advance the plan's goals and recommendations.

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes and meets all of the statutory elements and requirements of §66.1001, Wis. Stats. Each chapter of this plan is focused on a specific topic and presents the City's goals, objectives, and policies for that element. Together, these form the basis for the recommendation strategies that are presented within each chapter. Chapter 10: Action Plan summarizes the proposed strategies, projects, and timelines needed to help make this plan become a reality. The recommendations of this plan are supported by current data, background information, and community input, which are organized by chapter and are found in [Appendix A and B](#). [Appendix C](#) includes all supporting plan maps.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Beloit was founded in 1836, incorporated as a village in 1846, and officially incorporated as a city by the State of Wisconsin in 1856. One hundred and sixty years after incorporation, the City of Beloit covers approximately 17 square miles within Rock County. Situated on the Wisconsin-Illinois state line, Beloit has a strategic position approximately an hour south of Madison, an hour southwest of Milwaukee, an hour and a half to downtown Chicago, and one-half hour north of Rockford, Illinois. The City of South Beloit, Illinois borders Beloit to the south; the Town of Turtle lies to the east; and the Town of Beloit borders the City to the west and north.

## PLANNING AREA

This plan includes recommendations for lands within the City's planning area. The planning area has been selected to include all lands in which the City has both a short-term and long-term interest in planning and development activity. The planning area includes all lands currently within the City of Beloit and other unincorporated areas within the City's 3-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) as authorized under Wisconsin Statutes. Map 1 shows the City's boundaries, ETJ, and the relationship of the City of Beloit to neighboring communities in the region.



## 2. VISION, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES



## CHAPTER 2: VISION, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key issues and opportunities function as the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. Based on public input, data analysis, and other local trends, the City of Beloit has identified its overall vision, themes, and key issues to be addressed and opportunities to be leveraged over the coming decade and beyond. Each impacts decisions that will be made throughout the city and are addressed throughout this plan.

### Interrelationship Between the Built Environment and Beloit's Goals

The Comprehensive Plan contains goals covering a wide variety of topics. Although the relationships between these goals may not be immediately apparent, many of these goals are directly related to the City's built environment.

For example, creating a neighborhood that is highly walkable can advance a number of the City's goals at the same time: a walkable neighborhood can promote environmental sustainability by reducing the overall use of cars, it can support public health by making it easy for people to incorporate walking into their daily routines, it can promote equity by making local destinations accessible for people who do not drive or have reliable access to a vehicle, and it can support resilience by providing transportation alternatives as conditions change.

To achieve this plan's vision and goals, it will be essential to lead with the built environment. As private and public investments occur, the City must consider how the buildings, streets, neighborhoods, and developments it approves may advance or hinder its objectives, particularly as they relate to environmental sustainability, public health, social equity, and resilience.



## VISION STATEMENT

Based on public input and contributions from City Staff and officials, the City developed a vision to be the guiding statement for this plan, and its goals, policies, and strategies that describes the type of community that Beloit intends to be in 20 years.

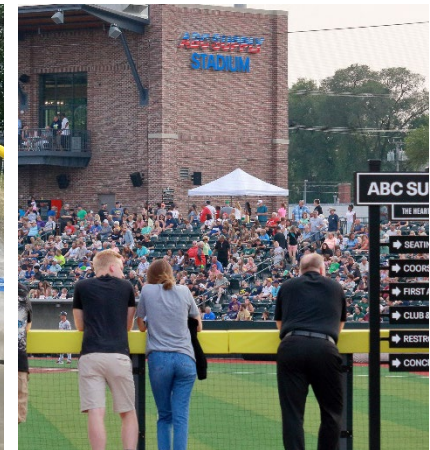
### 2024 City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

Beloit is an economically competitive and culturally inclusive city providing high-quality urban living with small town charm to all its residents. As the Gateway to Wisconsin, Beloit celebrates the strength of its racial, cultural, and economic diversity and provides a high quality of life that preserves and promotes the city's long-term economic and social viability and sustainability.

## OVERARCHING PLAN THEMES

The public input gathered throughout this process, as documented in [Appendix B](#), provides several areas of consensus that have led to the development of the following overarching plan themes. Each is further illustrated within specified issues and opportunities below and the goals and recommendations within each topic area explored throughout this plan.

- Preserve Beloit's existing small-town charm, but continue to provide big city amenities by promoting diversity and mixing of land uses.
- Address the community's aging housing stock and improve the balance of types and affordability levels of housing throughout the City.
- Grow the local economy through attracting, retaining, and growing local businesses and fostering local entrepreneurs.
- Increase the median household incomes of Beloit residents through higher wage jobs, workforce development, and economic opportunity.
- Preserve, enhance, and leverage the community's high-quality of life, character, and amenities.
- Improve and build upon the important natural resources, public spaces, and recreational facilities in the City.
- Promote and facilitate multi-modal transportation opportunities throughout the community and between neighboring communities.
- Collaborate with local schools to ensure quality public education for every child in the City.
- Advance sustainability, public health, and livability through the built environment.
- Provide high-quality services in an equitable, efficient, and financially sustainable manner.







## KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Leveraging the City's Existing Assets

Beloit is fortunate to have many community assets, including an accessible and diverse park and open space network; several prominent local events and community organizations; proximity to the greater Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago metropolitan areas; a highly ranked local College; strong community-minded businesses; and a thriving downtown. Beloit's regional position relative to large population and innovation centers, at the axis of two Interstates, and adjacent to some of the world's best farmland provides opportunities for future economic growth and community health. In recognition of these assets and the benefits they provide, it is vital to continue to improve and build on them to retain and attract new residents and businesses by offering a high-quality of life.

### Adapting to Population Growth and Demographic Shifts

The City has experienced a slow growth rate of less than 1% per year over the past 50 years. This plan projects that the City of Beloit will grow to an approximate population of 37,652 by 2045, representing 892 new residents or approximately 39 new residents per year. National, regional, and local level large-scale demographic trends and personal preferences are changing. Growing diversity in the local and national population, increasing cost of living and decreasing housing affordability, and growing numbers of young families present important demographic trends for Beloit. Some of the most impactful large-scale personal preference and societal shifts include, more people choosing to live alone and/or waiting longer to start a family, people having fewer children than previous generations, increasing student debt making it harder for younger people to become homebuyers, largely stagnant wages, easier accessibility to working remotely with technology, and a growing demand for increased housing and employment mobility. Changes in housing, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, and land use policy will be required to address these trends over the planning period.

### Addressing Housing Affordability, Availability, and Diversity

Beloit, like many communities in the state of Wisconsin and across the country, has a housing shortage, particularly in the supply of affordable and accessible housing. Increased housing diversity, evident in a mix of housing sizes, styles, and price points, will be needed over the planning period to accommodate the growing number of empty nesters, young professionals, and new families and to encourage turnover in the existing housing stock. New housing formats will need to account for the lifestyle preferences and needs of these different demographics, in addition to increasing costs of housing, which have continued to rise much faster than household incomes. These needs can be fulfilled by encouraging single family, two-family, townhouses, and multi-family options such as those described as "missing middle" formats, as well as through the provision of housing designed for "aging in place" and exploring several other unique types of housing formats, programs, and initiatives (see the Housing Chapter for more information).

### Fostering Redevelopment, Infill, and New Development

A combination of factors including the Great Recession and subsequent economic recovery, retail and employment shifts, and the global pandemic have all played a part in the level of development experienced in Beloit over the past decade. This provides opportunities for new development, redevelopment, and infill development in several areas of the City to increase diverse housing options, tax base, and local employment options. Through creative and innovative





strategies that foster a vibrant sense of place, there are opportunities for the City to foster redevelopment in and around downtown and along key community corridors. Additionally, there are opportunities for infill development on vacant properties around the community. Finally, public engagement revealed that development has been more prevalent on the east side of Beloit, while the west side has remained underinvested in. Beloit aims to utilize a variety of strategies to foster more development on the west side of the community over the planning period.

### **Ensuring Quality Public Education for Every Child**

While schools across the country have endured many challenges in recent years, from pivoting to remote learning during the global pandemic, to increasing teacher shortages, and declines in funding, education remains one of the top issues and opportunities for families and residents in Beloit. In addition to those broader challenges, the Beloit School District has struggled with turnover in leadership and declining enrollment, while other area schools have experienced increased enrollment. A dichotomy has emerged in the area where the Beloit Turner School District and other schools such as the Lincoln Academy and Rock County Christian School are growing, while the Beloit School District has recently closed several school locations. This impacts Beloit's housing market and economy as many families are choosing other school options due to a perceived difference in educational quality. This plays a key role in potential future growth.

Great schools are a cornerstone for workforce and community development and give students the tools to succeed in their future lives. Increasingly, schools are showing students options beyond college and are providing opportunities to learn skills in the trades and other career paths. It is essential to continue successful partnerships with employers and industry leaders to provide these opportunities and create a strong pool of talent to attract businesses to Beloit and provide youth with sustaining career opportunities.

The City of Beloit, the Beloit School District, Beloit Turner School District, the Lincoln Academy, and area private schools all have a vested interest in improving education in the community and creating memorable and positive experiences for children. The City of Beloit aims to partner with these institutions in creative ways to enhance the quality of education provided in the city and to increase awareness of existing successes experienced by children within the border Beloit area. It is important to recognize that the City, School Districts, Lincoln Academy, and private schools are separate entities and will need defined roles in this collaboration. The City endeavors to be a partner in turning these current challenges into an opportunity to improve quality of life in the community.

### **Advancing Sustainability and Climate Adaptability**

Beloit features well-preserved conservation areas and quality parkland, and the City is surrounded by high-quality water bodies, wildlife habitat, and agricultural land. These natural resources affect the City's growth and development potential, but also present opportunities in the form of maintaining and improving access to recreation facilities to increase quality of life and proactively adapt to climate changes.

Beloit aims to be a leader in environmental sustainability and climate resiliency, and there are opportunities to increase the City's role in those initiatives, particularly as the Midwest and Wisconsin specifically become an attractive relocation destination for coastal residents looking for a more stable climate and abundant fresh water. Additionally, these opportunities can be realized through community-wide transition toward carbon neutrality through its policies, investments, and initiatives.



There are also opportunities beyond just environmental sustainability. These include the human and economic impacts of a sustainable future for Beloit. One of the community's key assets is its cultural and economic diversity, which can be further leveraged to improve the quality of life of all residents in a sustainable manner. True sustainability fosters inclusivity, equity, and improves public health which features environmental, social, and economic components discussed throughout this chapter.

### **Accounting for Increasing Costs of Services and Infrastructure**

The cost of municipal services increases each year and exacerbates challenges in maintaining and expanding local services. Understanding the infrastructure and maintenance costs associated with new development will be important as the City considers new infrastructure investments moving forward. Fiscally responsible planning and investment will be a critical component of alleviating existing constraints to provide opportunities for sustainable long-term growth potential.

In addition to financial considerations, it's crucial to recognize the broader implications of responsible urban development. Sustainable growth encompasses not only economic aspects but also environmental and social factors. By carefully planning new infrastructure investments, the City can aim for developments that reduce its ecological footprint, enhance quality of life for residents, and foster a sense of community. This holistic approach to environmental, economic, and social sustainability was the basis of the City of Beloit's 2023 strategic plan and is a foundational approach for this Comprehensive Plan. By embracing this multifaceted development review process, Beloit can create a city that thrives economically, socially, and environmentally, while effectively managing the rising costs of municipal services.

### **Expanding and Improving Equitable Public Engagement in All City Processes**

Equitable public involvement is essential for building inclusive and resilient communities. It ensures that diverse voices, perspectives, and needs are heard, considered and involved in the decision-making process. Engagement and opportunities for public input should be consistent throughout City departments and tailored to reach populations that have historically been excluded from public input processes of the past, including on the basis of race, income, disability, sexual orientation, or geographic location. Additionally, to be stronger and more resilient, Beloit should strive to have its City leaders, officials, and boards reflect the diversity of the community. Existing tools and processes should be leveraged to continue exploring and creating a customized and equitable engagement approach for all City processes.

### **Fostering and Leveraging Partnerships and Collaboration**

Over the years, Beloit has forged numerous successful alliances with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and neighboring communities, each one contributing to the city's growth and well-being. These partnerships have led to remarkable initiatives that have enriched the lives of its residents, including the development of downtown into an attractive destination, community policing initiatives to reduce crime, and a variety of events in the community. Recognizing the immense value of these collaborations, the City is steadfast in its commitment to build on the success of these partnerships and forge new ones in line with the strategies contained within this plan. With a shared vision between valued partners, Beloit aims to ensure that its residents, local businesses, non-profits, and neighboring communities continue to thrive together, creating a harmonious and prosperous region for all.





## BELOIT'S COMMUNITY PROFILE

Examining key demographic, housing, development, and economic indicators provides a baseline understanding of the City's existing situation and its opportunities for the future. A detailed and complete set of all data for the City of Beloit in comparison to peer and neighboring communities, Rock County, and the State of Wisconsin, as required by Wis. Stats. §66.1001, is available in [Appendix A: Data Inventory and Analysis](#). The following is a summary of Appendix A which highlights several key trends.

- Beloit experienced relatively flat but stable population growth for the past 50 years. This plan's growth projections factor in population and housing changes that have taken place between 1990-2022. It is projected that by 2045, the City of Beloit could have a population of 37,642 residents or just under 900 new residents added over that time period.
- Beloit is more diverse than peer and neighboring communities and is becoming increasingly diverse. The percentage of individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino has increased from 9% in 2000 to over 21% of the present-day population.
- In terms of the population's age, Beloit has experienced a small increase in older individuals (increase in median age), but remains younger than almost all peer and neighboring communities, Rock County, and Wisconsin-wide trends.
- Average household size is larger (2.56) and has remained relatively the same in Beloit over the past 20 years, which is counter to most other geographies compared. In terms of housing unit makeup, the City has lower owner-occupied levels (58%) than other comparable communities and those levels have continued to decline over the past 20 years.
- Housing costs in Beloit are increasing, but those increases are generally in line with inflation. Costs are increasing more quickly in rental units versus ownership units, with rental costs increasing 3.2% annually and monthly owner-occupied costs increasing 2% annually.
- A higher percentage of people in Beloit are housing cost burdened than at the state or county level. In Beloit, 18% of households are spending between 30% to 50% of their income on housing, and an additional 14% are spending over 50% of their income on housing. A key contributing factor to this is a shortage of rental housing supply available at the lowest affordability levels. There are also more high-income renters than high-income level units available in the city, which results in those high-income renters outbidding middle-income individuals for more affordable units.
- Beloit School District has experienced a decline in enrollment over the past 10 years, while Beloit Turner School District has increased enrollment over the same time period. However, in 2023, the decline in enrollment within the Beloit School District was only 96 fewer students.
- Beloit has a median household income of \$52,097 and per capita income of \$25,719. These are relatively low compared to peer and neighboring communities, Rock County, and Wisconsin as a whole.



Beloit is a leader in the region's economy and is highly interconnected with the greater region. Almost 73% of individuals who work in Beloit commute in from elsewhere. The City's regional importance is also reflected in the number of large employers located in the community, along with small, local service-oriented businesses and employers in the City that serve visitors and residents alike.

## PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

To provide sound public policy guidance, a comprehensive planning process should incorporate inclusive public participation procedures to ensure that recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan reflect a broadly supported vision. Near the outset of this planning process, the City Council and Plan Commission adopted the City’s Public Participation Plan by resolution. The following public involvement opportunities were conducted as part of this planning process. For more information on the public feedback gathered, [see Appendix B](#).

Figure 2.1. Summary of Public Input Opportunities

Event	Date	Summary
Plan Commission and Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting	June 21, 2023	To kick off the planning process, a joint Plan Commission and Steering Committee meeting was held to provide an overview of the process and gather insight on key issues and opportunities facing the City.
Pop-Up Events	July 8 and September 8, 2023	To reach individuals where they are, pop-up events were held at the downtown Farmer’s Market and Movies on the Big Lawn at Riverside Park to collect resident feedback on priorities for the comprehensive plan. A total of 100+ people were engaged through these events.
Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews	July 20 and September 2023	A total of eight Focus Group interviews with over 45 local stakeholders were held, centered around key topic areas that included: Growth and Development, Community Facilities and Infrastructure, Community Leaders & Civic Groups, Small Businesses, Young Families or Young Homeowners, and members of the League of Women Voters. An additional four Youth-High School Students focus group discussions were held throughout September 2023 with over 100 area high school students.
Interactive Online Map Survey and Project Website	July – September 2023	The City created a Project Website to keep citizens informed of the planning process. The project website included an online map-based survey to gather input on future preservation and growth areas, existing gathering places and transportation issues, and new multi-modal transportation infrastructure ideas that collected over 590 responses.
Public Visioning Workshop and Online Follow Up Survey	August 28, 2023 and August 29-September 25, 2023	The City hosted an in-person workshop to gather input from residents on existing and future issues, assets, opportunities, growth areas, preservation areas, and transportation issues. Approximately 50 people attended the workshop, which featured several polling surveys, group visioning sessions, and a mapping activity. In addition to the in-person opportunity, an English and Spanish online survey mirroring the workshop exercises and questions was provided to gather further input. A total of 390 responses were collected.



Event	Date	Summary
Steering Committee Draft Review Meetings	November 11, 2023 January 23, 2024 February 29, 2024 March 12, 2024	<p>The second Steering Committee meeting was held in November 2023. This meeting featured a review of the community feedback solicited at the forefront of the planning process (Appendix B), the data analysis and existing conditions report (Appendix A), and the draft community-wide vision, themes, issues, and opportunities as described in this chapter.</p> <p>The third Steering Committee meeting was held in January 2024. It featured review and feedback on the draft Land Use and Housing Chapters. This also included the draft Alternative Development Scenarios, Existing and Future Land Use Maps, Corridor Graphics, and detailed land use policies.</p> <p>The fourth Steering Committee meeting was held in February 2024. The discussion centered around the other draft chapters of the plan that were not addressed during the January meeting.</p> <p>The fifth Steering Committee meeting was held in March 2024. It provided members with a chance to review the entirety of the draft plan together. The discussion focused on ways to improve communication of complex ideas within the plan and the public engagement strategy to come.</p>
Plan Commission and City Council Draft Review Meeting	April 29, 2024	A joint meeting of the Plan Commission and City Council was held to discuss and review the draft plan and the public input opportunities that occurred below.
Pop-Up Events	May 4, 2024 May 29, 2024	Two additional pop-up events occurred in May of 2024 to publicize the draft plan and provide an opportunity for community members to contribute feedback. This included attendance at the City's Farmer's Market and the Sky Carp Minor League Baseball game. A total of 60+ people were engaged through these events.
Public Open House Draft Review and Online Engagement Opportunity	May 1, 2024 – June 2, 2024 May 16, 2024	<p>The plan was posted to the project website for public review and comment between May and June 2024. This included a video summary recording of the plan, an online survey, and information on the various opportunities available for community members to participate in the plan review process. A total of 99 online survey responses were gathered, in addition to 5 email comments received.</p> <p>A Public Open House in-person event was held on May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Public Library. This event featured draft plan materials, an interactive survey, and opportunities to talk with staff and consultants about the plan. A total of approximately 15 people attended the event.</p>
Steering Committee Recommendation Meeting	June 12, 2024	The final Steering Committee meeting was held in June 2024 to review the comments and feedback gathered during the public review process (see above). The Steering Committee recommended the plan be considered for adoption by the Plan Commission and City Council following the discussion.
Public Hearing and Plan Adoption	June 19, 2024 August 5, 2024 August 19, 2024	The City of Beloit Plan Commission discussed, reviewed, provided feedback, and recommended City Council adoption on the draft plan in June 2024. A public hearing occurred on August 5 <sup>th</sup> before the City Council and final action was taken to adopt the plan on August 19 <sup>th</sup> .





### **3. LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH**





## CHAPTER 3: LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH

Livability, Sustainability, and Health are critical to the long-term viability and success of the City of Beloit. Many Beloit residents enjoy a high quality of life thanks to first-rate public amenities, strong civic organizations and institutions, and popular community organizations and events. Beloit will build on this strong foundation and advance current and new initiatives through setting detailed goals and policies related to livability, sustainability, and health. While this chapter focuses specifically on Livability, Sustainability, and Health, these three topics influence nearly every other element of the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, references to these concepts and related themes are found throughout this plan. This is by design, as they are inseparable from other Comprehensive Plan elements.

### GOALS AND POLICIES

Improve Quality Of Life Through Sustainable Development Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate sustainable best practices and strategies in all future policies and public investments.</li><li>• Encourage a compact growth pattern that enables healthy lifestyles and facilitates fiscal sustainability.</li><li>• Foster multi-modal transportation options throughout the City.</li><li>• Protect natural resources and provide access to parks, recreation, and trails.</li><li>• Expand connections between the riverfront and downtown through paths, trails, and riverwalk spaces with wayfinding signage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.</li><li>• Account for and adapt to changing climate conditions within the built environment.</li><li>• Monitor, invest in, and ensure the City's utility system has adequate capacity to accommodate projected future growth.</li><li>• Develop a comprehensive housing strategy to address housing affordability and availability.</li><li>• Consider public health outcomes in all land use, transportation, and infrastructure policies, plans, and investments.</li></ul>
Build Partnerships for Collaborative Solutions to Beloit's Biggest Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster collaboration around advancing sustainability, public health, and climate resiliency.</li><li>• Expand the City's community engagement opportunities and foster long-term inclusive representation by residents.</li><li>• Continue and expand work with nonprofit organizations to provide services that increase the quality of life of Beloit residents.</li><li>• Advance quality of life measures that positively change the perception of Beloit and encourage new residents to live in the city.</li><li>• Collaborate with local institutions and schools to improve the quality of public education available to city residents.</li><li>• Increase generational wealth in underrepresented communities by supporting minority-owned businesses and homeownership.</li><li>• Work with local farmers and businesses to increase access to fresh locally grown food.</li><li>• Continue community policing initiatives to reduce crime and change outdated perceptions of Beloit.</li><li>• Identify partnerships and support programs to improve access to affordable daycare.</li><li>• Increase equitable civic engagement, community events, and provision of services.</li><li>• Partner with local schools to introduce and expand access to local government for area youth.</li></ul>
Encourage and Incentivize the Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preserve and protect historic, archaeological, and culturally important properties, sites, districts.</li><li>• Promote public art throughout the community and prioritize local artists in this work.</li><li>• Invest in community arts, civic events, and cultural programming to increase equitable access to all residents.</li><li>• Ensure new development and neighborhoods within or adjacent to historical areas of Beloit are designed to reflect the community's unique identity and are compatible with the historical context of its surroundings.</li></ul>

## CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Advance the City's role in sustainability and climate resiliency.
  - Increase public health awareness and collaboration.
- Expand equitable and inclusive community engagement opportunities.
  - Encourage the use of local and healthy foods in Beloit.
  - Preserve and enhance Beloit's historic and cultural resources.
    - Establish a consistent community brand.
- Advance community goals through public art and placemaking.
- Improve public education in collaboration with Beloit School District.

### City's Climate Goals

In 2007, the City of Beloit adopted a resolution that the community would support state, federal, and international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2040. It is recommended that the City establish a new targeted goal over the planning period to drive community initiatives towards achieving greater climate resiliency and sustainability.

## STRATEGIES

### Advance the City's Role in Sustainability and Climate Resiliency

With data showing that Wisconsin will become wetter and hotter over the next 30 years, it is recommended that the City take ambitious steps to do its part to counteract climate change and respond to a changing climate in the short term and over the next decade and beyond. Beloit is already pursuing many sustainability measures, and it is recommended that the City formalize these efforts through a dedicated Climate Action Plan and identify additional actions that can be taken.

The City has a key role to play in advancing sustainability and climate resiliency in the community, however the most successful progress in these areas generally involves multiple parties including elected officials, municipal staff, school districts, neighboring and overlapping governments, other local groups and organizations, the development and building community, and residents. The City is fortunate to have many opportunities for local and regional partnerships on these topics. Overall, the City doesn't need to reinvent this process. There are many examples from around the state that can serve as models for the City including the Dane County Climate Action Plan, Eau Claire Energy Action Plan, La Crosse Climate Action Plan, and others.

### Climate Action Plan

The purpose of a Climate Action Plan is to set ambitious carbon reduction and renewable energy goals for the community and develop an action plan for how to accomplish them. This process helps chart a course for how the City, its residents, public sector partners, and the private sector can work together to make these goals a reality. Key components of a Renewable Energy Action Plan include:

- Setting carbon reduction and renewable energy goals for the next 10 years.
- Developing strategies on how the community can advance and meet these goals.
- Establish partnerships with overlapping jurisdictions, local businesses and community organizations, utility providers, and others.
- Identifying funding sources for implementation.
- Creating the framework for future programs, policies, and decision making



The following outlines recommended steps for advancing the City's role and continuing to collaborate with regional partners to advance these topics in the region:

- **Collect, evaluate, and monitor data.** Gather important benchmark data, analyze how different policies could impact this data, and establish processes for long-term tracking and updating of the data sets. The City has already completed much of this work through the Green Tier Legacy Community program reporting it actively tracks.
- **Determine priorities and set ambitious goals.** Beloit must determine its own priorities and goals related to sustainability and climate resiliency. These priorities and goals should be determined through public engagement and policy discussions with various stakeholders, committees, and elected officials. Again, the City has already advanced some of these initiatives with the adoption of the Eco-Municipality Sustainable Guidelines in 2007 and its participation in the Green Tier Legacy Community program.
- **Develop an action plan.** It is recommended that Beloit use planned performance measures, priorities, and goals to create concrete steps that help achieve goals and advance priorities. These steps will provide the framework for future decision making and planning efforts undertaken by the City and its partners.
- **Implementation.** Advancing each action step will require resources, collaboration, information sharing, and community buy-in. Beloit can lead this effort locally through its own budgeting process, capital planning, grant applications, and public engagement and education efforts, however it will take regional partnerships, advocacy groups, and the private sector to bridge gaps in what the City alone can do. There are several specific ways that Beloit can advance the steps outlined above.

### Expand Community Engagement Opportunities

The City of Beloit plays an active role in utilizing a variety of methods and tools to keep residents involved, including social media channels, websites, newspaper articles, and flyers. Additionally, there are numerous events throughout the year that provide opportunities for the community to get together for recreation and educational purposes. It is recommended that Beloit continue to diversify its public engagement opportunities, especially related to engagement of younger residents (i.e., under 25 years old) and underrepresented populations. This can be done through partnerships with the leaders of local organizations, churches, clubs, the school districts, neighborhood associations, local businesses, and other groups. The City should work with all of these groups to continue to increase diverse community events and celebrations, and establish new educational opportunities related to sustainability, equity, ethnic and racial diversity, and more. In particular, Beloit has a larger minority population than other Wisconsin communities of similar size. Including nearly 15% of the population identifying as Black or African American and a growing Latino population, making up over 21% of the population. The City should work with these populations to amplify their impact and contributions to the community while also making concerted effort to reach this community in a culturally competent manner that encourages their participation in public life. Through this engagement, the City can help foster local champions and advocacy groups to advance community goals and play a pivotal role in implementing action steps of this plan.



### Equitable Engagement Toolkit

In order to maximize the inclusivity of public engagement in key projects and public decision making, communities need to be intentional in reaching community members who are diverse in age, race, ability, language, income, and have different life experiences. This effort helps bring in voices that have been marginalized in the past and helps more equitably distribute the benefits of public decisions and investments. The City of Beloit can create a series of tools and procedures that can help the city plan its engagement efforts on a variety of projects. An Equitable Engagement Toolkit, which could look to the one created by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) for inspiration, will empower city staff and leadership across all departments to build new and more lasting and trusting relationships with the public.

### **Increase Public Health Awareness and Collaboration**

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute designates municipalities as a “[Wisconsin Healthy Community](#)” to recognize and encourage local efforts that improve the overall community’s health and wellbeing. The designation also aims to promote collaboration centered around health improvement.

This plan recommends that Beloit consider pursuing its own Wisconsin Healthy Community designation by highlighting its work and partnerships related to advancing public health in the community. This step can also provide the City with a greater understanding of health outcomes, determinants, and equity. The overarching goals of the Wisconsin Healthy Community Designation program are reflective of the community’s overarching goals in this plan.

Additionally, it is recommended that the City work collaboratively to address and advance public health initiatives in the region through collaboration with Rock County and other regional stakeholders. Working with Rock County, Beloit can play a role in broader County-wide health initiatives by implementing education and programming, data collection and sharing, developing policies, and strengthening partnerships that focus on increasing community health outcomes. This could include fostering youth leadership programs that can assist in leading health initiatives, building awareness of mental health programming, increasing local access to services like mobile clinics or medicine disposal locations, and other opportunities.

### **Encourage the Use of Local and Healthy Foods**

Most of the food consumed in the United States today is transported many miles before it reaches our tables. Various opportunities to promote locally grown foods can help reverse this unsustainable system. Some of the ways in which the City can contribute to these efforts include continuing to build on and expand the local Farmer’s Market, leveraging opportunities to support and provide residents with resources on Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, collaboration with restaurants and local vendors to locally-source food, and promoting and incorporating more community gardens across Beloit.

### **Advance Community Goals Through Public Art and Placemaking**

Beloit has a strong base of public sculptures, arts, theaters, musicians, and community artists. Programs like the Beloit International Film Festival, ArtWalk, Beloit College theater group, and the Beloit School District’s band and theater programs put on by Beloit’s performing arts groups highlight the artistic strength of the community. The arts are a powerful tool for emphasizing the cultural diversity within the community and will support the City’s placemaking efforts and tourism attraction. The arts are also a source of free or low-cost events that are a draw for youth, families, and people of all ages to enjoy. The City should capitalize on this strength to collaborate with local artists to continue the implementation of local art and cultural events in the City’s public spaces.

### **AARP Livability Index**

AARP ranks communities on a scale of 1-100 to determine a community’s overall “livability”. Metric values and policy points are scored for each of the seven livability categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. A location’s total livability score is an average of those seven category scores.

Beloit has an overall ranking of 55, placing it in the top half of communities. Beloit’s lowest ranking was in the Health category, where it scored a 32. Improving public health in Beloit is a key factor for increasing the City’s overall livability.

*Source: AARP Livability Index, 2023.*

### **Community Garden Benefits**

Community gardens offer a wide variety of benefits that advance climate resiliency, public health, and quality of life:

- Promote the consumption of local foods
- Increase local biodiversity
- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Provide community gathering places to advance social connections and interactions
- Reduce energy consumption from commercial food production
- Activate underutilized properties
- Promote food and environmental education



Additionally, the City should pursue placemaking initiatives as a revitalization strategy throughout the City. Placemaking includes strengthening the connection between people and the places they share by shaping the public realm to maximize shared value and interaction. Activating spaces through the establishment of temporary road closures for outdoor dining and events, public art displays, and other aesthetic and functional improvements can contribute to increased quality of life for residents that visit these spaces and provide an increased tax base for the community. Some of this is already occurring or planned to occur downtown including a mural program, artwork on electrical boxes, alley placemaking, outdoor dining spaces, pollinator-friendly streetscape improvements, and kayak and bicycle rentals. It is recommended that the City support these initiatives and potentially expand upon them throughout the community.

### **Establish A Consistent Community Brand**

When asked about the current image of Beloit, public input revealed a large divergence of answers. There was a large variance in opinions on topics ranging from whether Beloit is a large or small community, overall crime levels in the community, whether there are enough things to do in the City, quality of local amenities, and many other topics. While a variety of opinions is expected to some degree, the level of disagreement indicates the lack of a unified brand to define Beloit.

Locally, there are a several entities in the City pursuing branding efforts independently of each other. Many good efforts have been made on this front, but there is a distinct need to consolidate these into a more unified program to ensure that the City and partner groups are speaking with a united voice when promoting the City to visitors and businesses. The city should establish a working group including Visit Beloit, Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, Rock County, and others to create a consolidated branding strategy for the City of Beloit.

### **Improve Public Education in Collaboration within the City of Beloit**

The City of Beloit, area School Districts, Lincoln Academy, and private schools all have a vested interest in improving public education in the community and creating memorable and positive experiences for children. As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter, the School District of Beloit has endured its share of challenges in recent years, while the Beloit Turner School District, Lincoln Academy, and private schools have expanded. Although school outcomes are largely outside the control of the City of Beloit, the City is committed to partnering on initiatives to support each school and improve the quality of public education for all residents. The first step in this process will be establishing ongoing communications with designated officials from each organization. From these conversations, an outline of potential initiatives to partner on should be established and executed.

Collaborations between the City and area schools can be formalized or established in a less formal format. However, written delineation of responsibilities is crucial to ensure both organizations are on the same page at the outset of the initiative and that the agreements are mutually beneficial. Flexibility to modify agreements will be an important consideration to allow both entities to adapt to lessons learned through the process.



A few initial collaborations to consider include the following:

- Establish recurring meetings between school and City leadership to discuss ongoing issues that impact both the city and the schools, including housing, economic and workforce development, transportation, and quality of life.
- Participation of City officials in classroom civics lessons or in activities related to subject area expertise of public employees.
- Participation of City employees in career days to expose students to public service careers.
- Experiential learning of core city functions through internships or classroom participation.
- Facilitating the sale of underutilized real estate assets through advance site planning and TIF districts.
- Joint use agreements for facilities and equipment.
- Promoting events and raising awareness of successes in the Beloit area schools.
- Facilitating after-school events targeted at youth.
- Enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure to establish safer routes to school and reduce the need for bussing.
- Public art collaborations involving students to beautify public spaces.

### **Preserve and Enhance Beloit's Historic and Cultural Resources**

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) contains data on a wide range of historic properties throughout the state – such as round barns, cast iron bridges, commercial buildings, schoolhouses, and turn-of-the-century homes – that create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. The AHI identifies 2,065 documented structures in the City of Beloit. There are several unique properties like the Beloit Water Tower and Fairbanks Flats, and the rest of the list is mainly comprised of churches and residences. There are 33 properties in the City listed on the National or State Historic Registers including the Beloit College Campus, the Bluff Street Historic District, and the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle. Additionally, the City updated its local Historic Survey in 2016, which includes several other historic sites and structures ([see Appendix A for more information](#)). The City will partner with the Beloit Historical Society to educate the general public about Beloit's history and provide access to significant historic buildings.

The City of Beloit and the entire region were once home to the Mound Builders and Winnebago Native American tribes. There are many archeological sites within the City of Beloit designated by the Wisconsin State Historical Society. These sites include cemeteries/burial sites, effigy mounds, and campsites/villages. All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under State law. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not adversely affect archeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Archeological sites can be protected during the course of state agency activities if the sites have been recorded with the Office of the State Archeologist. The City will seek to preserve these archeological sites and educate the general public about the history of Native Americans within the region.

Overall, it is recommended that the City conduct and complete a Historic Preservation Plan to update existing condition information, address regulation and ordinance changes, and provide an action plan for documenting, preserving, and maintaining the community's unique historic and cultural assets.







## 4. AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

WELCOME





# CHAPTER 4: AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The preservation and improvement of its surrounding agricultural and natural resources is integral to Beloit's high quality of life. As growth pressures increase, there is an ever-increasing need to proactively protect and enhance these features and resources over the planning period. This chapter provides the goals and policies related to agricultural and resource preservation, protection, and improvement. It also details a set of key strategies to help advance or achieve them. Background information, data, and existing plans related to agricultural and natural resources can be found in [Appendix A](#). Also, see Map 2 and 3 in [Appendix C](#).

## GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>Preserve Natural Resources and Farmland for Future Generations to Enjoy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and water quality using the City's Zoning, Subdivision, and Official Map (see the Land Use Chapter for more information).</li><li>• Promote compact development patterns within the City and maintain a hard edge between urban development and the countryside.</li><li>• Carefully consider the location of prime farmland and environmentally sensitive areas before making decisions on the expansion of urban services or community growth.</li><li>• Establish City-wide renewable energy and carbon emission goals.</li><li>• Reduce and minimize the amount of pavement and impervious surface areas throughout the community (see the Land Use Chapter for more information).</li></ul>
<b>Forge Partnerships with Neighboring Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advance the City's role in becoming a more sustainable, energy-conscious, and climate resilient community through regional partnerships and development of local policies and plans.</li><li>• Work with the surrounding municipalities to preserve and protect agricultural uses from premature, inefficient, or potentially damaging development in mutually agreed areas.</li><li>• Discourage land uses, land divisions, and activities that may conflict with agricultural uses or adversely affect farm investments in long-term farming areas outside of the City's long-term growth areas.</li><li>• Work with Rock County on any future updates to the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan, Land and Water Resource Management Plan, and County-wide Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>



## CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

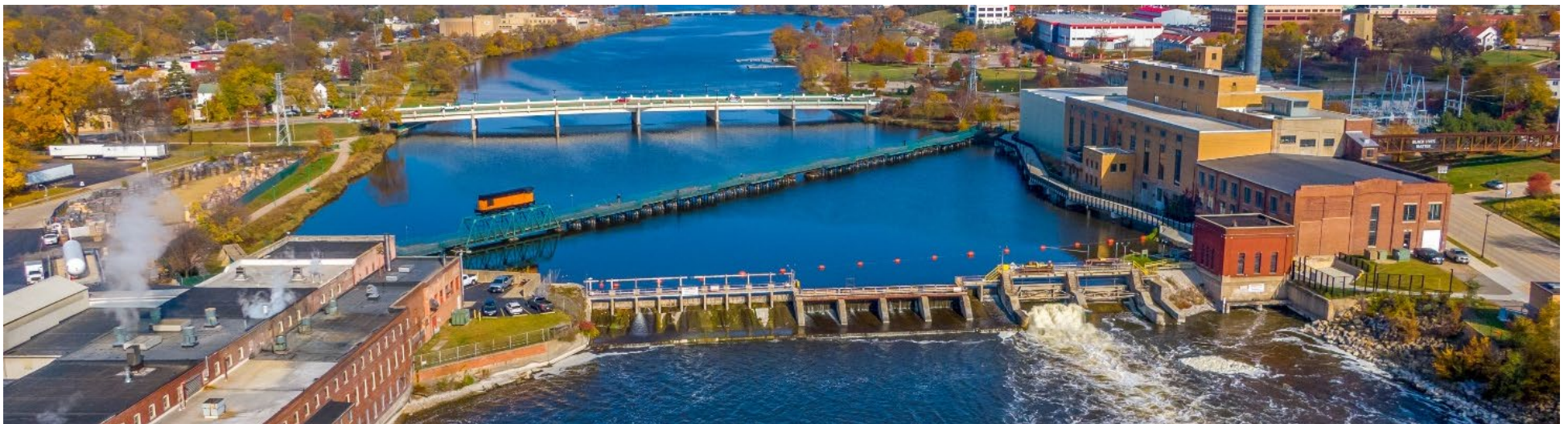
The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

- Advance the City's role in climate resilience and sustainability through the protection and preservation of natural and agricultural resources.
- Foster a compact development pattern within the City's boundaries.
- Preserve natural resources and connect them with recreational opportunities and tourism.
- Support regional farmland preservation efforts to preserve productive agricultural lands.
- Improve and preserve urban biodiversity through well-integrated and connected greenways, forests, vegetation, native plantings, and gardens.

### STRATEGIES

#### **Advance Stormwater Best Management Practices**

Continue to integrate Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) wherever possible to mitigate the negative impacts stormwater runoff can have on downstream properties, farmland, and waterways, such as the Rock River and Turtle Creek. Stormwater BMPs aim to control runoff volume by managing precipitation as “close to where it hits the ground” as possible, thereby facilitating infiltration of precipitation into groundwater and evaporation of water back into the atmosphere. This approach decreases peak stormwater quantities and improves the overall quality of the stormwater that does enter streams and rivers. The City should promote, and in certain cases require, the following BMPs:



Stormwater BMP Types	Description	Recommended Strategy
Rain Gardens	Landscaping feature that is designed, located, and installed for the purposes of capturing stormwater runoff and allowing it to infiltrate back into the ground.	Codify rain garden design standards and allow them to apply toward meeting landscaping requirements.
Rain Barrels	Collects and stores the water that drains from rooftops to prevent it from running offsite.	Develop a rain barrel program and provide residents with information about how and where they can purchase their own rain barrels.
Permeable Pavers	Allow water to seep through the pavement itself or provide gaps for the water to seep into.	Integrate standards into the Zoning Ordinance and standard engineering specifications to encourage use, where appropriate.
Impervious Surface Reduction	Reduce the amount of impervious surface across the community through infiltration practices and low impact design standards.	Codify low impact design standards such as green roofs, permeable pavement, and reduced parking standards. Leverage redevelopment opportunities and future road projects to improve infiltration and reduce impervious surfaces.
Retention Pond	Designed to filter out sediment and other solids from stormwater, while also retaining runoff on-site.	Continue to require well-designed and well-integrated retention ponds within new development.
Vegetative Buffer Stripes	Vegetation stripes that infiltrate run-off and prevent it from flowing off-site.	Continue to utilize green space requirements in the Landscaping Ordinance and encourage the use of native plantings in vegetative strips through site plan review.
Bioswales	A small-scale combination of a retention pond and vegetative buffer strip.	Integrate standards into the Landscaping Ordinance and allow bioswales to count toward meeting site landscaping requirements.
Green (Vegetated) Roofs	Use of organic material on roofs to absorb run-off and filter pollutants from rainwater.	Integrate green roofs into future municipal facility projects.
Salt Management	Manage salt usage during winter months that negatively impacts pollutants in waterways.	Continue to the use of the geo-melt organic based ice and snow removal practice instead of salt and educate community members on the benefits of salt reduction.

To implement these strategies, the City has a variety of tools including the Architectural Review, Landscaping, Stormwater, Erosion Control, and Subdivision Ordinances, in addition to a stormwater utility to provide resources to address large-scale stormwater situations. A Green Infrastructure Plan is also a beneficial process that can help identify existing issues, provide defined standards for the integration of green infrastructure into new and existing developments, and establish action steps for increasing green infrastructure best practices and education throughout the community.



### **Foster a Compact Development Pattern to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Agricultural Resources**

From time to time, development proposals for areas in the Towns adjacent to the City's municipal limits may consider proposals for large-lot residential development. This type of large-lot development impedes the City's ability to provide municipal facilities in an efficient, cost-effective manner in the event of its expansion. This type of development also consumes agricultural land at a much faster rate (up to 25 times faster) than more compact development within the City.

Beloit will promote a compact development pattern, focusing on techniques that reduce the amount of land required for additional growth such as infill development, redevelopment, Traditional Neighborhood Design, and higher density new development. In addition to helping preserve productive agricultural areas, woodlands, and environmentally sensitive areas, a compact and sustainable development pattern will benefit regional water quality, facilitate multi-modal forms of transportation, provide more affordable housing options, promote public health, and will be less expensive to serve with public utilities and services. In general, private well and septic development in areas within the long-term growth areas and the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is strongly discouraged, outside of mutually agreed-upon areas defined by Intergovernmental Agreements.



### **Link Natural Resource Preservation with Recreational Opportunities and Tourism**

Beloit has a significant opportunity to leverage its high-quality natural resources to support recreation and tourism. One way to accomplish this is through increasing passive recreation options within existing resource areas. Riverside Park is an excellent model of linking a natural resource with recreational opportunities that can be replicated in other areas of the City. Natural resource preservation areas can serve as important components of the City's overall park and recreation system, providing opportunities for outdoor education, relaxation, and exercise. Such areas also maintain and enhance the beauty of a community or neighborhood and serve a variety of ecological functions by providing habitat for wildlife, enhancing water and air quality, and providing natural flood control.

Additionally, the City has a unique opportunity to capitalize on the combination of its current draw to tourists and its outstanding natural resources and open spaces. Linking natural resources protection to its tourism base can be accomplished through collaborative partnerships, particularly with Beloit's downtown and tourism organizations to promote and position the city as an outdoor destination, as well as expanding and connecting recreational trails with local amenities, increasing educational and wayfinding signage, and expanding connected passive recreational areas throughout the area. It is recommended that the City pursue this strategy through the implementation of the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan and any future updates of the plan.

## Improve and Preserve Urban Biodiversity

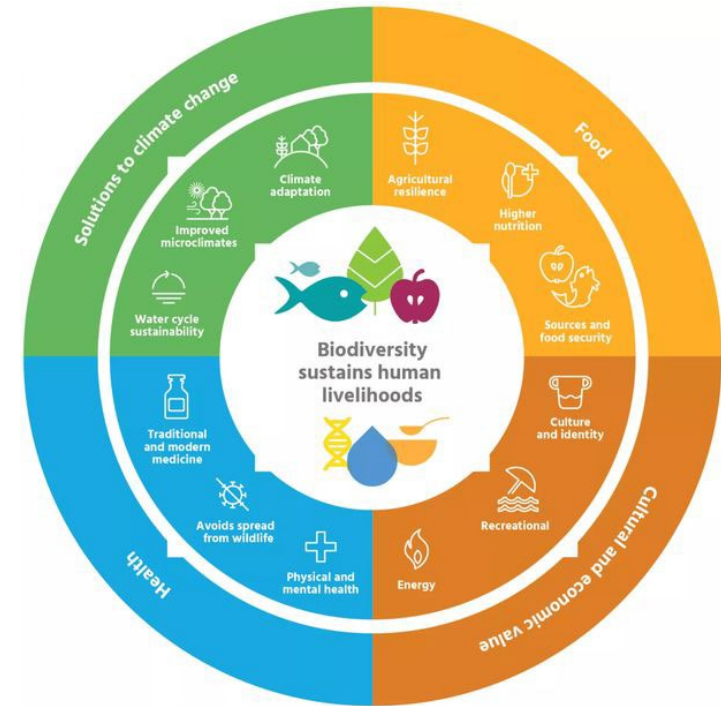
Many species of wildlife can coexist successfully within and on the fringes of cities if community plans recognize and maintain the necessary habitats and conditions. It is also important to reduce conflict between the built environment and the natural environment. As the City grows, preservation of urban biodiversity is not only essential for protecting wildlife and the natural environment, but it also adds richness to urban life.

**Community Forestry.** The benefits of a robust urban forest and tree canopy are many. Urban forests help to filter air and water, control storm water, conserve energy, create shade, regulate temperature, absorb and store carbon, and provide animal habitat. They also add beauty, form, and structure to urban design. By reducing noise and providing places to recreate, urban forests strengthen social cohesion, spur community revitalization, and add economic value to our communities. The City has an existing tree inventory that should be updated and maintained over the planning period, in addition to creating an urban forestry plan. This process will identify and describe ecologically sound strategies and an action plan for achieving the City's goals of creating and maintaining a robust and healthy tree ecosystem. This plan may also inform the update of policies and standards for landscaping in private development.

**Preserve and Improve Greenways to Support Habitats.** Linking parks and open spaces is not only valuable for humans. An interconnected greenway system also allows wildlife to move among habitats and to have greater habitat extent to support their population and respond to stresses in the environment. Improving biodiversity supports wildlife, such as pollinators and birds, in many ways. Greenways should be kept as “natural” as possible. Multi-use paths should be designed to allow people to access and enjoy these areas while minimizing impact. In addition, it is essential that the City continues to analyze greenways and open spaces to determine changes to enhance them. Some of the primary methods for enhancement include bank stabilization, habitat restoration, minimizing compaction of soil, managing storm water runoff, creating and preserving buffer areas, and reducing invasive species.

**Integrate Vegetation.** There are many ways the City and the community can improve the built environment to enhance urban biodiversity. The City should seek opportunities for well-integrated greenspace in developed areas and encourage trees and native plantings in boulevards, remnant properties, along stormwater facilities, and transportation corridors. Urban life is significantly enhanced with the addition of shade-providing trees and water filtering vegetation.

**Replace Lawn Areas with Native Plantings and Gardens.** The traditional suburban lawn is comprised of non-native species, requires significant time, water, and energy to maintain, and does not contribute to local wildlife. Most lawns areas are mowed, but otherwise not utilized for recreation or other uses. Many lawn areas could be transitioned to more ecologically valuable, visually interesting, resource efficient, and lower maintenance conditions. Strategies could include the addition of pollinator gardens, food gardens, rain gardens, native grasses, and flowers. These native lawn substitutes create a similar appearance but are more ecologically productive and require less maintenance. However, this initiative should be balanced with appropriate and clear property maintenance requirements or a licensing system to avoid future enforcement issues.



*Source: Global Landscapes Forum, Biodiversity 101: Why it matters and how to protect it, May 21, 2020*





## 5. LAND USE



## CHAPTER 5: LAND USE

This chapter is intended to outline the goals, objectives, and policies related to land use. Recommendations serve to guide the future preservation and development of public and private lands in and around Beloit. Background information, data, and existing plans related to land use and community character can be found in [Appendix A](#). Also see Maps 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, and 5c in [Appendix C](#).

### GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>Promote Land Use Patterns That Improve Quality Of Life And Advance The Local Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply the land use policies below to foster a compact mix of uses, densities, land use types, and affordability levels rather than segregating different land use and housing types in different areas of the community.</li><li>• Develop plans and strategies to foster the continued revitalization of existing neighborhoods and community corridors by proactively planning for, identifying, and focusing on infill and redevelopment opportunities, particularly along key corridors.</li><li>• Use new development and redevelopment to create a sense of place within the built environment and create memorable places designed for people, interactions, and multi-modal transportation options and connectivity throughout the City.</li><li>• Focus growth strategies on both the east and west sides of Beloit to grow the local economy and provide increased housing availability and affordability.</li><li>• Require all proposed residential developments to dedicate land, or pay a fee in lieu thereof, for public park, recreation, and open space acquisition and development.</li><li>• Grow and expand the local economy through high-quality, compact, sustainable, and mixed-use development.</li><li>• Increase diverse housing formats throughout the community.</li><li>• Discourage unplanned, incremental strip commercial development.</li><li>• Require high-quality design for new development and continue to enhance and beautify the streetscapes along major corridors and community gateways.</li><li>• Invest in utility extensions within existing Town island areas to promote annexation within these areas.</li></ul>
<b>Guide Future Development With The Future Land Use Map</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow the land use policies below when considering all future rezoning requests and development reviews.</li><li>• Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the recommendations of the Future Land Use Map and this Comprehensive Plan.</li><li>• Work with Rock County and the Towns of Beloit and Turtle on future land use planning within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. Explore intergovernmental agreements with all surrounding municipalities.</li><li>• Continue to require all new development in the City connect to sanitary sewer and public water systems.</li><li>• Inventory and maintain existing utility and infrastructure capacity to understand future growth capability.</li><li>• Practice fiscal sustainability by only approving development that plans and accounts for the logical extensions of streets, utilities, and infrastructure.</li><li>• Review all new neighborhood subdivisions for consistency with this plan's policies and local ordinances to ensure they are designed in accordance with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles containing a wide mix of housing formats, costs, and tenancy types in order to create well-balanced and varied neighborhoods with strong community ties.</li><li>• Preserve and protect historic, archaeological, and culturally important properties, sites, districts through local ordinances and plans.</li></ul>



- Reduce and minimize the amount of pavement and impervious surfaces throughout the community to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and water quality using the City’s Zoning, Subdivision, and Official Map.
- Require new subdivisions to provide multiple vehicular access points whenever possible, and discourage the construction of cul-de-sacs, except where topography or similar barrier dictates the need due to the increased costs associated with maintenance and infrastructure, creation of disconnected street patterns and segregated land uses, and promotion of exclusive auto-orientation development.
- Require pedestrian-oriented neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices by adapting City policies and ordinances to reflect the recommendations of this plan including the Subdivision Ordinance and a Complete Streets policy.

### Overarching Land Use Policies

The following set of policy recommendations apply to multiple future land use categories in the City of Beloit as defined further within this chapter. Where appropriate, the policies listed under each land use category may be applied in conjunction with applicable recommendations listed here.

- Prioritize development and redevelopment of the riverfront in a manner that preserves and enhances the quality of surface waters while also preserving their economic and natural environmental value. Acquire and retain land along the river for public use.
- Encourage mixed-use development downtown and along community corridors throughout Beloit.
- Prohibit unscreened outdoor storage of equipment or materials.
- Use this plan as the guide to improve and update local ordinances related to site design, landscaping requirements, and architectural design.
- Educate developers and the public on how the recommendations of this plan affect both public and private development proposals.
- Discourage “poverty industries” (ex. payday loans, rent-to-own, pawnshops, etc.) and predatory businesses, in addition to only auto-oriented land uses.
- Provide for the needs of electric vehicles including vehicular charging stations in the design and construction of buildings, street systems, and parking.
- Use the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) process to support health considerations in decisions that impact the built environment, such as large-scale new subdivisions, large redevelopments, infrastructure expansions, etc. Partner with the Rock County Public Health Department and allied organizations to complete HIA’s for public and private projects that have the potential to significantly affect public health.
- When a Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) is required, ensure pedestrians, transit riders, paratransit riders, bicyclists, and persons using other non-vehicular modes of travel are considered.
- Provide opportunities for childcare facilities to be located near employment and encourage childcare spaces to be incorporated within new developments.
- Limit negative aesthetic impacts of parking lots and front-loaded garages by:
  - Locating garage doors and parking lots so they are not the dominant visual element.
  - Screening parking areas from public view and placing parking in the rear or side of buildings.
  - Integrating landscaped islands and stormwater features within large parking fields.
  - Providing direct links to building entrances with pedestrian walkways physically separated from vehicular movement areas.
  - Articulating the facades of structured parking facilities with foundation landscaping, varied facade setbacks, and recessed garage doors.

## Design Principles

The following design principles are encouraged:

- Orientation of the building toward the street with reduced front setbacks and improved sidewalk connections.
- Reduced on-site surface parking, increased shared or joint parking facilities, and rear or side-building surface parking.
- Exterior-oriented design that includes articulated facades with a mix of high-quality exterior building materials such as brick, stone, glass, wood, and non-corrugated metal.
- Mixing of uses on the same site, placemaking elements incorporated into site design, and multi-modal transportation connectivity.
- Protection and preservation of natural features that utilizes these elements as a focal point of the development.

The following design principles are discouraged:

- Disjointed, disconnected, and excessive land consumption development patterns.
- Large and extensive pavement and parking fields and orientation only to accommodate vehicle traffic.
- Inward-focused design that includes blank, unarticulated facades and lacks any architectural features of interest.
- Generic, corporate, and placeless design that lacks unique, place-based architectural elements or features.
- Structures and development within existing natural features and corridors.

## What is context sensitive design?

The idea behind context sensitive design is not only taking into consideration functionality, but also the area's surroundings when making planning decisions. In applying this principle, it's important to evaluate potential impacts of a decision through the lens of geographic context and community goals and objectives. When applying context sensitive design to future infill, redevelopment, or new development projects, this means taking into consideration setbacks, buffering, multi-modal connectivity, traffic patterns, building orientation, density, height, utilities and infrastructure, community facilities, and building materials. For example, a higher density project or more intense development may be better suited along an arterial or minor arterial community corridor, where density and intensity can then transition in size, scale, and format from the corridor frontage into a more residential neighborhood setting. Because sites, neighborhoods, and corridors are all different, this principle isn't applied uniformly throughout the community. Rather, its intended to be unique in context to the built environment.





## CHAPTER 5: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

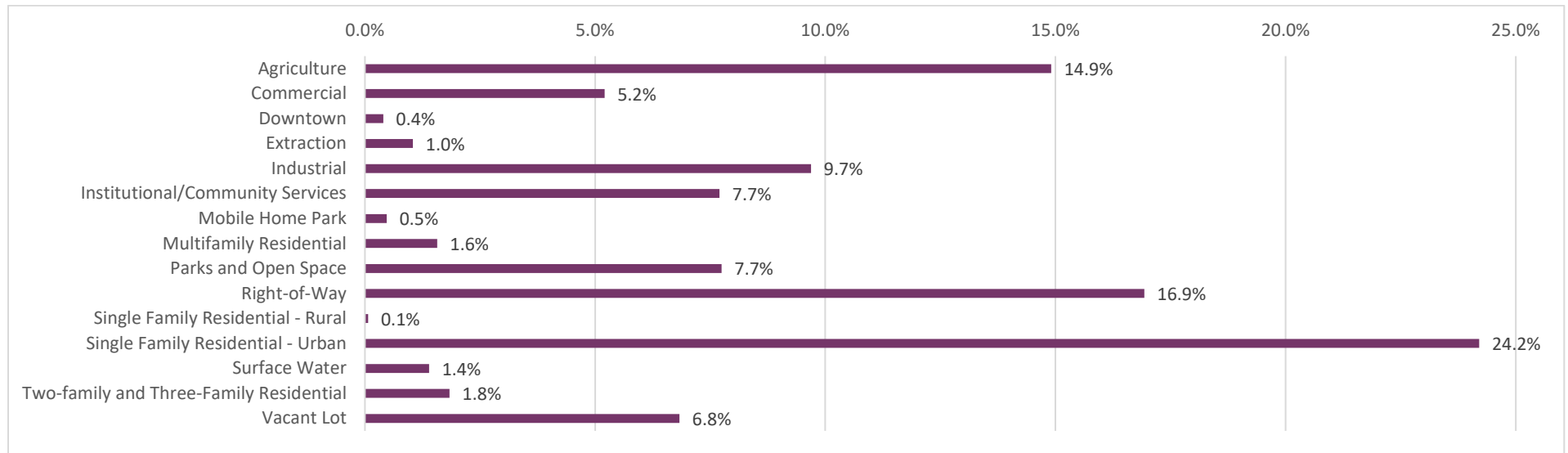
- Identify, plan for, and actively pursue infill development and the redevelopment of key sites and corridors.
- Utilize design standards to ensure high-quality new development that is well integrated into its surroundings.
  - Integrate Traditional Neighborhood Design and mixed-use opportunities in new and infill development and redevelopment.
- Ensure land uses support the community facility, transportation, economic development, and other objectives of this plan.
  - Require detailed site, neighborhood, or area plans prior to the platting and development of land.
  - Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to ensure predictable and high-quality neighborhood and site design, improve mobility options, increase land use and housing format options, and provide increased opportunities for compact development and mixing of land uses.

### EXISTING LAND USE

An accurate depiction of Beloit's existing land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired future land use pattern. Map 4a and 4b in [Appendix C](#) depicts the existing land uses within the City's boundaries and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction as of 2023.

Existing Land Use Categories	Existing Land Use Description
Agriculture	Agricultural uses, farmsteads, and open lands.
Single Family Residential - Rural	Residential development on private well and/or septic systems, typically outside of the City.
Single-Family Residential - Urban	Single family residential served by public water and sewer utilities in the City.
Two-Family/Three-Family Residential	Two-family and Three-Family residential (two and three-flat, duplex, or twin-home).
Multi-Family Residential	A variety of multi-family residential buildings of four or more dwelling units (multi-plex, townhome, apartment, condos, etc.).
Commercial	A variety of commercial, office, retail, and related uses, typically along key community corridors.
Downtown	Pedestrian-oriented mixed-use commercial, office, retail, institutional, and residential uses.
Industrial	Manufacturing, assembling, production, warehousing, storage, and similar uses.
Extraction	Quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, peat extraction, and related land uses.
Institutional/Community Services	Small or large-scale public buildings and sites, schools, hospitals, and community-serving facilities.
Parks and Open Space	Park and open space facilities including playgrounds, trails, picnic areas, natural areas, and related recreational activities.
Vacant	Undeveloped platted lands within the City that may be served by public utilities and infrastructure.
Rights-of-Way	Publicly-owned land for transportation uses, including roads, highways, and railroads.
Surface Water	A combination of lakes, rivers, and perennial streams.

Figure 5.1. Existing Land Use Percentages By Type



Source: City of Beloit and V&A, 2023

## FUTURE LAND USE

### What is a Future Land Use Map?

The Future Land Use map and related policies described below should be used as a basis to update the City's regulatory land use tools, particularly the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. They should also be used as a basis for all public and private sector development decisions, including annexations, zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, subdivision approvals, extension of municipal utilities, arrangement of transportation facilities, and other public or private investments. Changes in land use to implement the recommendations of this plan will generally be initiated by property owners and private developers. In other words, this plan does not automatically compel property owners to change the use of their land or grant the entitlements required for development to occur.

Wisconsin Statutes allow communities to plan for lands within their extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ). To effectively manage growth, this plan identifies desirable land use patterns within the existing City limits and within unincorporated Town areas within the City's ETJ. This approach recognizes that Beloit (and regional) growth, public health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and other dynamics described in this plan are directly facilitated or impeded by the patterns of growth and land uses in adjacent unincorporated areas. Regional and intergovernmental planning and cooperation are best suited to collaboratively approach addressing these topics that transcend individual governmental boundaries.

Although this plan has been designed to accommodate a larger population than is projected in the next 20 years, it does not assume that all areas depicted on the Future Land Use Map will develop during this period. Instead, the Future Land Use Map shows those areas in and around the City that are the most logical development areas, regardless of the absolute timing of development. The Future Land Use Map (Map 5a, 5b, and 5c in [Appendix C](#)) indicates recommended

### Annexations

This plan does not compel annexation into the City of Beloit, rather it illustrates areas that may be suited for annexation in the future, upon property owner request. All proposed annexations should be guided by the goals and recommendations of this plan. However, each annexation request is unique depending on the specific timing, the property's location, the ability to provide utilities and public services, and overall plan consistency.



future land uses over the 20-year planning period and their location within the City and the ETJ. Changes in land use to implement the recommendations of this plan will be at the request of property owners. This plan will not compel property owners to change the use of their land. Instead, Map 5a, 5b, and 5c and the policies in this chapter will guide the City in its review of development proposals.

DETAILED FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGIES

Each of the future land use categories listed and shown on the Future Land Use Map are described below. The text under each listed land use category includes a description of that category, an outline of where that type of land use should be promoted, and the policies related to future development in areas designated under that category. Compatible zoning districts are suggested, however existing zoning districts and standards may not be adequate to achieve the characteristics described in each area. As indicated elsewhere in this plan, the Zoning Ordinance is recommended to be amended to reflect the City’s values and goals.

The development intensities suggested in each category are provided as a range for the uses in the category, ex. 4 to 8 dwellings per acre, and do not reflect the average intensity of the category. Thus, one part of the designated area may be 4 dwellings per acre while an adjacent or nearby area may be independently calculated as 8 dwellings per acre. Additionally, the appropriate use of net versus gross densities and intensities are context-dependent (i.e., infill, redevelopment, or greenfield development). This range is reflective of the recognition that land use and intensity are only two of the factors considered in planning future land use areas, and must also include design and performance characteristics.

Agricultural
Description: Agricultural uses, farmsteads, and other open lands at or below a residential density of 1 dwelling unit per 40 gross acres.
Compatible Zoning Districts: DH, Town Zoning
Policies: <div><div>1. Exercise the City’s authority to review proposed land divisions within the City’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and explore intergovernmental planning and the update of the City’s Official Map to assist in the implementation of this future land use category.</div><div>2. Do not extend sanitary sewer service or public water service into Agricultural areas until and unless the City changes the future land use category for such areas through a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Future Land Use Map.</div><div>3. Work with Rock County, the Town of Beloit, and Town of Turtle to implement the above policies and programs in a cooperative manner, where possible.</div></div>

Long-Term Growth Area
Description: Land where the City may grow beyond the 20-year planning period, for which it is premature for the City to designate any particular type of future land use. Prior to City of Beloit development within any part of the Long-Term Growth Area, the City will amend this Comprehensive Plan to recommend specific future land uses (beyond agriculture) and identify how the specific land use pattern would be served by transportation, utility, and other public services.
Compatible Zoning Districts: DH, Town Zoning
Policies: <div><div>1. Policies and recommendations on permissible uses for the Long-Term Growth Areas shall be the same as those listed for the Agricultural future land use category unless and until the City’s Comprehensive Plan is amended.</div><div>2. Prior to annexation and allowing more intensive forms of development within the Long-Term Growth Area, the City will, through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, identify specific future land uses (other than agriculture) and how the specific land use pattern would be served by transportation, utility, and other public services.</div></div>

### Established Neighborhood

Description: Already developed, predominately residential areas, with future building types to include single-family dwellings, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), two-family dwellings, single-family attached units such as twin homes or townhomes, residential two, three, and four-unit flats, small-scale multi-family up to 4 units per building, and context appropriate, mid-scale multi-family structures. Additionally, where appropriate in context to the existing neighborhood and building format, small-scale neighborhood-oriented mixed-use development may occur in structures designed to accommodate a mix of residential and commercial within the same structure. Small-scale neighborhood commercial land uses are oriented to serve the surrounding neighborhood with commercial uses facing the street and are typically found along higher volume traffic roadways and intersections (ex. the corner store or small shop), including services, office, and retail. This land use also includes all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: R-1A, R-1B, R-2, R-3, PLI, PUD, C-2

#### Policies:

1. Encourage residential development at densities around 8 to 50 homes per acre. Encourage mixed-uses where small-scale neighborhood-serving commercial and residential can coexist within the same structure, fitting into the existing neighborhood context along higher volume traffic roadways and intersections. Context-sensitive design (setbacks, building orientation, parking/traffic patterns, stepbacks, etc.) must be considered and incorporated into larger format buildings (multiple stories), higher density multi-family (greater than 4 units per building), and neighborhood-serving commercial land uses.
2. Leverage infill and redevelopment opportunities in these areas to promote a mix of residential formats that are compatible in the design of the surrounding neighborhood.
3. Update the bulk dimensions within the City's Zoning Ordinance to accommodate smaller lot sizes and narrower lot widths for single-family development, attached units (twin and townhomes), and small-scale multi-family options.
4. Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to accommodate the variety of land uses in this category through the creation of new zoning districts that expand permitted land uses for small-scale multi-family, tiered multi-family options by density, higher-density multi-family options, and small-scale, mixed-use, neighborhood-oriented commercial and residential in the same structure.
5. Promote rehabilitation and maintenance efforts of older neighborhoods and buildings.
6. Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to encourage housing designs which are attractive and require the house to be closer to the street than the garage. This would include adding front porches, stoops, etc.
7. Promote architectural design of new development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, including building and facade materials, building height, building bulk, setbacks, window and door styles and placements, roof designs, and colors.
8. Outside of single and two-family projects, require that all proposed projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, and signage plan prior to development approval.
9. Require higher density multi-family developments (greater than 4 units per building) to provide on-site open space areas that serve the needs of the project's residents, in addition to public park land requirements applicable to all residential development.
10. Work with the local historical society, Landmarks Commission, and property owners to protect and celebrate historically significant residences within the community.



### Existing Conditions

- Traditional Neighborhoods (Pre-1960s): These neighborhoods are typically a variety of residential land use types with some intermixed neighborhood commercial and are connected via a grid or semi-grid street network that accommodates residents via automobile, bicycle, walking, or transit. Stormwater is handled via storm sewers without large open common green spaces or on-site stormwater retention. Parks are provided intermittently throughout.
- Suburban Neighborhoods (Post-1960s): These neighborhoods are typically all the same type of land use and have a very similar appearance throughout. The curvilinear road network features auto-orientation with roads and driveways internal to the development, often with limited access points. They also have dedicated stormwater and green space on-site, but lack connectivity and walkability.

### Future Conditions

- Established Neighborhoods will change incrementally over time to incorporate a diversity of housing options like Accessory Dwelling Units, tiny homes, and missing middle housing formats (See the Housing Chapter for more information).
- This will be accomplished through Zoning Ordinance changes to bulk dimensional standards, land uses, and building configurations, in addition to context-sensitive design standards that accommodate higher density uses that are thoughtfully located and reflective of the characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood.



### Planned Neighborhood

Description: A carefully planned mix of single dwelling unit detached or attached, two-dwelling, multi-dwelling buildings, small scale business, community facilities, and parks, recreation, and conservancy uses consistent with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles (see the Housing Chapter for more information) and forms of development at a minimum of 4-8 dwelling units per gross acre.

Compatible Zoning Districts: R-1A, R-1B, R-2, R-3, PLI, PUD, C-2

#### Policies:

1. Require minimum residential density of 4-8 dwelling units per gross acre, as site conditions allow.
2. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design principles for new neighborhood development. See detailed descriptions of this concept in the Housing Chapter.
3. Follow the policies listed above for the Established Neighborhoods land use category within residential portions of Planned Neighborhoods. Follow the policies listed below for Community Services, Parks and Open Space, and the appropriate mixed-use land use categories for other complimentary land uses in Planned Neighborhoods.
4. Utilize natural features to act as buffers between different land uses, when necessary.
5. Plan for interconnected road, trail, and open space networks within and between new, existing, and future neighborhoods. Require new parks and open space facilities within new Planned Neighborhoods.
6. Require a Neighborhood Plan in advance of development proposals.
7. Encourage grid-like street patterns and discourage the use of cul-de-sacs, except where topography or similar barrier dictates the need due to the increased costs associated with maintenance and infrastructure, creation of disconnected street patterns and segregated land uses, and promotion of exclusive auto-orientation development.
8. Encourage the construction of narrower local streets and alley-loaded lots in new neighborhoods, where possible, and require sidewalks along all streets. See the Housing Chapter for more details. Alley-loaded lots may be well-suited in some new neighborhoods to help increase densities and reduce land and infrastructure costs associated with new development.
9. Require higher density multi-family developments (greater than 4 units per building) to provide on-site open space areas that serve the needs of the project's residents, in addition to public park land requirements applicable to all residential development.





# PLANNED NEIGHBORHOODS

**Planned Neighborhoods provide attractive places to live, play and take care of day-to-day service needs.**

Planned Neighborhoods support diverse housing choice and options, including single family homes (detached or attached), two family homes, townhomes, and small-, middle-, and larger-scale multi-family. They also include small-scale businesses, community facilities, parks, recreation, and conservancy uses consistent with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles and forms of development, including mixed use. Planned Neighborhoods provide attractive, desirable, and sustainable places to live, play, work, and meet day-to-day service needs.

- Mix of housing types and densities
- Mix of lot sizes: small lot (6,000 sf), mid-size (8,000 sf), and large lot (10,000 sf)
- Diverse ages & incomes
- Homes within a comfortable walk of parks and services
- Opportunity to center around plazas, parks, public spaces
- Streets connected internally and to larger community
- Neighborhood-wide multi-use path system with interconnected sidewalks, bike lanes, and routes
- Natural areas protected and made central to development
- Integration of neighborhood focal points such as schools, churches or shopping



**A** Single Family Homes



**B** Townhomes



**C** Two-Family



**D** Multi-Family – Apartments & Condos



**E** Neighborhood Mixed-Use



VANDEWALLE &  
ASSOCIATES, INC.







# TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Traditional Neighborhood design aims to enhance quality of life and community character through integrated multi-modal transportation options, diverse housing types, parks, schools, services, and jobs within walking distance of one another, preserving environmental systems, and reducing long-term demand for fiscal resources.

This can be accomplished by implementing the following guiding:

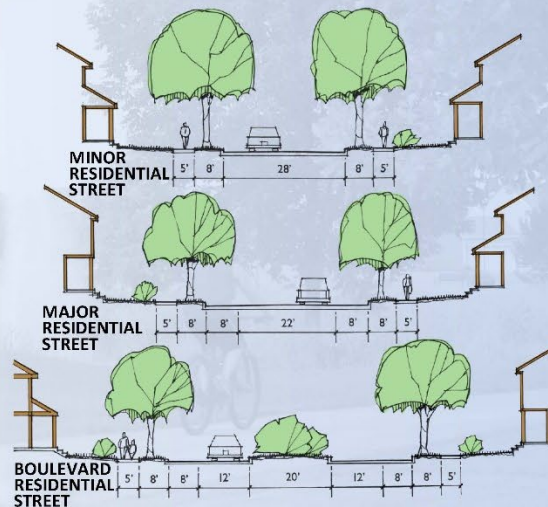
- Establishing community gathering places
- Providing housing variety
- Advancing equity and inclusion
- Blending land uses
- Promoting walkability
- Promoting connectivity
- Calming traffic
- Creating attractive and active streetscapes
- Highlighting natural areas
- Incorporating public health and sustainability



Streetscape



Single Family Parcel



Street Cross-Sections



Multi-Family Parcel

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES, INC.





### Single Family Unsewered

Description: Existing single family detached residential development served by some combination of individual on-site well and wastewater treatment (septic) systems and typically located outside of City limits.

Compatible Zoning Districts: Town Zoning

Policies:

1. Exercise the City's extraterritorial land division review authority to ensure that new Single Family Residential Unsewered development is discouraged within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, outside of established areas designated for such development within an adopted Intergovernmental Agreement.
2. It is recommended that an Intergovernmental Agreement with all neighboring jurisdictions be pursued to assist in this effort (See the Intergovernmental Opportunities Chapter for more information).

### Manufactured Home Residential

Description: This category is intended to allow single-family-oriented parks or subdivisions with manufactured or mobile homes that are professionally managed arrangements of manufactured homes and associated amenities.

Compatible Zoning Districts: This type of development is permitted as a conditional use in the R-3 and R-4 Zoning District

Policies:

1. Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Manufactured Home Zoning District with detailed performance and design standards.
2. Encourage housing designs which are attractive and emphasize the house in relation to the internal road (front porches, stoops, etc.).
3. Require Manufactured Home Residential developments to be professionally managed and provide adequate recreational open space within the neighborhood.

### Avenue Mixed Use

Description: Small-scale office, service, institutional, or retail commercial uses, small-scale indoor-oriented industrial, existing single-family residential, and mixed residential formats and uses in an arrangement compatible with the scale of the neighborhood context through building form, site design, and landscaping; typically, 1 to 5 stories in height. The establishment of new single-family land uses are not permitted within Avenue Mixed Use areas. This land use also includes all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: C-1, C-2, C-3, R-3, R-4, M-1, PUD, PLI

Policies:

1. Encourage neighborhood-oriented retail, office, and service businesses, and small-scale indoor-oriented industrial uses in areas that will conveniently serve residential neighborhoods.
2. Require that all proposed multi-family, commercial, and industrial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, utility plan, and signage plan prior to development approval.
3. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with residential areas, including: residential roof materials, such as shingles; generous window placements; and exterior materials, such as wood, vinyl siding, brick, decorative block, stone, and other approved materials.
4. Design street and driveway access to minimize traffic congestion and improve safety by limiting the number of vehicle access points to the street and ensuring adequate spacing between access points.
5. Encourage minimal front setbacks, design buildings for pedestrians and not automobiles with building entrances facing the street, and locate parking in the rear or side of the building or on streets.
6. Include facilities for bicyclists (bike storage racks, bike paths, etc.) in all development designs and reduce minimum automobile parking requirements.

7. Consider updating the City Zoning Ordinance to establish a zoning district that permits mixed use residential and commercial development by right with associated design requirements.
8. Consider updating the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish a redevelopment-oriented Zoning District that would provide increased flexibilities for redevelopment in these areas through design standards, increased maximum heights, reduced setbacks, and mixed use commercial and residential allowed by-right.
9. Require higher density multi-family developments (greater than 4 units per building) to provide on-site open space areas that serve the needs of the project's residents, in addition to public park land requirements applicable to all residential development.
10. Complete Detailed Corridor Plans for key community-serving corridors across the community to identify area-specific issues, opportunities, recommendations, and action items to drive the realization of these areas. See the Prairie Avenue and Madison Road Corridor Graphics for examples.

### Urban Mixed Use

Description: Larger-scale retail, service, and residential uses, including indoor-oriented light industrial generally located along major community throughfare corridors that serve the City as well as neighboring communities, with building heights from 1 to 5 stories. This land use also includes all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: C-1, C-2, C-3, R-3, R-4, PUD, PLI

#### Policies:

1. Control collector and arterial street access by limiting the number of vehicle access points and ensuring adequate spacing between vehicle access points. Promote cross-access between individual developments, as this will help avoid future congestion and traffic safety problems.
2. Promote the use of high-quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas, and building foundations, and require parking lots to be heavily landscaped.
3. Require high quality signage that is not excessive in height or total square footage.
4. Incorporate amenities such as benches, fountains, canopy shade trees, and public art wherever possible.
5. Design buildings and sites oriented toward pedestrians and not automobiles, locate parking in the rear or side of the building where possible.
6. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with the area: façade articulation, generous windows, defined customer entryways, screened outdoor storage, and exterior building materials such as vinyl siding, brick, decorative block, stone, or other related materials.
7. Include facilities for bicyclists (bike storage racks, bike paths, etc.) in all development designs and reduce minimum automobile parking requirements.
8. Encourage minimal front setbacks, design buildings for pedestrians and not automobiles with building entrances facing the street, and locate parking in the rear of the building or on streets.
9. Require higher density multi-family developments (greater than 4 units per building) to provide on-site open space areas that serve the needs of the project's residents, in addition to public park land requirements applicable to all residential development.





**Avenue Mixed Use  
(Smaller Scale Formats)**

#### Future Conditions

- Avenue Mixed Use will change incrementally over time via infill and redevelopment along existing community corridors. Urban Mixed Use will accommodate new growth over time and could also include some infill and redevelopment along existing community corridors.
- In combination, these changes within both future land use categories will include a reduction in pavement and parking, closer orientation to the street, multi-modal transportation connectivity, high-quality exterior building design, and a mixing of uses on the same site.
- This will be accomplished with Zoning Ordinance changes to bulk dimensional standards, land uses, and building configurations, in addition to proactive revitalization efforts in underutilized areas of the community.

#### Existing Conditions

- Traditional Corridors (Pre-1960s): These corridors are typically located within or near Traditional Neighborhoods that feature a variety of land use types serving local residents with daily shopping and service needs. They are connected via a grid or semi-grid street network that accommodates visitors and residents via automobile, bicycle, walking, or transit.
- Suburban Corridors (Post-1960s): These corridors are typically all the same type of land use and have a very similar appearance throughout. They feature auto-oriented uses, roads, and driveways with larger setbacks from the street and parking between the roadway and building. They normally lack connectivity and walkability.



**Urban Mixed Use  
(Large-Scale Formats)**

### **Downtown Mixed Use**

Description: Pedestrian-oriented mix of retail, service, office, mixed use, and residential uses and pattern of development typical of a traditional downtown as it relates to placement, scale, and form of buildings, with a minimum building height of 2 stories. This land use also includes accessory indoor industrial or manufacturing uses such as maker spaces and production of products sold on-site, in addition to all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: CBD, PUD, PLI

#### **Policies:**

1. Continue to implement the Downtown Plan and consider updating the plan prior to the next update of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
2. Promote downtown as a unique commercial, civic, and social center designed to create a pleasant, safe, walkable experience at street level.
3. Work with property owners and businesses to preserve, renovate, and modernize existing structures and sites.
4. Foster active first floors throughout downtown that establish connections between indoor and outdoor spaces, especially within the public realm.
5. Support the expansion, retention, and upgrading of specialty retail, restaurants, entertainment, healthcare, financial services, offices, neighborhood retail and services, recreational, multi-family, and community uses.
6. Require that all projects submit and have approved detailed building elevations and site plans, showing the proposed locations of the building(s), parking, storage, loading, signage, landscaping, and lighting prior to development approval.
7. Promote truly mixed-use development with residential above the first floor and design oriented to pedestrians and not automobiles, including high-quality transit services and connections downtown.
8. Expand pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and intersection safety within downtown and adjacent areas.
9. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with the area: engaging façade design, generous windows, defined customer entryways, and exterior building materials such as brick, decorative block, stone, or other related materials.
10. Protect historic structures and sites through the development of defined design requirements within the Zoning Ordinance that reflect the character, scale, orientation, and unique architectural elements of these structures. Require new development, expansions, and exterior renovations comply with all architectural review and design guidelines.
11. Conduct a parking analysis that includes improved parking management strategies for the downtown area.

### **Business Park**

Description: A carefully controlled mix of commercial and general and light industrial uses on public sewer, public water, and other urban services and infrastructure. Business Park areas should function as a well-planned urban growth, with expansions considered as part of a Detailed Area Plan. This land use also includes all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: M-1, M-2, C-1, C-3, PLI, PUD

#### **Policies:**

1. Proactively market these areas for light, indoor manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, distribution, and office-related development.
2. Promote active live-work environments through the inclusion of accessible multi-modal transportation connections to the rest of the community including walking, bicycling, and transit.
3. Require that all proposed projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, and signage plan prior to development approval.
4. Encourage screened outdoor storage areas, parking lots, loading areas, and mechanical equipment from public view, including roof-top and group equipment. Additionally, promote modest lighting, limited signage, and the creation of landscaped (or tree preservation) buffers where future industrial use areas abut existing or future residential areas.
5. Separate pedestrian walkways vehicular traffic and loading areas.



6. Update the Zoning Ordinance to establish defined design requirements to reflect high-quality building materials, building orientation toward the street, and avoidance of long, unarticulated facades.
7. Explore opportunities within these areas to incorporate renewable energy production either integrated within new development or potentially as a standalone use in areas unsuitable for new commercial and industrial development.

#### **General Industrial**

Description: Indoor manufacturing, warehousing, personal storage facilities, and distribution activities including accessory uses such as offices and outdoor storage. Uses in this category include large scale and/or intensive manufacturing, possibly with significant outdoor processing or storage, warehousing, distribution, office, and associated accessory uses. This land use also includes all institutional land uses and parks further described below.

Compatible Zoning Districts: M-1, M-2, PLI, PUD

Policies:

1. Require that all proposed industrial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, and signage plan prior to development approval.
2. Screen parking lots, loading areas, outdoor storage areas, and mechanical equipment (i.e., air conditioners, ventilation equipment, etc.) from public view, including roof-top and ground equipment.
3. Separate pedestrian walkways, vehicular traffic and loading areas.
4. Market these areas for employment generating manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses with compatible office uses.
5. Update the Zoning Ordinance to establish defined design requirements similar to the Business Park land use category above.

#### **Heavy Industrial and Extraction**

Description: Most intensive industrial, outdoor storage activities, disposal, quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, peat extraction, and related uses, often associated with high intensity operations, traffic, and potential impacts to surrounding land uses. This also includes other land uses which may have high potential impacts to surrounding uses such as adult entertainment and related uses.

Compatible Zoning Districts: None

Policies:

1. Consider the establishment of new Zoning Districts to accommodate and provide zoning regulations for heavy industrial, extraction, or similar high-intensity land uses to give the City the needed regulatory power outside of the Conditional Use Permit process.

#### **Institutional/Community Services**

Description: Public or public-related land uses and buildings such as schools, cemeteries, places of worship, public buildings, public or private non-profit service providers, community centers, assisted living or continuum of care facilities, and public utilities. These uses may be conducive to transition from less intense uses to other, more intense land uses within the same neighborhood.

Compatible Zoning Districts: PLI, PUD

Policies:

1. Integrate institutional facilities into new neighborhoods and residential areas and provide an adequate distribution of institutional facilities throughout the City. Require site plan review and high-quality site design, building design, landscaping, lighting, and signage for all institutional uses.
2. Ensure that land use decisions and future growth are consistent with the recommendations in the Community Facilities Chapter of this plan.
3. Consider reserving future sites for public facilities by identifying these areas on an Official Map.
4. Amend this plan as necessary to accommodate future utility and community facility locations.

5. Continue to work with Beloit College and Beloit area schools to coordinate uses and activities on college- and school-owned land.
6. Update the Zoning Ordinance to address unique attributes for these types of land uses such as building design, traffic and drop-off/pick-up, outdoor lighting and activities, buffering from other land uses, and multi-modal transportation connections.
7. Assisted living or continuum of care facilities shall integrate context sensitive design principles in relationship to density and intensity within existing Established Neighborhoods, Planned Neighborhoods, or mixed-use land use categories.

### Parks and Open Space

Description: Existing or planned park and open space facilities devoted to active or passive recreational uses such as playgrounds, play fields, play courts, park shelters, picnic areas, open space, golf courses, and recreation trails.

Compatible Zoning Districts: PLI

Policies:

1. Ensure all residents are within adequate walking distances of a park or recreational amenity, as described in the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan. Continue to implement the recommendations of the City's Open Space and Recreation Plan and update the plan every 5 years to remain eligible for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grants.
2. Design future neighborhoods around and with prioritized pedestrian access to environmental corridors and parks without negatively affecting the environmental health of these areas.
3. Improve continuity and quality of bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, parks, and schools.
4. Leverage these land uses to further connect and enhance natural features with recreation and education opportunities.
5. Consider creating a Parks and Recreation Zoning District to address the different site attributes of passive versus active recreation and multi-modal transportation connections.

### Environmental Corridors

Description: Generally continuous open space systems based on lands that have sensitive natural resources and limitations for development. This category includes Wisconsin DNR identified wetlands subject to existing State-mandated zoning, FEMA designated floodplains and floodways, waterway and drainageway buffers, and slopes of 20 percent or greater. Areas of environmental sensitivity, stormwater management, habitat preservation, natural open space, and surface water to be preserved from most human disturbance. These areas may include passive recreation amenities such as paved or unpaved trails.

Compatible Zoning Districts: PLI and Environmental Overlays

Policies:

1. In general, prohibit new development in mapped environmental corridor areas. If development is proposed in areas where environmental corridors have been mapped, require developers or landowners to determine the exact boundaries of the environmental corridor based on the shoreland, wetland, floodplain, or other natural feature(s) that comprise the corridor.
2. Continue to allow existing agricultural uses (cropping, grazing, or other preexisting agricultural uses) and passive recreation within environmental corridors, subject to the ongoing use of water quality and stormwater best practices.
3. Preserve, protect, and enhance open spaces and conservancy areas along the Rock River, Turtle Creek, and Springbrook Creek.
4. Consider undertaking projects and management activities to restore native landscapes and protect watersheds.
5. Promote public acquisition or conservation easements where the land is not presently publicly owned.



<b>Right-of-Way</b>
Description: Areas reserved for public infrastructure and uses such as transportation facilities, utilities, and green infrastructure.
Compatible Zoning Districts: All Zoning Districts
Policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider reserving future sites for public facilities by identifying these areas on an Official Map.</li> <li>2. Continue to adapt the City's Subdivision Ordinance to promote smaller street widths where practical, off-street trails, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks.</li> </ol>

<b>Sewer Service Areas</b>
Description: Lands located within the City of Beloit's designated Sewer Service Area by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources due to the location's ability to be served by public sewer and water infrastructure provided by the City.
Compatible Zoning Districts: All Zoning Districts
Policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider amendments to the Sewer Service Area only when they are consistent with the City of Beloit's 2030 Water Quality Management Plan and approved by the Rock County Health Department, and Wisconsin DNR.</li> </ol>

# SMART GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Smart Growth Areas are defined by the State of Wisconsin as areas that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state, and utility services, where practical, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which will have relatively low municipal, State governmental, and utility costs.

In Beloit, Smart Growth Areas include sites and areas within the City that present unique opportunities for redevelopment and areas around the periphery of the City that are logical and efficient new development areas. As each area's development patterns transform over time, special focus should be placed on design that encourages the ability to facilitate connections via walking, bicycling, and transit over auto-oriented design and exclusively auto-oriented land uses. These include the following:

## Downtown

The City's historic downtown is a tremendous asset to the community. The City of Beloit Downtown Redevelopment Plan was prepared in 2008 and its continued implementation has been a major success. The plan analyzed key regional assets and provides recommendations for future land uses and forms in the downtown, focusing on redeveloping underutilized parcels, maximizing pedestrian connections and opportunities, redesigning intersections and public areas, and connecting sections of the downtown together. The downtown currently contains a mix of residential, office, service, commercial, financial, entertainment, and institutional uses in traditional "downtown" style buildings. In order to ensure that this central community gathering place is maintained and improved as a vibrant, walkable place to shop, gather, and visit, it is recommended that the City update its Downtown Redevelopment Plan during the planning period.

## Community Corridors

There are multiple key community corridors throughout Beloit that present infill and redevelopment opportunities over the planning period. This can be accomplished most effectively and efficiently through detailed corridor revitalization plans. This type of planning effort goes beyond the capabilities of the Comprehensive Plan to detail and inventory existing sites, area specific data, gather neighborhood and property owner input, establish defined revitalization strategies, develop site concepts, and provide an implementation action plan with funding strategies. Additionally, one of the key aspects of a corridor revitalization plan is relationship building with key property owners, businesses, and residents which leads to a greater understanding of where the City could focus its limited resources and time to begin the transformation of the area.

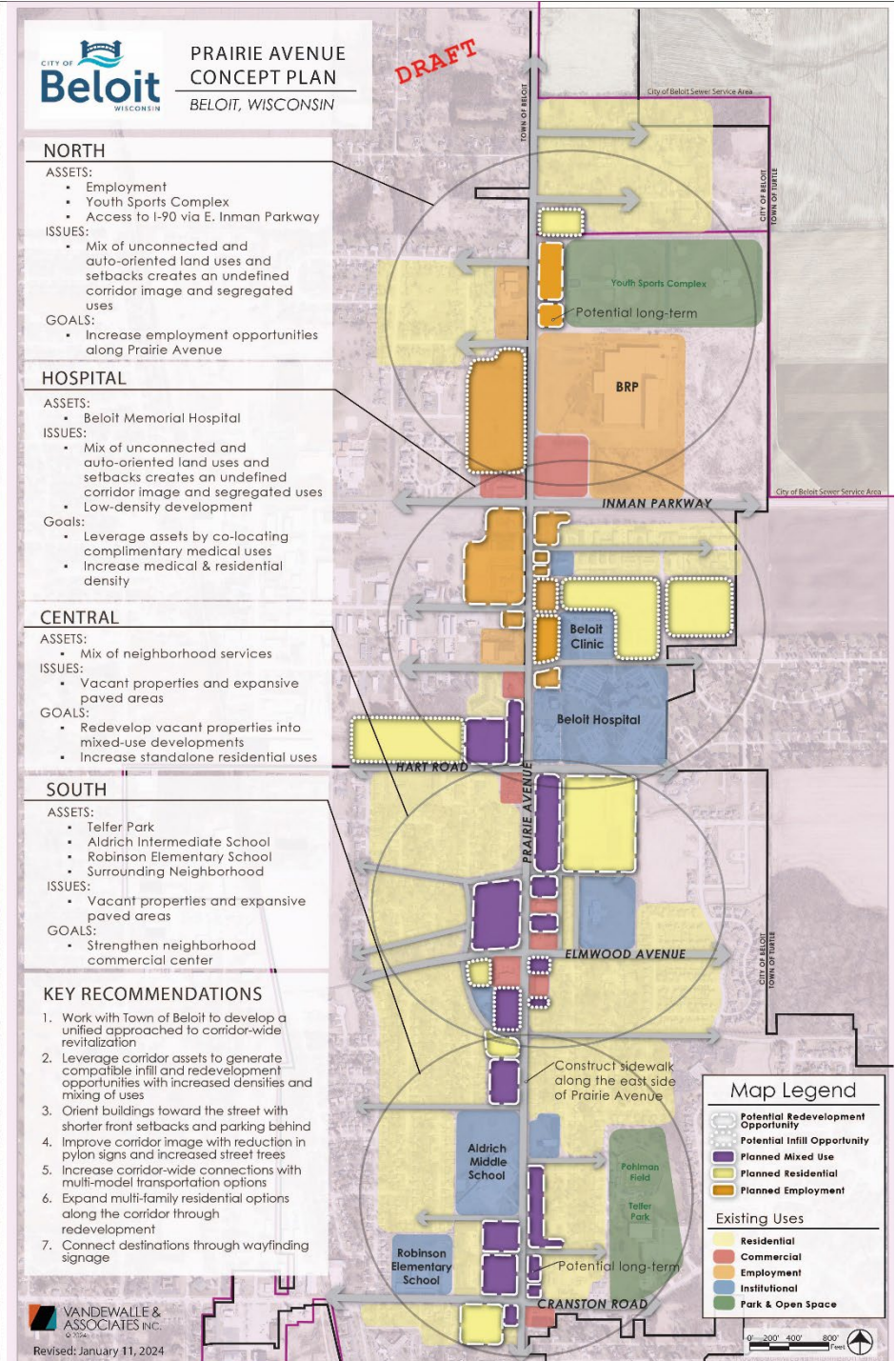
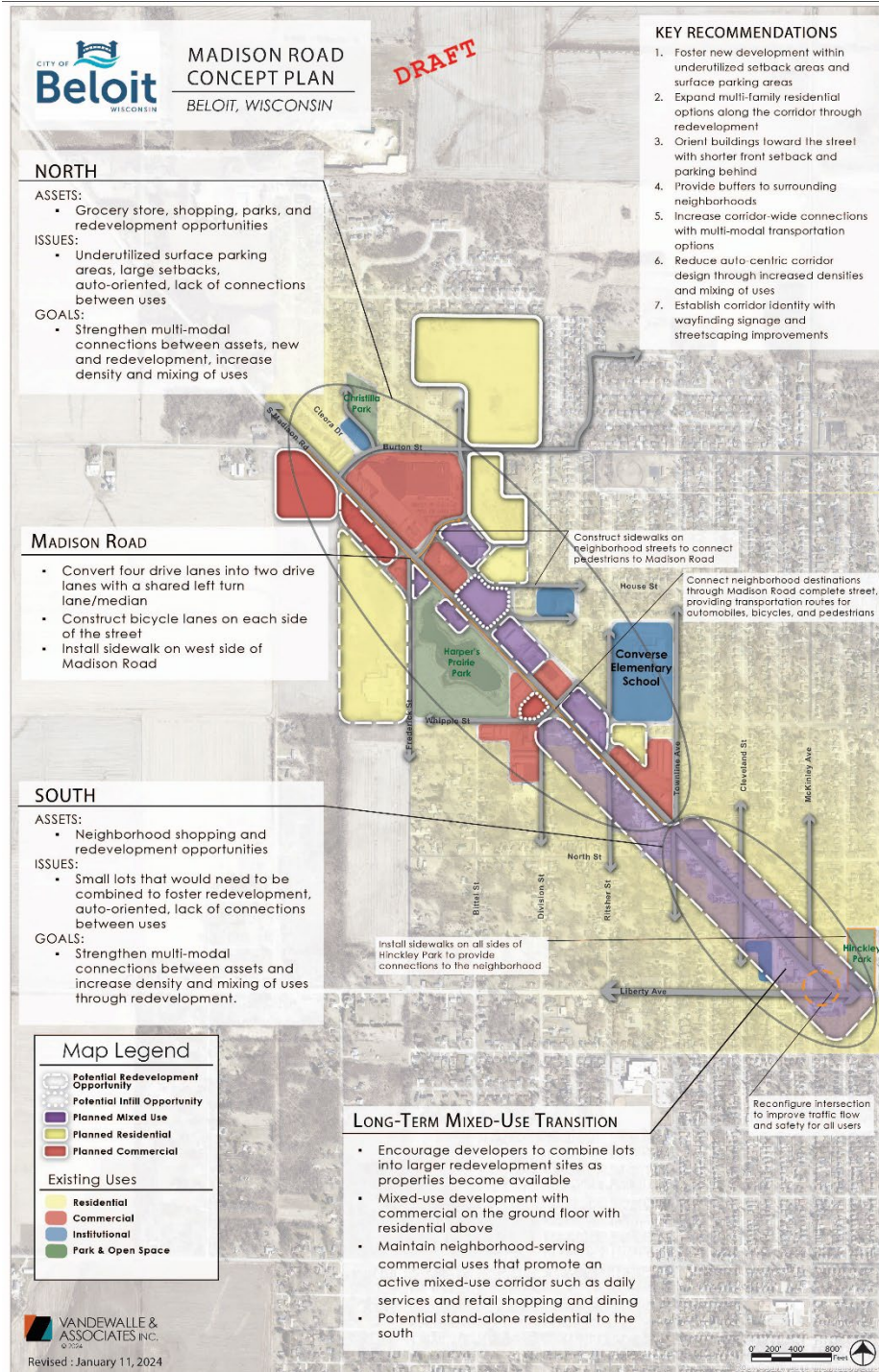
As part of this Comprehensive Plan, the building blocks of two corridor revitalization plans were developed for Madison Road and Prairie Avenue (see below). The graphics below provide key recommendations and site opportunities for the City to capitalize on underutilized lands already within its boundaries and served by public utilities and infrastructure. Each aims to support greater walkability and bikeability, limit additional land needed to support more residents and businesses, and create more vibrant, urban spaces. It is recommended that the City build on these recommendations to develop detailed corridor revitalization plans across each area and other corridors over the planning period, including the potential creation of new Tax Increment Financing Districts to help support revitalization of each.

**Madison Road and Prairie Avenue Corridor Graphics.** Each corridor graphic illustrates specific recommendations related to land use transformation, reorientation of development patterns, transportation improvements, and aesthetic upgrades. They are not intended to supplement the Future Land Use Map or the land use-specific recommendations and policies above, but instead work in conjunction with them. The graphics are depictions of geographically-specific revitalization issues, opportunities, and recommendations.

As shown below, commercial uses generally depict areas that are existing standalone commercial (retail, office, service, etc.) today or provide a future opportunity for those types of uses long-term. Residential includes a combination of existing standalone residential development patterns (single-family, two-family, multi-family, etc.) and opportunity areas where additional residential development could be accommodated in the future. Employment includes both existing and future opportunity areas for additional industrial, medical, office, or complimentary uses which are oriented toward concentrations of people coming to the property for work, but aren't necessarily as customer-facing as other commercial uses. Institutional includes mostly existing churches, schools, medical providers, and other civic-oriented uses, while parks and open space depict mostly those existing facilities and sites owned by the City of Beloit. Finally, mixed use can include a combination of commercial, residential, institutional, and employment on the same property or within the same building. To achieve greater density, concentrations of complimentary uses, and maximize underutilized properties, multiple land uses can and should occur on the same site or within the same building throughout each corridor. However, as incremental change occurs and individual projects are evaluated, standalone uses may be suitable in these areas if they meet the land policies above, local ordinances, and further accomplish the key recommendations as listed on each graphic. For example, standalone residential in mixed density formats may be well-suited as an infill or redevelopment on a particular site shown as Mixed Use below.









### **Willowbrook Road Corridor**

The Willowbrook Road Corridor, located west of I-90 from Stateline Road to Milwaukee Road, currently features a mix of commercial and industrial uses and serves as a minor arterial road to commercial areas along Milwaukee Road and interstate access in South Beloit. The City of Beloit will receive \$13.4 million in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) Grant program for the reconstruction of Willowbrook Road from Milwaukee Road to the state line, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. This project encompasses the construction of a new bridge, an upgraded rail crossing, the reconstruction of Colley Road to Gateway Boulevard with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Milwaukee and Willowbrook Roads, and various intersection improvements in the vicinity. The anticipated start of construction is late 2025. The Ho-Chunk Nation will provide the required local match for the remaining portion of the project. The road improvements are essential due to the anticipated traffic impacts of the future casino, which is expected to serve as a catalytic development, promoting further development along the Willowbrook Road Corridor.

### **Pleasant Street Corridor**

The Pleasant Street Corridor, stretching along the Rock River from St. Paul Avenue to the Portland Avenue Bridge at White Avenue, is set for revitalization aimed at enhancing connectivity between downtown, Beloit College, and the riverfront. There is potential to create a vibrant, pedestrian-focused corridor that fosters community interaction and supports diverse transportation needs. This revitalization effort will explore incorporating a mix of uses to better leverage the corridor's access to the Rock River, ultimately transforming it into a dynamic, multi-functional space that enriches both the local economy and the community's quality of life.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization Plans**

Utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the City of Beloit developed a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan for the Hackett Neighborhood (Census Tract 16) and Merrill Neighborhood (Census Tract 18). Each neighborhood is located on the near east and west sides of the Rock River in the central portion of the City. This plan identifies detailed area demographics and community profiles, fostered discussion and input from residents and stakeholders, and develops strategies to address key issues and opportunities. Since its adoption in 2020, the City and its partners have actively worked to implement the plans and action steps, which will include a full update in 2024. This plan is a key example of what could be done in other neighborhoods throughout Beloit as described further below.

For many decades, the east side of Beloit has experienced substantially more development than the west side. This underinvestment from the private market has been compounded by recent closures of several schools on the west side in 2023. In combination, this creates the need for more detailed planning efforts and City investment to focus revitalization efforts within the west side neighborhoods. This can be accomplished through neighborhood revitalization plans that integrate the goals, policies, and strategies of this plan within defined areas. Because each neighborhood is unique, a customized approach and plan will be needed. This can be done through the establishment of neighborhood associations that can assist in leading these efforts. Neighborhood associations create a sense of ownership in the plan to truly foster dynamic change by getting residents involved from start to finish. They can also assist directly in the implementation of the plans through volunteerism, community gatherings, and fundraising. Several other Wisconsin communities that have utilized this

### **Upzoning and Affordability**

The term upzoning refers to changing zoning requirements for a given property that provides greater opportunity to utilize the site, whether that's reduced setbacks, increased density, or additional land uses permitted within the district. In recent years, several studies have been conducted analyzing the impacts of housing affordability following large-scale upzoning policies being implemented by communities throughout the United States. The studies have concluded that broadly applied upzoning that allows more compact and dense housing types in multi-modal accessible neighborhoods, with complimentary policies such as reductions in parking minimums, can increase housing supply, drive down prices, and increase overall affordability.

*Source: Supply Skepticism Revisited, NYU Law and Economic Research Paper Forthcoming, November 2023.*

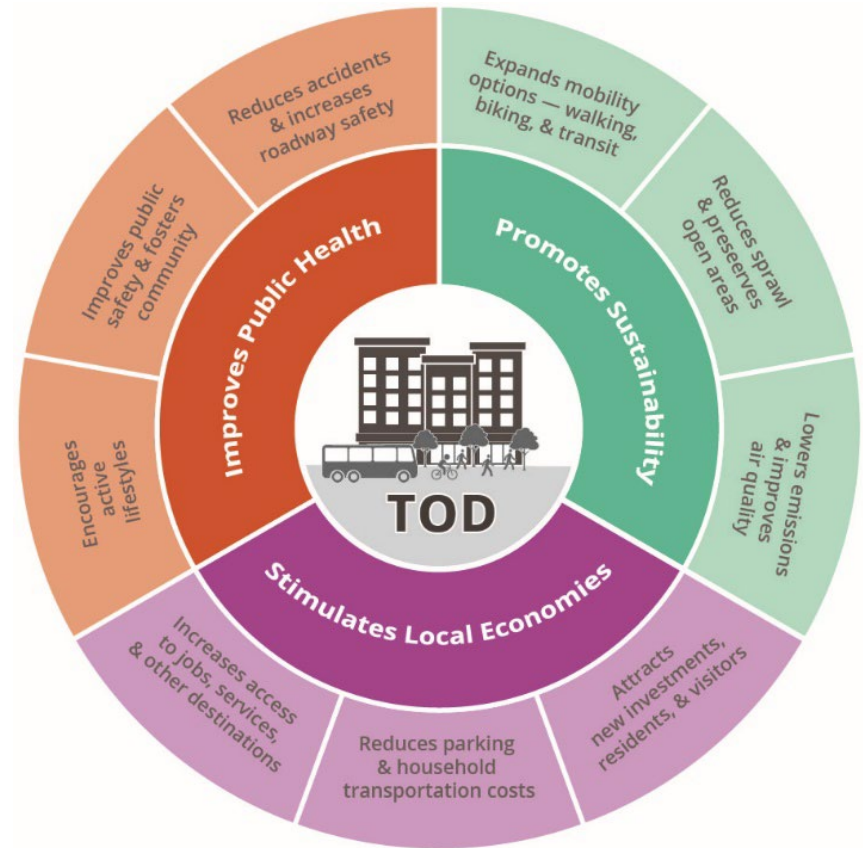
approach and found it successful include the City of Eau Claire, West Allis, Janesville, and Madison. It is recommended that Beloit continues to pursue neighborhood revitalization planning, starting on the west side of the community, over the planning period to identify opportunities for infill development that can serve as a catalyst for future development and promote the overarching goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Gateway Business Park

The Gateway Business Park is located near the Wisconsin-Illinois border and takes full advantage of Beloit's locational assets. Located east of I-90 and south of I-43, it is highly visible and provides both interstate and rail access. Beloit has experienced sustained employment growth in this area over the past two decades and an expansion of the Business Park will be needed over the planning period to continue this success. This will require coordination and planning, in addition to public investment. As part of this effort, a new Tax Incremental Financing District was established in 2023. Working with The Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, the City should continue to pursue the build out and expansion of new development sites as part of its overall economic growth strategy. This is further detailed in the Economic Development Chapter of this plan.

### Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Many of the recommendations above for specific geographical areas also have transit accessibility making them key opportunity areas in promoting and fostering increased transit-oriented development. The bus system and its routes throughout Beloit, as further described in the Transportation Chapter, traverse many of the community corridors throughout the City. Transit-oriented development is the principle of creating compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around transit systems. By increasing density, activity, and housing around transit stops, it provides the opportunity to leverage proximity, accessibility, and availability of alternative forms of transportation, other than the personal automobile. Typically, this includes areas within immediate walking distance and pedestrian connections to and from transit stops (1/4 mile). During any of the planning activities listed above (Corridor Plans, Revitalization Plans, Downtown Plans, or Neighborhood Plans), special consideration and attention should be given to areas along transit routes and how to best leverage that opportunity to further the goals, policies, and strategies of this plan. Additionally, within the recommended Zoning Ordinance rewrite, transit-oriented development should be considered as either a new zoning district, overlay district, or the principles be applied to standard zoning districts in and around these key locations.



Source: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, Transit-Oriented Development Zoning Study



## Growth Areas Beyond the City's Boundary

While the City's focus is on infill and redevelopment within its existing boundaries, the City will also need to consider growth beyond its boundaries to accommodate anticipated demand. Beloit can grow in the most efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable way by requiring detailed planning efforts and working with developers to promote mixed density formats, provide neighborhood-serving commercial development, integrate multi-modal transportation components, incorporate park and open space features, and deliver efficient public services and utilities.

**East Side Growth Area.** The City's east side holds numerous opportunities for future growth including the east and west sides of I-90 and the north and south sides of I-43. As mentioned above, the build out and eventual expansion of the Gateway Business Park is planned south of I-43 and east of I-90. Beyond that, there are two other key growth areas including directly northeast of the I-90/I-43 interchange and near the I-90/Shopiere Road interchange. Both will require the extension of utilities and infrastructure which may limit the development potential in the near term. However, with strategic long-term planning and investment, each holds the potential to accommodate future residential, mixed-use, commercial, and employment growth due to its location, accessibility, and nearby amenities. However, special attention should be given to future growth patterns in this area to ensure compatibility between higher intensity uses and planned residential neighborhoods.

**West Side Growth Area.** On the City's west side, there are several large tracts of undeveloped land already within the City of Beloit's municipal boundaries. However, there are topography, bedrock, and limestone constraints that present challenges that need to be overcome for new developments to occur in this area. The constraints will make it more challenging for this area to develop within the planning period, however alternative building formats could present future development opportunities. One solution could include slab on grade construction which does not require a basement. While this isn't the typical approach to single or two-family developments in Wisconsin, it could be utilized for all residential development types in a unique format. Additionally, by creating density in this area it can further help offset the costs of grading activities, bedrock removal, or bringing in additional grade and fill to resolve the existing issues. Development density spreads the cost of this work over a greater number of units, which in turn can make the development more financially viable for a developer.

**Planned Neighborhoods.** Planned Neighborhoods are shown on Map 5a, 5b, and 5c. The location and extent of these areas correlates with the boundary of land that can logically be served by current and planned sanitary sewer facilities. It is recommended that each incorporate and integrate Traditional Neighborhood Design Principles (see Chapter 7). The way to ensure this occurs is through the development of detailed neighborhood plans for these areas in association with

## Neighborhood Plans—A Recommended Process:

**Analysis:** A wide variety of site-specific information must be collected about both existing and emerging conditions:

- A. Establish and confirm the full neighborhood design process.
- B. Collect existing map and plan data for the area and its surroundings.
- C. Evaluate the existing and emerging real estate market.
- D. Employ meaningful public participation to help identify opportunities and constraints, and to help create a vision for the area.
- E. Conduct property owner, agency, and stakeholder interviews.

**Plan:** Based on the results of the Analysis phase, adopt a Detailed Neighborhood Plan:

- A. Refine and confirm the neighborhood vision.
- B. Draft and confirm a Preliminary Concept Plan.
- C. Produce and confirm one or more Alternative Neighborhood Plans for presentation and review by the public, stakeholders, agencies, and the committee.
- D. Produce and confirm a Draft Detailed Neighborhood Plan based on the responses to the Alternative Neighborhood Plans.
- E. Refine and adopt the Detailed Neighborhood Plan, and ultimately integrate it into the Comprehensive Plan as an amendment.

**Implementation:** Following Plan adoption, establish and apply the appropriate regulatory and procedural foundation to ensure full implementation:

- A. Facilitate developments consistent with the Plan.
- B. Require compliance with the Plan as a condition of annexation.
- C. Establish zoning districts and boundaries in compliance with the Plan.
- D. Review proposed land divisions, conditional use permits, and planned developments based on conformance with the Plan.

new annexations or proposed new developments. Planned Neighborhoods are shown in both the east and west side growth areas. The call out box is the recommended process for establishing new neighborhood plans.

### **Foster Revitalization and Redevelopment In Strategic Locations**

In each of the identified Smart Growth areas above, this plan recommends the revitalization and redevelopment of underutilized properties and areas to improve the tax base, foster diverse employment and housing opportunities, enhance community appearance, and boost sustainability efforts. Revitalization efforts should be considered where there is an opportunity to redevelop lands to a greater density and intensity of use and to provide a broader mix of uses that takes advantage of locational amenities, location efficiency, and access. Redevelopment is inherently more environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible than new development, as it utilizes existing utilities, infrastructure, and services.

Overall, revitalization typically does not occur by itself. Instead, careful planning, site assessment, public-private partnerships, property acquisition, redevelopment incentives, and persistence over many years is required. The process often begins with conducting a detailed planning process to develop specific implementation action items. Typical components of a Revitalization or Redevelopment Plan include:

- A public participation process that involves stakeholders, property and business owners, and the public.
- Establishment of a future vision for the site, area, or corridor that guides what it looks and feels like, its role in the community, and amenities desired.
- Evaluating the planning area's existing conditions, challenges, and assets.
- Conducting an economic opportunities analysis to focus on the location, amenities, and business mix, as well as the assessment of the regional factors such as economics, transportation patterns, and intergovernmental relationships.
- Identifying goals, objectives, and priorities for the area through cooperative efforts with residents, property owners and other key stakeholders.
- Conducting a market assessment for key sites to determine the role of the site within the marketplace, provide demographic trade area information to assist in the solicitation of potential developers or site users, and identify the range of specific issues and challenges to site redevelopment.
- Identification of constraints to future revitalization in the area and methods for addressing and overcoming those hurdles moving forward.
- Preparing a redevelopment strategy and district concept plan map that identifies the highest and best land uses, site characteristics, design approaches, and implementation strategies for the planning area, with particular attention to priority sites.
- Research and documenting of potential funding sources and collaboration entities.
- Aggressively pursuing implementation through techniques such as adoption of a statutory redevelopment plan; establishment of a redevelopment tax increment financing district; possible brownfield remediation; possible site acquisition, consolidation, and demolition; and developer recruitment.







## 6. TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES





# CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The ease of access to different types of safe, convenient, and effective transportation options within a community is a key component of growth because it facilitates the flow of goods, services, and people to and from neighborhoods and areas of activity. Similarly, the resiliency and capacity of a community’s utilities and community facilities is an important tool for economic growth and increasing the quality of life for residents. This chapter provides the goals and policies related to transportation, utilities, and community facilities. It also details a set of key strategies to help advance or achieve them. Background information, data, and existing plans related to these topics can be found in [Appendix A](#). Also, see Maps 6 and 7 in [Appendix C](#).

## GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>Provide a Safe Transportation System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and maintain a safe, efficient, and interconnected multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of all users, prioritizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities and users, promotes public health, and decreases reliance on the automobile.</li> <li>• Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian planning in the City with other entities to expand the trail system and promote connections to other municipal, county, and state trails.</li> <li>• Improve ADA accessibility across the entire transportation network during future infrastructure projects, including crosswalks, sidewalks, trails, and bus stops.</li> <li>• Require new subdivisions to provide multiple vehicular access points whenever possible, and discourage the construction of cul-de-sacs, except when extreme topography or existing development patterns necessitate their use.</li> <li>• Preserve railroad corridors for freight and potential passenger rail service or future multi-use trail corridors.</li> <li>• Require all new streets in the City to be designed to provide safety for all users.</li> <li>• Expand transit opportunities to serve future development and existing developed areas which are underserved.</li> </ul>
<b>Align Utilities, Community Facilities, and Transportation Planning with Overarching Community Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the review of development proposals, consider short and long-term utility and community facility systems planning and capacities. Prioritize infrastructure improvements and investments in current and future transit-oriented development areas.</li> <li>• Require pedestrian-oriented neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.</li> <li>• During future right-of-way upgrades and improvements, establish the most appropriate bicycle accommodation consistent with the <a href="#">FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide</a>, integrate pedestrian-scale lighting, traffic calming devices, seating, bicycle parking, public art, wayfinding signage, stormwater management features, promote the installation of all utilities underground, and incorporate canopy trees to provide shade, buffer pedestrians, and calm traffic.</li> <li>• Preserve sufficient public street right-of-way to allow for needed street updates and improvements, through subdivision review and official mapping.</li> <li>• Integrate land uses, transportation, and infrastructure planning efforts to proactive design systems that are healthy, safe, equitable, and sustainable.</li> <li>• Provide recreational facilities and design public buildings for users of all ages, demographics, and abilities.</li> <li>• Actively participate in and coordinate multi-jurisdictional transportation, utility, infrastructure, and community facility system improvements in the City’s planning area.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt City policies and ordinances to reflect the recommendations of this plan and in alignment with Vision Zero program to reduce and eliminate traffic deaths, injuries and crashes, including the subdivision ordinance and a Complete Streets policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Make Informed and Strategic Investments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to update and implement the City's five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that sets priorities for completing public infrastructure projects. Ensure future CIP planning projects are coordinated between City and County departments and are evaluated based on the equitable benefits they provide to support affected existing and future residents and businesses.</li> <li>• Promote infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization of areas to maximize the use of the City's existing infrastructure.</li> <li>• Plan for an orderly and cost-efficient extension of municipal utilities and facilities within the areas identified for future growth.</li> <li>• Plan for orderly and cost-efficient extension, construction, and reconstruction of City streets by advancing complete streets principles for all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles as appropriate. Ensure streets are right-sized to reduce construction and maintenance costs and enhance safety for all users.</li> <li>• Proactively assess and plan for expanded City services to accommodate future growth and ensure the City has the ability to capture the value associated with such growth to pay for required City service increases.</li> <li>• Facilitate the replacement of lead water service laterals in the community.</li> <li>• Continue to partner with civic and service organizations to help defray the cost and maintenance of facilities such as parks, trails, open spaces, transit stops, public art, etc.</li> <li>• Emphasize sustainability, energy-efficiency, and cost effectiveness in the delivery of public facilities and services.</li> <li>• Conduct facility space needs studies as part of any plans for new community facilities.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

- Improve multi-modal transportation accessibility, safety, and connectivity throughout the community.
- Prepare for transportation technology changes through adapting policies, information sharing, and infrastructure improvements.
  - Adopt an Official Map and a Complete Streets Policy to align transportation and land use strategies.
    - Implement existing transportation, utilities, infrastructure, and community facility plans.
    - Coordinate and cooperate with regional entities on development of bus and rail services.
      - Incorporate climate resilience and adoption into infrastructure planning.
    - Continue to work with the Beloit School District on future land use planning decisions.

## STRATEGIES

### Improve Multi-Modal Transportation Accessibility and Safety

Since the 1950s, right-of-way infrastructure has been primarily designed to accommodate vehicular travel and only secondarily accommodated the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Beloit should proactively reorient its public rights-of-way to serve users of all travel modes. This means that the design, construction, and upgrade of new and existing facilities must involve the thoughtful implementation of multi-modal transportation facilities. One way to ensure this takes place is through the creation and adoption of a Complete Streets Policy, which requires that any new roadway project incorporate multi-modal transportation elements based on best practices and performance measures provided by federal and state agencies. Specific multi-modal elements to consider and implement over the planning period include:

**Incorporate traffic-calming measures.** In locations where safety issues have been identified, incorporate traffic-calming measures that cause drivers to slow down. This can be accomplished through narrower street widths (28-32 feet), improved connectivity, on-street parking, on-street bicycle facilities, curb extensions and bump-outs, raised crosswalks, changes in pavement texture, and generous boulevards.

**Enhance intersections for all users.** Shorten crossing distances, increase visibility for all users, add street furniture, establish signalized intersections, facilitate on-street bicycle turning movements, and incorporate refuge medians in long-distance and high-volume intersections.

**Improve local and regional bicycle facilities.** Establish the most appropriate bicycle accommodation consistent with the [FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide](#) and local and regional bike plans. Bicycle routes should be well maintained and designed to be as free of possible safety and comfort impediments such as uneven pavement, abrupt curb ramps, debris and conflict points with pedestrians or motorists. Additionally, continue to prioritize projects that fill gaps in the existing network and create a well-integrated regional network.

**Prioritize sidewalks in new development and within the existing network.** Require sidewalks/pedestrian accommodations on both sides of all existing and proposed streets (may be multi-use paths on both sides or one multi-use path and one sidewalk on the opposite side). Identify and prioritize infilling existing gaps within the sidewalk network, develop and implement a City-wide Sidewalk Plan or sidewalk utility, and implement local and regional plans. Revisit facility standards and stringently evaluate infrastructure projects to ensure every detail supports safe, convenient, and enjoyable walking.

### Active Travel

Active travel, meaning walking or bicycling for transportation, is considered the most sustainable form of personal mobility. The environmental benefit is ten times greater than substituting a typical gasoline vehicle for an electric vehicle powered by renewable power. In addition, cutting down automobile use reduces other energy intensive infrastructure, energy, and supply chain impacts. Further, walking and biking are proven to improve physical and mental health and cost far less than driving. *Source: National Institutes of Health*

### League of American Bicyclists – Bicycle Friendly Community

The League of American Bicyclists annually awards communities throughout the U.S. as diamond, platinum, gold, silver, or bronze Bicycle Friendly Community. This is a program designed to recognize and award municipalities that have taken steps to actively support, encourage, and accommodate bicycling for transportation and recreation.

It is recommended that Beloit strive to become a more bicycle-friendly community through an official designation. The League of American Bicyclists applies local-level criteria and metrics through its designation process in which the City can apply in its future infrastructure projects and provide insight on gaps in the services it currently offers.



**Increase public transit options.** Public transit, such as buses, paratransit, rideshare, and others provides essential means of transportation for people without the ability, means, or desire to drive, walk, or bike. Additionally, it provides a more environmentally friendly means of transportation as compared to driving a single-occupancy vehicle. Use of transit is also associated with healthier and more active lifestyles, as people who use public transportation get significantly more daily physical activity, simply from walking between transit stops and their destinations. Increasing the number of routes, frequency, types, and options for public transit throughout the City is critical to providing truly multi-modal transportation, more equitable transportation access, and healthier lifestyles. The City should also work with transit providers and Beloit residents and employers to promote and expand ridership of public transit. Promotion and education on transit routes, fees, and schedules should be inclusive in communicating with Beloit’s diverse residents, in particular the Latino and Black communities as well as non-English speakers.

### **Prepare for Transportation Technology Changes**

As transportation technology continues to rapidly evolve, it will be important for Beloit to be prepared to accommodate changes. Over the past few years, bike-share, ride-share, and car-share have all become prevalent throughout the United States, changing the way that people interact with and use local transportation systems. Many communities are beginning to prepare for further technological changes occurring in the auto industry, such as the increasing production of electric vehicles and the potential for automated self-driving vehicles. While it is impossible to know what the exact outcomes of transportation technology changes will be, the City can continuously evolve its ordinances, procedures, and planning to accommodate these changes. This could be as simple as an ordinance change to allow car-sharing or electric car charging stations in public parking lots, or as significant and complex as redesigning public facilities and infrastructure to better accommodate self-driving vehicles, should such technology become prevalent in the future.

While we do not yet know exactly what transportation will look like in the coming years or its potential implications, there are some preliminary considerations to plan for:

- **Adapting Local Policies.** Many communities across the country are requiring the installation of electric vehicle charging stations within new development where vehicle parking occurs for long periods of time (ex. housing, employment, park, hotel land uses). Additionally, communities are working to reduce barriers related to EV chargers by allowing them throughout the community with defined standards.
- **Technology Shifts in Transit.** New transportation technology is not only impacting personal and commercial vehicles, but also the mass transit systems. This includes converting transit vehicles to electric or other carbon-alternative fuels, preparing for potential autonomous transit vehicles, and increasing the use of real-time route and transit ridership mapping platforms to improve the ridership experience. The City and Beloit Transit System can work together over the planning period to pursue these opportunities as technology advances.
- **Updating Infrastructure.** Accommodating autonomous vehicles will require significant infrastructural changes, including integrating smart infrastructure investments in future roadway projects, adapting to include off-street or on-street parking facilities for autonomous vehicle pick-up and drop-off instead of traditional parking lots and garages, and maintaining lane striping and signage on roadways in peak condition to aid in the effectiveness of autonomous vehicles in navigation. To support electric vehicles and buses, infrastructure upgrades and facilities must also be updated to facilitate charging stations in appropriate locations. A comprehensive electric vehicle charging siting analysis, as mentioned below, can assist in this effort as private and public vehicles expand their electrification.

### **Changing Preferences**

A survey published by the National Association for Realtors titled “2023 Community and Transportation Preferences Survey” explores the lifestyles preferred by many young people across the country. Overall, 79% of respondents rate walkability “very” or “somewhat” important. Young adults prioritize walkability the most, with 90% of Gen Z and millennial respondents indicating they’d pay more for a home in a walkable community.

Overall, many people’s preferences are changing when it comes to transportation. Providing increased multi-modal transportation options and connectivity will be one way to increase the retention and attraction of young people over the next 20 years.

- **Changing Revenue Sources.** Incorporating high-capacity electric vehicle charging stations within municipal parking lots could promote and accommodate ridesharing and become a new revenue source for the City. Also, over time, traffic violation revenue may decrease significantly because of overall safer roadways. It may be appropriate to intermittently budget for lower revenue totals from this source to avoid dramatic changes to local resources.
- **Technology Systems.** As many larger governing bodies increasingly integrate intelligent transportation systems (ITS), it will be important for Beloit to participate in data collection and sharing, in addition to utilizing wireless and cloud-based technologies within their own practices (smart transportation infrastructure).

One planning process that communities have utilized to prepare for these technological changes is an electric vehicle (EV) charger siting analysis. This can be done in partnership with local energy providers to determine the most appropriate locations for new stations that maximize social, environmental, and economic benefits. A market driven approach has provided the City with a few EV charger facilities as of 2023, however this infrastructure can provide greater benefits to Beloit's residents, businesses, and visitors with strategic siting and investment in key locations such as downtown, near other community destinations, or in underserved areas. It is recommended that City conduct an EV charger siting analysis and planning process within the planning period.

#### **Coordinate and Cooperate on Development of Bus and Rail Services**

The Beloit Transit System provides bus service to Beloit residents six days a week on six routes, in addition to an express bus to Janesville. Teri will provide summary of challenges to funding increased transit.

The Transit System is also considering establishing microtransit in areas of the City. There are also ongoing initiatives to coordinate and expand service with Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD) over the state line, and regional mass transit services with neighboring communities, including bus and passenger rail. It is recommended that Beloit continue to study expansions to regional bus and rail services with neighboring communities, Rock County, and State agencies to implement recommendations from regional transportation and passenger rail plans prepared by the State Line Area Transportation Study (SLATS), the federally designated MPO for the Beloit Urbanized area.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to increase ridership on existing transit routes over time through increased advertising and notification. In particular, the equitable distribution of materials in an easy to consume method and translated into multiple languages to assist minorities in navigating the system. It is recommended that the City and Beloit Transit System work together to improve community knowledge on the ways they are already served within the existing transit system. Another way to increase ridership is through land use planning and focusing efforts to create increased densities around transit stops. If the built environment enables transit to be as effective and efficient as personal automobile travel, more people have the option for utilization of transit. As detailed in the Land Use Chapter, this includes providing opportunities for transit-oriented development in key locations throughout the community.

Further, another public transit opportunity exists related to students attending the Beloit School District. An identified lack of transportation has contributed to an increase in student tardiness and absences in recent years. To address this issue, additional school routes on each side of the City could provide bus service from the City's residential neighborhoods directly to and from the school grounds. This strategy has been utilized by Beloit Transit in the past with much success, however this initiative ended several years ago when the School District implemented all yellow-bus service district wide. The City of Janesville recently entered into a contract with Janesville School District to provide additional school routes and this has contributed to improvements in student tardiness and absences.

#### **Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations**

In 2022, there were 762,000 electric vehicles sold in the United States, an increase of 65% from 2021 sales, and more than triple the number of electric vehicles sold in 2019. There are now estimated to be over 3 million electric vehicles on U.S. roads and over 130,000 public electric vehicle charging stations. Typical locations for EV charging stations include restaurants and retail stores, shopping centers, gas stations, hotels, office parks, multi-family buildings, and public parking lots. It is anticipated that sales will increase over the planning period, and it is important to plan for public locations suitable for EV charging stations, in addition to reducing barriers to installing them on private property. Some communities have even developed requirements for EV charging stations within new development or, at a minimum, installing the infrastructure during construction that will be needed to accommodate stations in the future.

*(Source: CleanTechnica and Whitehouse.gov, 2023)*



The Janesville Transit System has also realized an increase in general ridership after implementing the school routes. This strategy could also be coupled with offering different types of student passes and fare capping options that would be coordinated along with technology upgrades and cashless fare media. These would provide students and parents more flexibility with payment and planning to utilize public transportation to and from school and school events.

### **Continued Implementation of Existing Transportation, Utility, Infrastructure, and Community Facility Plan**

Beloit's bicycle and pedestrian network is described in the Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) Pedestrian and Bicycle System Plan Update (2017). Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans provide communities with strategies for continuing to improve active transportation opportunities, establishing a framework to increase walking and biking, and improve connectivity in the City. Continued implementation and future updates to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans will help the City:

- Seek routes and corridors that will expand connectivity and ultimately create a comprehensive active transportation network.
- Adopt and implement best practice facility guidelines.
- Prioritize areas of the community that are in most need of multimodal connections.
- Establish wayfinding signage along recommended routes to increase community accessibility.
- Encourage the installation of bike racks and other bicycle related facilities at businesses and in key public facilities.

Additional transportation plans have also been prepared by SLATS include the Long-Range Transportation Plan (2021), annual Transportation Improvement Program, and Beloit Transit Development Plan (2020). Each serves to improve the transportation network over time, addressing different components. They form the basis of this plan's recommended transportation improvements as shown on Map 6. Implementation and future updates to each will guide the City in:

- Creating a multi-modal transportation system that enhances mobility and access for all users, especially traditionally underserved populations, enhances quality of life, and provides well-connected and healthy neighborhoods.
- Prioritizes transportation improvements that foster regional economic development opportunities, strengthens local and regional transportation assets, improves safety, and preserves and protects the environment.
- Provides additional transit services to existing and expanding employment centers within the Town of Beloit, Gateway Business Park, and fixed routes into Illinois.
- Improves the frequency, connectivity, and simplicity of transit routes.
- Implements the recommendations of the Microtransit Study and Passenger Rail Study.
- Reduces transit service emissions, lowers maintenance costs, and improves reliability through upgrading the local fleet to hybrid buses.



The City's Open Space and Recreation Plan aims to connect and integrate public open space throughout the community to foster improved public health and quality life and advance environmental stewardship and climate resiliency. It is recommended that this plan be updated every 5 years to maintain grant-eligibility and further advance the recommendations of this plan, including:

- Enhancing network connectivity of all public spaces and natural areas
- Integrating equity into the location, design, and access of public spaces.
- Targeting investment in facilities and amenities with the highest potential impacts.
- Reinvesting in existing infrastructure through continuously evaluating and monitoring facilities and programming.
- Advance strategic initiatives that address community deficiencies such as lack of active and diverse playfield space and the lack of indoor recreational space.
- Leverage collaborative partnerships, including with the private sector and volunteer groups, to fund future programs, maintenance, and facilities.

For all existing transportation, utility, infrastructure, and community facility plans, please see [Appendix A](#). Also, see Map 6 in [Appendix C](#) for all recommended and planned bicycle, pedestrian, and roadway improvements. As shown on Map 6, planned facilities are those where allocated funding is in place and are likely to occur in the coming years, while potential facilities are those that may be funded in the future and are longer-term initiatives.

#### **Update, Adopt, and Enforce a City Official Map**

An Official Map reserves land for roadways, trails, and other public facilities. This tool offers the City the ability to show alignments of future roads, expanded right-of-way for existing roads, and other planned public facilities like trails and parks. When land development is proposed in an area of a facility shown on the adopted Official Map, the City may obtain or reserve land for that future facility through public dedication, public purchase, or reservation for future purchase. It is recommended that the City update and enforce its Official Map to plan and protect areas needed for future infrastructure development. Specifically, the Official Map should identify and prioritize areas identified on Map 6 and 7 in [Appendix C](#).

#### **Incorporate Climate Resilience and Adaption into Infrastructure Planning**

Investments in infrastructure are long term. The City's roads, drinking water, energy, stormwater, and wastewater systems will be subjected to climate conditions substantially different than those they were designed for, over most of their future service life. In many cases, these future climate conditions could significantly impact infrastructure performance, and may result in service disruptions, failures, and costly retrofits.

Identifying and developing climate change adaptation strategies will improve infrastructure planning, design, management, and operation under these future conditions. Many of these contributing strategies are incorporated throughout this plan, including increasing green infrastructure and preserving environmental corridors, prioritizing non-motorized mobility, incorporating future climate projections into utility and infrastructure planning, increasing municipal building and vehicle efficiency, EV charging stations, and renewable energy systems, and supporting efforts to weatherize older homes and structures for increased energy efficiency. It is recommended that the City utilize mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies in all future infrastructure activities and investments.



### Enhance Coordination with Beloit Areas Schools on Future Planning Decisions

The health of the City and the health of the Beloit areas schools are closely intertwined. High quality schools, at all levels of education, enhance the overall quality of life for City residents, increase positive opportunities for the City's youth, and are a large factor in workforce and economic development.

As the City continues to grow and new neighborhoods are planned, the City and area schools should plan and coordinate very intentionally to create complete, compact neighborhoods with future schools in strategic, central locations. It is recommended that the City continue to coordinate land use and development decisions with the long-range planning efforts of each school. If overall enrollment continues to decline in the Beloit School District, the district may need to reevaluate its space needs and determine the best path forward is potentially selling or redeveloping their real estate assets. If overall enrollment and expansion continues for other area schools, additional space needs planning may also be needed. The City intends to proactively identify appropriate sites for new schools or to facilitate the redevelopment of unused school property to return the land to the property tax rolls and expand the tax base, while also accomplishing the City's housing goals.

### Proactively Plan for and Implement New Utilities and Community Facilities

The City proactively plans for and implements new utilities and community facilities that promote sustainability, climate resiliency, equity, fiscal responsibility, and public health. Figure 6.1 provides an overview of existing initiatives in the City. The City should continue to plan for future upgrades to its infrastructure to maintain a high quality of life for its residents and improve the conditions of the city.

Figure 6.1. Utilities and Community Facility Initiatives

Utility or Community Facility	Timeframe	Initiatives
Water Supply	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations of the 2022 Utility Extension Study.
Sanitary Sewer	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations of the 2022 Utility Extension Study.
Stormwater Management	2024	Update the City of Beloit Stormwater Management Plan.
Police Services	Ongoing	Complete the Police Department Space Needs Study and implement the findings of the study.
Fire Protection and EMS Services	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations of the Fire Department's Strategic Plan.
Housing and Community Services	2024 Ongoing	Update the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area plans for the Hackett and Merrill Neighborhoods Implement the TIF Housing Plan.
Economic Development		Implement the TIF Housing Plan.
Library	Ongoing	Planning for the development of a new Children's Museum at the Library building (Discovery PLAYce).
Parks and Recreation	2024	Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan and continue to update it every 5 years to maintain grant-eligibility.
Childcare	Ongoing	See the Economic Development Chapter for more information.
Transportation	Ongoing	Continue to work with SLATS to plan for transportation improvements and implement existing plans such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transit Plans, Safe Streets for All, Zero Emission Transition Plan, and Capital Improvements Plans.





## 7. HOUSING







## CHAPTER 7: HOUSING

The United States is experiencing a housing shortage, which has caused home prices and rents to climb sharply at the national, state, regional, and local levels. The existing housing situation is a result of both a lack of supply (underproduction of units) and changing demands (demographic, societal, and market shifts) that have occurred over the last century, but were exacerbated with the housing market collapsed in 2008. The current housing climate has made it increasingly difficult for families to buy their first homes or to afford rent, and it has intensified the need for additional housing – particularly for quality housing options that families can afford.

Long-term housing trends demonstrate a growing shortfall in the supply of affordable housing serving working families and individuals with wages below the median household income. Additional housing diversity will be needed over the planning period to accommodate empty nesters, young professionals, and new families, and to account for the costs of housing rising much faster than household incomes. This chapter provides the goals and policies related to overcoming these challenges. It also details a set of key strategies to help advance or achieve them. Background information, data trends, and existing plans related to these topics can be found in [Appendix A](#).

### **What is Affordable Housing?**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing in which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

### **What is Low-Income Housing?**

Per HUD, low-income housing is determined by the percentage of a household's annual income related to the median household income for that area. Low-income is defined as 80% of median family income for the area and very low-income is defined as 50% of median family income for the area. If the household's annual income falls within these definitions, they are eligible for federally subsidized housing programs which are often administered at the county level. In Beloit, the Beloit Housing Authority administers the program.

*Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Glossary of Terms*

As of 2023, Very-Low Income (50% of Janesville-Beloit AMI) for a family of one person was \$30,250 and for a family of four was \$43,150. Moderate Income (80% of Janesville-Beloit AMI) for a family of one person was \$48,350 and for a family of four was \$69,050.

*Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development FY 2023 Income Limits Documentation System*

### **What is Workforce Housing?**

Workforce housing is homeownership, as well as rental housing, that can be reasonably afforded by households experiencing moderate to middle income and located in acceptable proximity to centers of employment. The most common definition of workforce housing comes from the Urban Land Institute, which defines workforce housing as: "housing that is affordable to households earning 60% to 120% of the area median income." This term may be used by some to place housing in economic development terms and to avoid misplaced stigmas of identifying something as "affordable" housing.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>Provide Housing That Meets a Diversity of Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the amount, type, and availability of affordable and workforce housing options in the community through new programming, investment, and adaptation of City ordinances.</li> <li>• Adapt zoning regulations to allow new and evolving housing opportunities by right such as accessory dwelling units, granny flats, upper story residential in mixed-use buildings, and small-scale multi-family options.</li> <li>• Partner with regional entities to continuously evaluate regional housing needs, collaborate on programming efforts, and leverage alternative funding sources in order to meet unmet housing needs.</li> <li>• Leverage the proximity to transit for new infill and redevelopment projects that fosters transit-oriented development along existing and planned transit corridors.</li> </ul>
<b>Build New Neighborhoods Using Land Use Best Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all new neighborhood subdivisions for consistency with this plan’s policies and local ordinances to ensure they are designed in accordance with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles containing a wide mix of housing formats, costs, and tenancy types in order to create well-balanced and varied neighborhoods with strong community ties.</li> <li>• Promote infill and redevelopment that includes housing to advance long-term fiscal sustainability in terms of utilities, infrastructure, and service provision.</li> <li>• Phase new residential development in a manner that is consistent with public utility and facility service capacity.</li> <li>• Conduct a park fee needs assessment and update the subdivision ordinance to include requirements that all proposed residential developments to dedicate land, or pay a fee in lieu thereof, for public park, recreation, and open space acquisition and development.</li> <li>• Require residential developers and builders to provide infrastructure improvements, including parks, utilities, streets, street trees, street lighting, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit accommodations.</li> <li>• Promote the use of water saving technology, renewable energy production, electric vehicle charging, onsite composting, and other sustainability best practices in new and existing neighborhoods.</li> </ul>
<b>Revitalize Vacant Housing and Underinvested Neighborhoods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop and fund programs that assist in the rehabilitation and maintenance of the City’s existing housing stock.</li> <li>• Collect data on neighborhoods with high levels of vacancies and develop targeted strategies to restore occupancy.</li> <li>• Develop targeted strategies to encourage more balanced levels of owner occupancy in neighborhoods with a high number of rental occupancies by fostering alternative housing ownership models throughout the community utilizing land trusts, shared housing, and housing cooperatives to create affordable housing options that allow renters to build equity and create pathways to ownership.</li> <li>• Utilize strategic investment in property, infrastructure, or community facilities to leverage as a catalytic development to assist in revitalization of key corridors and neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Ensure City neighborhoods are served by a full range of urban services and close to key destinations for residents.</li> <li>• Continue the City’s code enforcement policy with consequences for continued violations.</li> <li>• Establish a vacant property registry and evaluate the creation of a new rental registration and inspection ordinance.</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 7: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

- Provide a wider mix of housing types, sizes, and costs throughout the city.
  - Develop a city-wide housing approach.
- Advance initiatives to address the city's unhoused population.
  - Promote traditional neighborhood design principles.
  - Take steps toward improving the existing housing stock.
- Leverage programs, tools, and resources to increase the amount of attainable housing units.

### ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN SCENARIO PLANNING

Addressing housing availability and affordability are core components to the City of Beloit's long-term goals. However, it can be difficult to understand how policies translate to the built environment. To better illustrate policies in action, a set of scenario plans were prepared. The objective of this exercise was to analyze the impacts of various long-term growth policies to help make informed decisions today and in the future, in addition to communicating and educating the community on the impacts of these decisions.

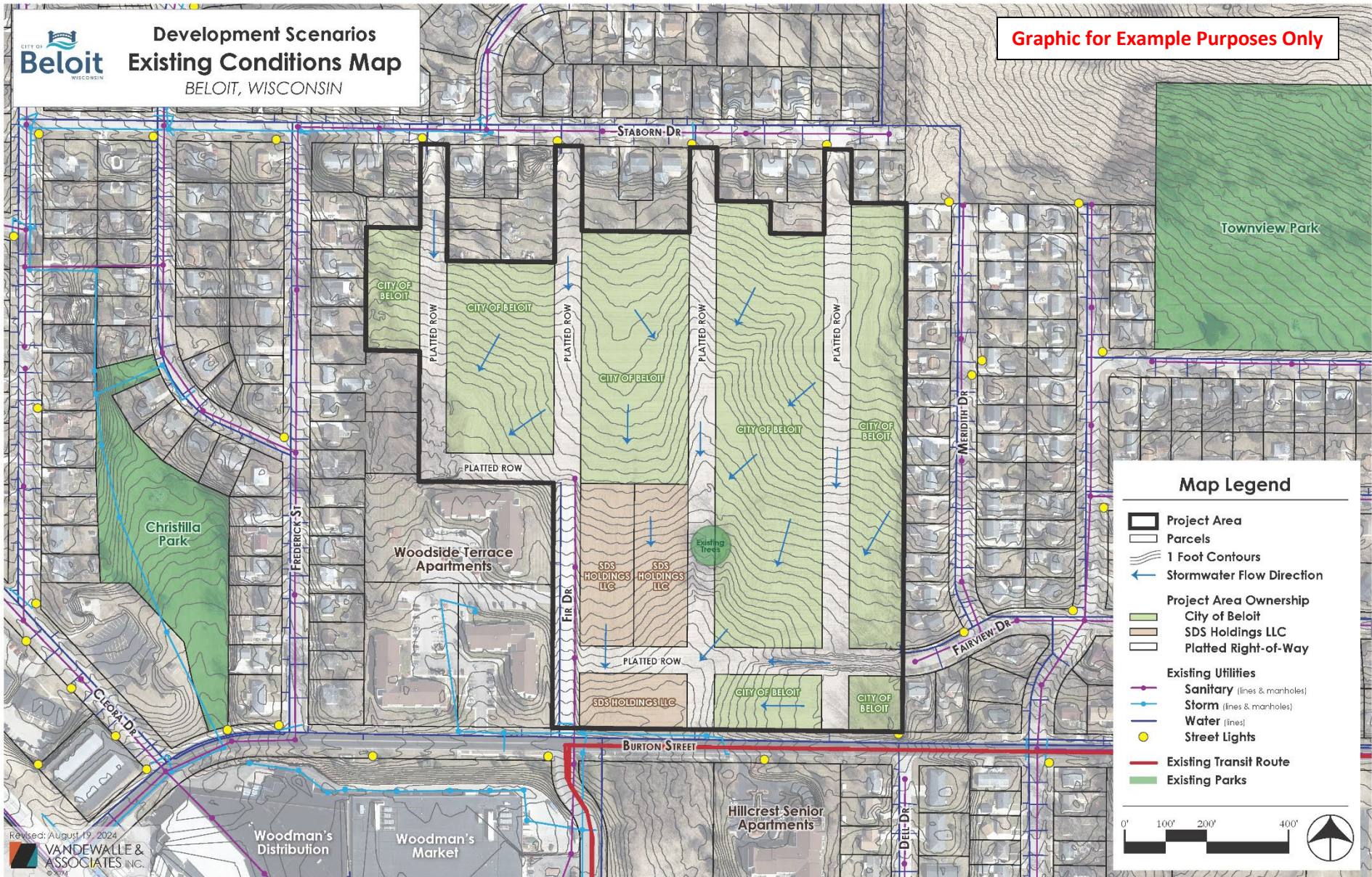
**The example scenarios below are not representative of the exact future build out of the site. Instead, they are intended to be representative of different ideas based in the realistic context of an infill development site.**

The scenario plans are based on an existing 30-acre infill development property on the far northwest side of Beloit. The property was platted many years ago as part of a larger residential subdivision development and consists of seven City-owned properties, platted (but not constructed) right-of-way, and three small privately-owned properties with existing development on all sides. This property was selected because of the many opportunities it presents:

- Large vacant property that is a prime candidate for infill development within an existing neighborhood.
- It is served by existing utilities and infrastructure on all sides, which reduces the cost of extending critical infrastructure to the site.
- A mix of housing types, formats, occupancies, and price points surround the site, including single-family, two-family, senior, and multi-family residential.
- The area is within close proximity to parks, shopping centers, transit, and schools.

This exercise is intended to illustrate how different densities, designs, and residential unit types and configurations could be applied to the property. It also serves as an example of how various other infill, redevelopment, or new development opportunities could be built out in the future. The alternative growth scenarios developed include Low, Medium, High, and Mixed Density options to compare and contrast.







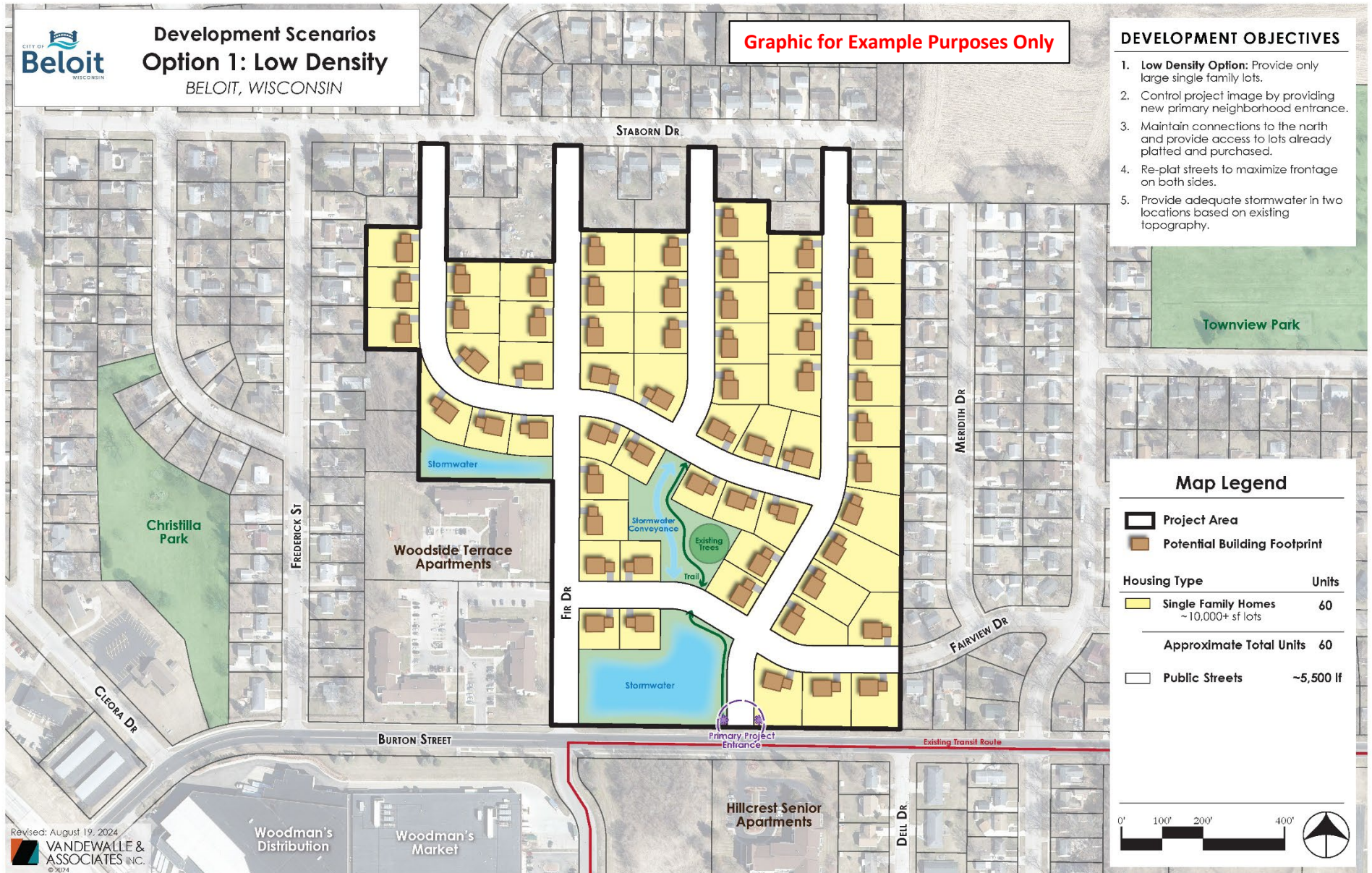


## Development Scenarios Option 1: Low Density BELOIT, WISCONSIN

Graphic for Example Purposes Only

### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. **Low Density Option:** Provide only large single family lots.
2. Control project image by providing new primary neighborhood entrance.
3. Maintain connections to the north and provide access to lots already platted and purchased.
4. Re-plat streets to maximize frontage on both sides.
5. Provide adequate stormwater in two locations based on existing topography.



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## Development Scenarios Option 2: Medium Density BELOIT, WISCONSIN

Graphic for Example Purposes Only

### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. **Medium Density Option:** Provide a mix of two family and smaller single family lots similar in size to adjacent homes. Use two family to transitions along existing multi family and Burton.
2. Control project image by providing new primary neighborhood entrance.
3. Maintain connections to the north and provide access to lots already platted and purchased.
4. Re-plat streets to maximize frontage on both sides.
5. Provide adequate stormwater in two locations based on existing topography.

Townview Park

Christilla Park

Woodside Terrace Apartments

Stormwater

STABORN DR.

MERIDITH DR

FAIRVIEW DR

FIR DR

Stormwater

Stormwater Conveyance

Existing Trees

Trail

Primary Project Entrance

Existing Transit Route

BURTON STREET

FREDERICK ST

CLEORA DR

Woodman's Distribution

Woodman's Market

Hillcrest Senior Apartments

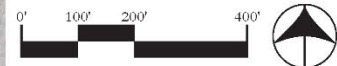
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### Map Legend

- Project Area
- Potential Building Footprint

Housing Type	Units
Single Family Homes ~7,000+ sf lots	50
Duplexes ~10,000+ sf lots	50
Approximate Total Units 100	
Public Streets	~5,500 lf





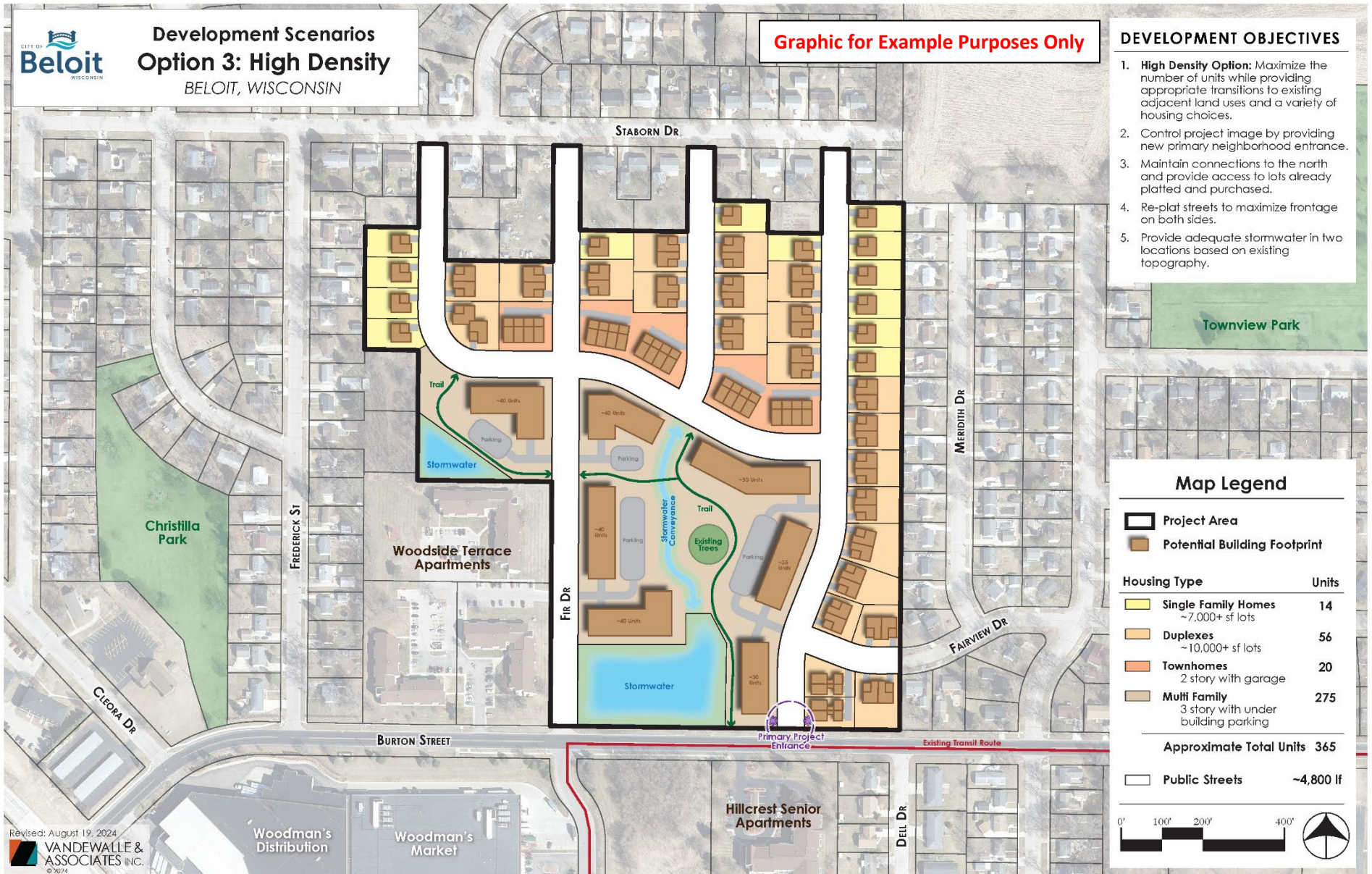


## Development Scenarios Option 3: High Density BELOIT, WISCONSIN

Graphic for Example Purposes Only

### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. **High Density Option:** Maximize the number of units while providing appropriate transitions to existing adjacent land uses and a variety of housing choices.
2. Control project image by providing new primary neighborhood entrance.
3. Maintain connections to the north and provide access to lots already platted and purchased.
4. Re-plat streets to maximize frontage on both sides.
5. Provide adequate stormwater in two locations based on existing topography.





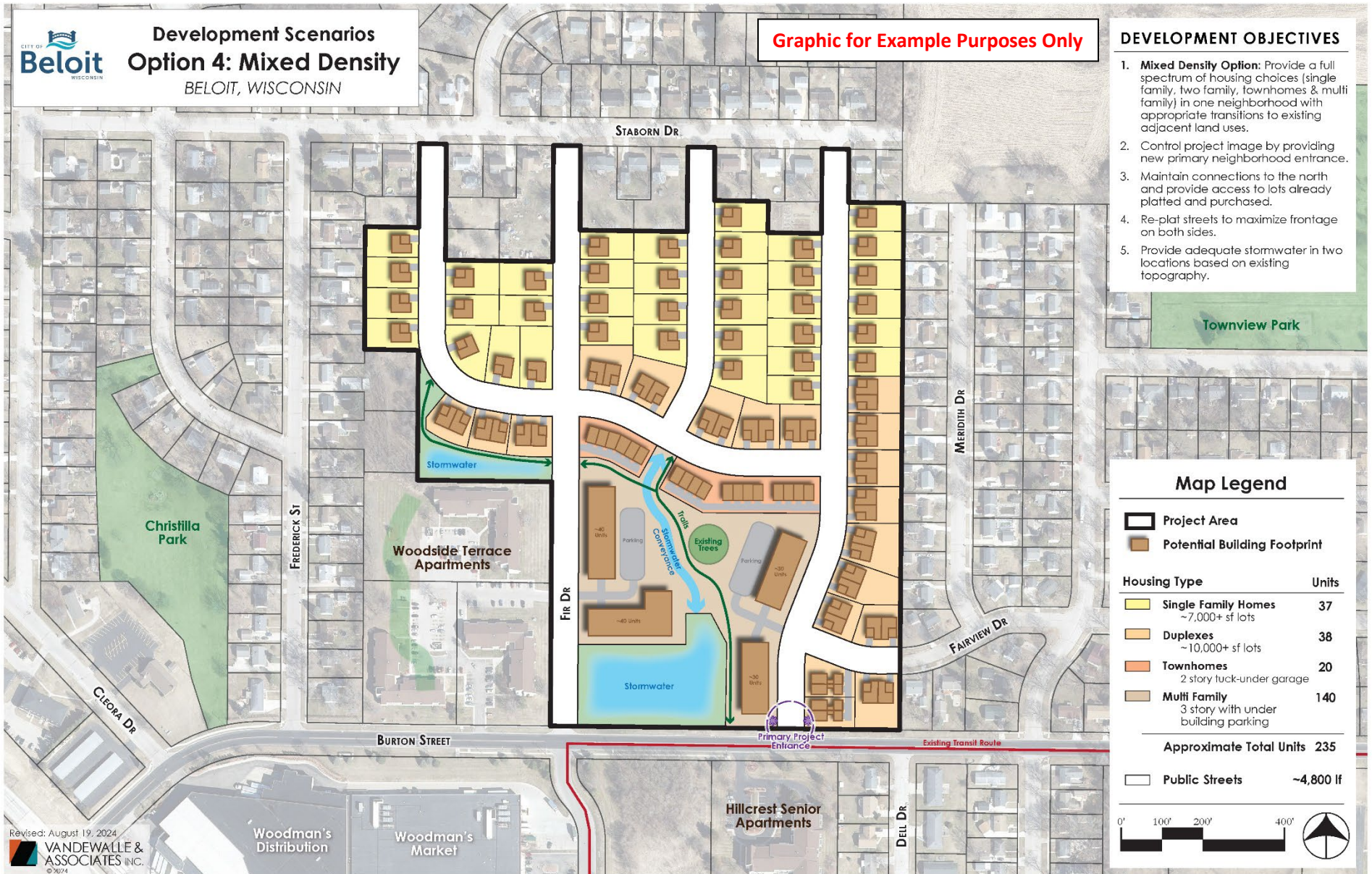


## Development Scenarios Option 4: Mixed Density BELOIT, WISCONSIN

Graphic for Example Purposes Only

### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. **Mixed Density Option:** Provide a full spectrum of housing choices (single family, two family, townhomes & multi family) in one neighborhood with appropriate transitions to existing adjacent land uses.
2. Control project image by providing new primary neighborhood entrance.
3. Maintain connections to the north and provide access to lots already platted and purchased.
4. Re-plat streets to maximize frontage on both sides.
5. Provide adequate stormwater in two locations based on existing topography.



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Woodman's  
Distribution

Woodman's  
Market

Hillcrest Senior  
Apartments

Figure 7.1. Unit Types and Totals By Scenario

Scenario	Single-Family Units: 10,000 SF Lot Size	Single-Family Units: 7,000 SF Lot Size	Two-Family Units: 10,000 SF Lot Size	Townhome Units: Varying Lot Sizes	Multi-Family Units: Varying Lot Sizes	Total Housing Units	Gross Housing Units Per Acre
Low Density	60	-	-	-	-	60	2
Medium Density	-	50	50	-	-	100	3
High Density	-	14	56	20	275	365	12
Mixed Density	-	37	38	20	140	235	8

Figure 7.2. Costs and Assessed Values By Scenario

Scenario	Linear Feet of Road	Estimated Infrastructure Cost Per LF*	Total Infrastructure Costs	Average Infrastructure Cost Per Unit	Total Assessed Value**	Assessed Value Per Acre
Low Density	5,500	\$1,000	\$5,500,000	\$91,667	\$21,000,000	\$700,000
Medium Density	5,500	\$1,000	\$5,500,000	\$55,000	\$30,000,000	\$1,000,000
High Density	4,800	\$1,000	\$4,800,000	\$13,151	\$55,550,000	\$1,851,667
Mixed Density	4,800	\$1,000	\$4,800,000	\$20,426	\$41,875,000	\$1,395,833

\*Source: V&A, 2023. Estimated infrastructure costs are approximate for planning purposes. The total is an average per linear foot cost broadly based on constructed new neighborhood developments that have occurred between 2020-2023 in southern Wisconsin. The total includes accounting for the construction of all utilities (water, sanitary sewer, lift stations, laterals, storm sewer, stormwater management, electric, gas, and fiber), all supporting infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, curbs, terraces, street trees, lights, and signs, etc.), and all grading needed to make a site shovel ready. Actual costs and requirements vary by site and development.

\*\*See Figure 7.3 for estimated assessed values per unit.

Figure 7.3. Estimated Assessed Values By Unit Type

Scenario Plan Unit Types	Estimated Assessed Value Per Unit*
Single-Family (10,000 SF Lot)	\$350,000
Single-Family (7,000 SF Lot)	\$325,000
Two-Family (10,000 SF Lot)	\$275,000
Townhomes	\$130,000
Multi-Family	\$120,000

\*Source: V&A, 2023. Estimated assessed values are approximate for planning purposes. They are broadly based on constructed new development assessments across southern Wisconsin for the unit types shown in each scenario plan. Actual assessed values vary by site, community, and construction utilized.



The City of Beloit has experienced decades of development that reflects the broader suburban-oriented patterns seen across Wisconsin and the Midwest. This is reflected in the Low and Medium Density Scenario at around 2-3 gross dwelling units per acre. The consequence is a separation of land uses that creates a predominate culture of driving and significant upfront development and long-term maintenance costs. As shown above, these two scenarios may have the highest assessed value per unit, but translate to the lowest assessed value per acre and highest infrastructure costs per acre. Meaning that for relatively the same amount of land and infrastructure, the Low and Medium Density Scenarios cost more to develop and produce less tax revenue to support infrastructure and community services. In contrast, the Mixed and High Density Scenarios provide higher accessed values per acre and lower infrastructure costs per unit. This results in a more efficient use of land where the same total land area and infrastructure are producing far more tax revenue for the community. Additionally, it promotes walkability, diverse housing formats, and varying price points. Finally, these scenarios also provide greater community-wide benefits such as opportunities for new residents to move into Beloit or existing residents to downsize or scale up depending on their housing lifecycle needs, which can in turn translate to new school-aged children within the school district.

While the High Density Scenario yields the greatest monetary impacts, it may not be the best fit for this particular property's location and context. Instead, the Mixed Density Scenario accomplishes many community goals as described further below, while also providing more consistency with the existing surrounding neighborhood. In particular, the Mixed Density Scenario provides more differentiation in housing formats (apartments, townhomes, two-family, and single-family), occupancy types (owner or renter), and affordability levels to accommodate people in various lifecycles of housing including starter homes, downsizing options, young family move up options, young professionals, etc. In total, this exercise is an illustration of the potential impacts of policy decisions on the built environment and provides context for how the City of Beloit's goals could be implemented over time and accomplished.



## STRATEGIES

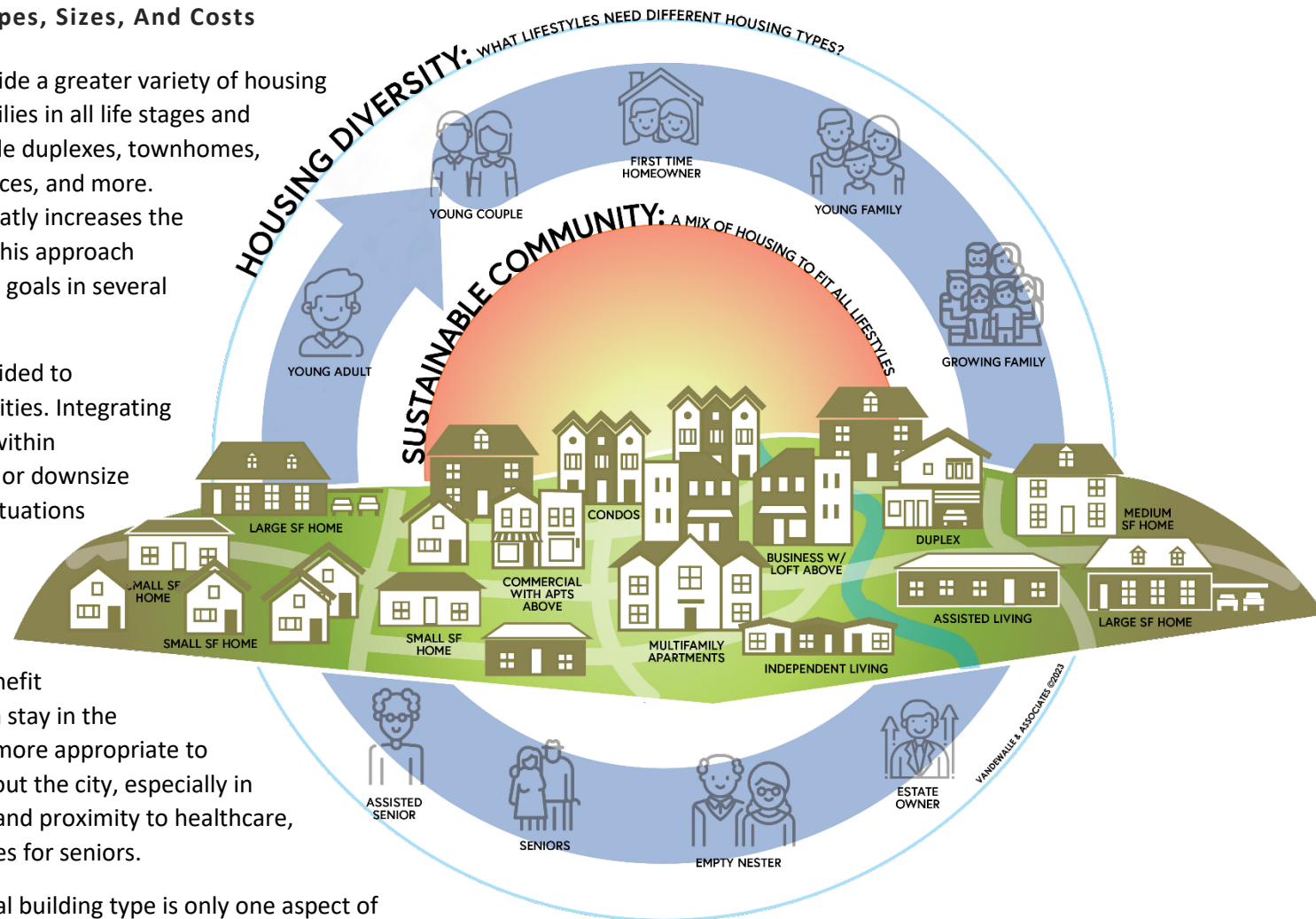
### Provide A Wider Mix Of Housing Types, Sizes, And Costs Throughout The City

An overarching goal of this plan is to provide a greater variety of housing formats and build quality housing for families in all life stages and income levels. Housing formats can include duplexes, townhomes, apartments, condos, single family residences, and more. Introducing a variety of building types greatly increases the housing options within a neighborhood. This approach supports the City's vision and overarching goals in several ways.

**Life Cycle Housing.** Housing must be provided to accommodate all stages of life and all abilities. Integrating life cycle and accessible housing options within neighborhoods allows residents to upsize or downsize along with life milestones and changing situations without leaving the established social network of a neighborhood. The inclusion of more accessible housing across Beloit supports not only the residents themselves, but also visitors who may benefit from accessible features. Older adults can stay in the neighborhoods of their choice if housing more appropriate to their changing needs is available throughout the city, especially in amenity-rich areas with good walkability and proximity to healthcare, basic needs, and programing and resources for seniors.

**Ownership and Occupancy Types.** Physical building type is only one aspect of housing variety. Different occupancy and ownership structures, including fee simple ownership, renting, owner-occupied two- and three- unit rentals, condominiums, co-housing, and housing cooperatives, are ways to provide residents with choices. The dramatic rise in housing costs and stagnant wages have made it more difficult than ever for first time home buyers and those seeking affordable housing options across all occupancy types. However, there are housing types that enable ownership while also creating scale that can improve affordability.

These housing types include many of those formats as noted above, such as twin-homes, two-flats, townhouses, and small-lot single family. Unfortunately, these types are called “missing middle” because areas like Beloit and surrounding communities have had very few of these housing formats constructed over the past several generations. However, these types were common prior to mid-to-late-century suburban development trends and associated development regulations.





### What is Missing Middle Housing?

“Missing middle housing” is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types scaled between single-family detached houses and larger apartment buildings. Missing middle housing is compatible in scale with most single-family residential areas and can help meet the growing demand for urban living. Missing middle housing types contribute to a walkable neighborhood, require simpler construction types than larger buildings, and contribute to higher residential densities than single-family homes.

Despite the higher density, they have lower perceived density than other building types because the units are small and well designed. Housing types that should be considered as part of the missing middle include: tiny homes, traditional small-lot single-family detached homes, side-by-side duplexes, two-, three-, and four-flats, townhouses, live-work buildings, accessory dwelling units, and small apartment buildings.



Source: *Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis*. Daniel Parolek.

**Affordable Options.** Affordable housing must go beyond simply options that are financially attainable. It must be clean, safe, well-designed, and fit the needs of the household. All housing, regardless of price, should meet standards of quality and provide a safe, healthy environment for those living there. Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the City and within areas that have access to transportation options, public services, and amenities for daily living. Integrating affordable housing into neighborhoods makes it more likely that the housing and residents contribute to a stable neighborhood and may result in better outcomes for residents, whereas concentrations of low-income housing tend to isolate residents and result in greater demands for services. New lower cost and subsidized housing should be located in areas that already have a high level of resources and amenities available at a range of income levels.

**Implementation Methods.** There are a variety of ways to implement the above strategies to provide greater housing diversity. Some of these include:

### Affordable Housing Fund

Like many communities around Wisconsin, Beloit faces a shortage of affordable housing. One proven solution to this problem is establishing an affordable housing fund that provides gap financing to incentivize developers to provide units at below market rates. Beloit recently established a housing fund through the extension of several TIDs in 2023. These funds are planned to be utilized for property acquisition, housing rehab, affordable rental unit creation and preservation, infill development incentives on vacant lots, new subdivision incentives, utilities, and downtown upper floor housing grants. Other funding sources for Affordable Housing funds can come from grants, local foundations, local businesses, or philanthropic groups.

- Address zoning and other ordinance barriers to diverse housing as further described in the Action Plan Chapter.
- Provide regular educational or training sessions on housing trends and strategies to elected officials, committee members, community groups, and the public. This could be accomplished through a Citizen's Academy or a Housing Forum.
- Leverage the newly created TID extension housing fund to implement the strategies of this plan and 2023 TIF Housing Project Plan.
- Identify state and federal funding sources to support housing in the community.
- Pursue innovative housing opportunities with community partners and developers such as land trusts, land banks, down payment assistance programs, cooperative housing, etc.

### **Develop a City-Wide Housing Approach**

As the housing crisis has manifested across the country over the past decade, many communities have found that, prior to taking ill-defined and non-unified action steps toward solving the issues at hand, they need to take a step back and develop a community-wide housing approach. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but the goal is to understand the situation, foster a network of collaborators, set targets and goals, and establish action steps. A recommended approach includes:

- Setting the stage for a successful housing strategy to ensure that key stakeholders within and outside of the local government understand the local housing strategy.
- Preparing a customized housing strategy by understanding local data and trends, determining policies, identifying opportunities, developing an action plan with recommendations, and setting ambitious goals.
- Monitoring progress over time as implementation occurs to ensure success and adapt the strategy and approaches taken as changes occur.

The Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation conducted a Housing Demand Analysis in 2022 and the City completed a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan (NRSA) for the Hackett and Merrill Neighborhoods in 2019, which can both serve as the baseline for developing this community-wide approach. Additionally, this plan and its goals, recommendations, strategies, and action steps also serve as the catalyst for developing a housing strategy. Once the approach is solidified, the key to implementation comes in a variety of ways including collaboration with partners across a wide spectrum of fields, ordinance updates to remove unnecessary barriers to the creation of new housing formats desired by the community, conceptual planning of key sites, developer recruitment, and strategic use of financing tools. Further, any type of housing approach should recognize and address racial disparities in housing and identify action steps that can be taken to remedy them. Both the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and City's NRSA Plan provide demographic data to further illustrate the existing disparities today and include objectives and strategies on how to target and address historically underserved populations. The City of Beloit can build upon these existing efforts to expand these strategies and objectives community-wide. Additionally, over time, as these existing plans are updated, they should be incorporated into this holistic housing approach. Overall, instead of different entities working in a siloed environment on various aspects of the housing crisis, it is recommended that Beloit develop a unified, cohesive, and metrics-based effort to solve the community's housing affordability and availability issue.

### **Trend Toward Smaller Households**

The size of the average American household steadily declined over the last five decades, and this trend is even more pronounced in Wisconsin. According to a 2023 report by the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the average household size has declined from 3.22 in 1970 to 2.36 in 2020. The shift during this period has been caused by multiple trends: Americans are living longer on average, having fewer children, and are more likely to live in a single-person household.

This decline has impacts on the type of housing units needed in a community. To adapt to these changing trends, smaller units located in walkable neighborhoods can accomplish multiple goals for a community.

*Source: Wisconsin Outpaces Nation in Trend Toward Smaller Households, WI Policy Forum, 2023*

### **Aging In Place**

Americans are living longer than ever, and most hope to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. AARP projects that by 2030, there will be a severe shortage in accessible and affordable housing to meet the needs of individuals over the age of 65.

Traditional Neighborhood Design promotes aging in place by creating increased supply of housing overall, and providing housing options to meet the varied needs of aging residents that may no longer have access to a car but wish to remain independent. *Source: AARP, 2023*



### Promote Traditional Neighborhood Design Principles

In all future neighborhoods, the City intends to promote Traditional Neighborhood Design. The implementation of Traditional Neighborhood Design aims to:

- Integrate a diversity of high-quality housing types to accommodate a variety of lifestyles, age groups, and financial capability.
- Ensure the long-term preservation of community character and high quality of life.
- Provide housing, parks, and schools with direct and efficient connections and within walking distance of shops, services, and jobs.
- Blend multi-modal transportation options into neighborhood design.
- Preserve environmental systems that define, sustain, and connect neighborhoods and communities.
- Reduce demand for fiscal resources needed for transportation, public infrastructure, services, and housing.

In the design and approval of new neighborhoods (subdivisions), the City and developers should ensure the adherence to the following Traditional Neighborhood Design principles:

TND Principle	Attributes
Establish community gathering place	Design neighborhoods around parks, public spaces, and community facilities
Provide housing variety	Diverse housing types are arranged in a compact and interconnected form
Advance equity and inclusion	Inclusion of different housing forms, sizes, and price points improves social cohesion
Blend land uses	Commercial, retail, and community facilities are integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood
Promote walkability	Sidewalk, paths, or multi-use trails are connected within and between neighborhoods
Promote connectivity	Interconnect streets, trails, drainageways, parks, and similar facilities
Calm traffic	Increase safety and livability through on-street parking, narrower streets, traffic circles, medians, and narrower cross walks with curb extensions
Create attractive and active streetscapes	Decrease building setbacks, incentivize front porches and balconies through design and front building setbacks, and deemphasize front-loaded garages through increased setbacks and percentages of front facades
Highlight natural areas	Create common open spaces, gather places, and flood protection using environmental features
Incorporate public health and sustainability	Integrate best practices into overall design to increase neighborhood sustainability and public health
Require high-quality design	Utilize distinctive architectural features, high-quality materials, varying densities and formats, and avoid monotony

### Advance Initiatives to Address the City's Unhoused Population

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, there are several steps that can be taken to drive change in respect to unhoused populations. This process includes:

- Developing a coordinated approach to delivering services, housing, and programs
- Establishing rapid re-housing opportunities that connect services with those in need
- Identifying opportunities for longer-term rental assistance locations to provide suitable transitional housing options
- Developing and designing a crisis response tool kit to get people out of homelessness quickly
- Assisting low-income populations with connections to critical job networks that build wealth and provide greater housing choice

This is a complex issue that requires a well-thought-out set of solutions. Communities across the country have been leveraging resources like these to develop customized programs, initiatives, and plans that best fit the community's context, environment, and network of partners. It is recommended that the City continue to advance partnership opportunities with local non-profits, faith-based groups, and government entities to create meaningful change within the unhoused population in Beloit.

### Take Steps Toward Improving the Existing Housing Stock

As illustrated in [Appendix A and B](#), the existing housing stock in many areas of the city is older and in need of repair. Additionally, there is a growing trend of homes being purchased by outside investors to turn into rentals instead of an ownership unit. The City should focus on improving the conditions of existing housing, including but not limited to the following:

- Providing incentives for housing upgrades and homeownership increases through use of CDBG/HOME funding, TIF affordable housing funds, and partnerships with other organizations.
- Within targeted neighborhoods, pursue the purchase of vacant, dilapidated, and tax delinquent housing for rehabilitation and resale for owner-occupancy.
- Creation of a landlord enrollment program and database to track rentals across the community, so that code enforcement policies can be applied with consequences for continued violations.
- Map properties with defective conditions to analyze trends and develop targeted neighborhood level strategies to fix those properties.

### Leverage Programs, Tools, and Resources to Increase the Amount of Attainable Housing Units

This overarching recommendation is reflected in all other recommendations above, however there are particular initiatives that can be leveraged by Beloit and its partners to drive change. The entire country is faced with the ongoing housing availability and affordability crisis, so case studies and solutions are prevalent throughout the United States. Some example initiatives include:

- Non-profit community housing cooperatives: tenants rent individual rooms and share common spaces, driving down the cost of rent.
- Partnerships with faith-based institutions: organizations develop underutilized lands for community facilities and affordable housing.
- Local developer training: educate and grow local entrepreneurs into housing developers.
- Other housing training programs: educate and assist property owners with the design, cost estimates, permitting, and planning needed to develop their own new housing units on their properties (accessory dwelling units, two-flats, etc.).
- Leverage the existing housing fund: capitalize on existing housing fund dollars to implement this plan and the TIF Housing Plan to assist with property acquisition, low or no interest loans, developer recruitment and entitlements, or incentivizes to close financial gaps.
- Continue to leverage grants and outside funding sources: there are many state and federal funding sources that can be leveraged to make an affordable housing project possible including WHEDA, WisDOA, LIHTC, Historic Tax Credits, Section 42, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, etc.
- Prevent evictions: continue to utilize and expand upon the existing program through Legal Action to help provide legal services to individuals facing eviction and the resources needed to stay in their existing housing.

### Fostering Infill Housing

The City can take steps to streamline the housing development process to provide more opportunities for infill projects, in reflection of the goals and recommendations of this plan. An example of this is to create a catalog of pre-approved building designs that can be used by developers to jumpstart a project as has been done in cities like South Bend, IN. This is especially useful for infill development projects. The pre-approved designs meet the high-quality architectural standards in the city and has been vetted for compatibility with city plans and regulations, removing many obstacles for development.

*Source: City of South Bend, Build South Bend program, 2023*





## 8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

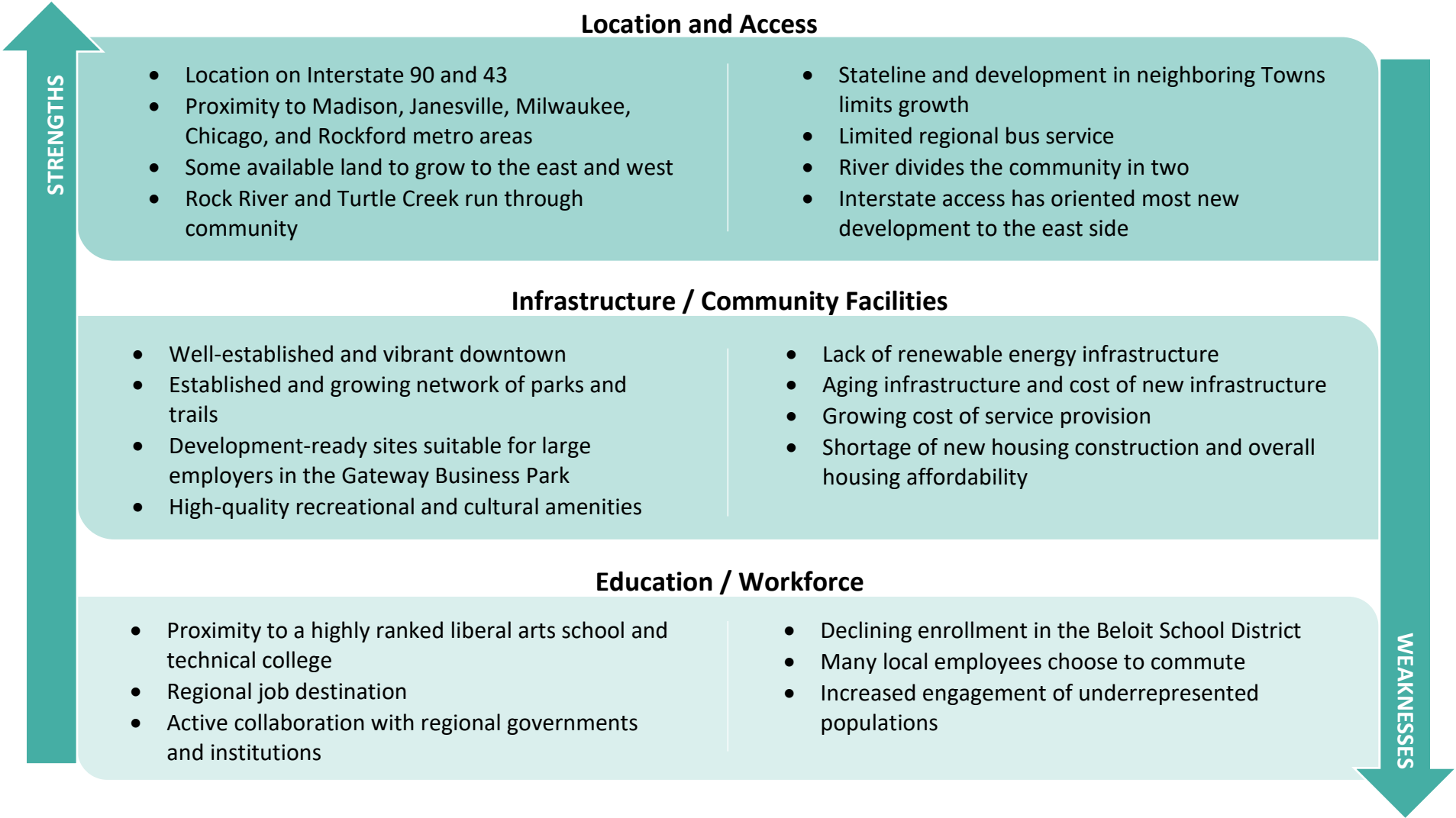




# CHAPTER 8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Beloit is well-positioned to accommodate future business growth, as described in the table below. An understanding of Beloit’s current economic position, along with thoughtful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendation, will position Beloit to take advantage of future economic opportunities and better diversify its economy. See [Appendix A](#) for all economic data and analysis.

## ASSESSMENT OF BELOIT’S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES





## BELOIT'S DESIRED ECONOMIC FOCUS

Beloit strives to offer affordability, high quality of life, and local employment and shopping opportunities. The City's desired economic focus moving forward is centered on:

- Improve and increase the City's housing affordability and availability to become a live-work community.
- Leverage the community's cultural, social, and ethnic diversity as an asset for resident, business, and employer attraction and retention.
- Prioritize infill and redevelopment opportunities in areas where existing utilities and infrastructure are available, while continuing to grow the Gateway Business Park.
- Collaborate with local institutions to adapt and educate the local workforce to be prepared for new roles in manufacturing, management, business, technology, information, trades, and medical occupations.
- Grow the local and regional tourism and hospitality sectors through leveraging local assets.
- Foster entrepreneurship and small business expansion that complement the community's existing businesses and character to avoid duplication of large-scale commercial and industrial development that is offered in other existing regional concentrations.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

<b>Foster Business Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide new business and industrial sites for the community to be competitive in attracting high quality enterprises.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for property acquisition where the City can collaborate on projects that advance the goals of this plan.</li> <li>• Continue the strategic use of Tax Incremental Financing to foster business growth, expansion, and infill and redevelopment.</li> <li>• Work with the private sector to revitalize commercial corridors, create high-income jobs, and attract more residents to Beloit.</li> <li>• Support the creation of new businesses that offer a diversity of jobs within Beloit, including within the sustainability and technology sectors.</li> <li>• Leverage regional access and assets to increase the community's economic resiliency.</li> <li>• Continuously evaluate regulatory barriers to business creation such as applications and financial requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop, Attract, and Retain High-Quality Local Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and Skilled Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local economic development organizations to attract and retain businesses that capitalize on Beloit's assets.</li> <li>• Foster workforce development programs in partnership with local institutions and education providers to focus on educating the current and future labor force to be prepared for and adaptable to future technological skills required.</li> <li>• Support and foster local entrepreneurs and promote the community as a regional destination for entrepreneurs and start-ups through the creation of incubator, artist, maker, or co-op spaces such as shared commercial kitchens, workshops, and access to technology equipment.</li> <li>• Support the creation of small-business incubators for a variety of business types, including industrial, retail and service, tourism, and sustainability.</li> <li>• Partner with regional stakeholders and groups to increase artist spaces, education, events, and integration of art in public spaces.</li> <li>• Leverage regional collaboration and public-private partnerships to help promote investment, redevelopment, equitable development, and revitalization throughout the community.</li> <li>• Support employers who provide quality jobs, living wages, benefits, stable schedules, and related family-friendly policies.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 8: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

- Strategically utilize tax incremental financing (TIF).
- Increase access to affordable, quality childcare.
- Foster entrepreneurs and small business start-ups.
- Spark economic development by building on Beloit's arts and culture.
  - Collaborate on regional and state economic growth initiatives.
  - Build and maintain relationships with the business community.
- Attract diverse new businesses and prepare the local workforce for changes.
- Explore opportunities to expand the City's Gateway Business Park through new Detailed Area Plans that could include the creation of an eco-industrial park.

### STRATEGIES

#### **Strategically Utilize Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)**

To help implement the recommendations in this plan, the appropriate and thoughtful use of TIF will place Beloit in a much stronger position when working to create new community amenities, infrastructure, and with developers and business owners. TIF may also allow the City to vie for the types of projects that might not otherwise be possible without it, projects of a scale and quality that can change the local market and generate other quality projects.

TIF is one of the few economic development tools in Wisconsin with which local governments can leverage financial resources to contribute to an economic development strategy or project, such as infrastructure investment, removal of barriers, and contribution to characteristics that produce specific public benefit. This may include preparing sites for development, investing in affordable housing opportunities, integrating sustainability features, and creating public amenities that attract investment and contribute to placemaking.

#### **Building the Capital Stack**

"Building the Capital Stack" is a common phrase in economic development. It refers to compiling multiple sources of financing to bring a project to fruition.

Many of the most ambitious economic development projects include a multi-layered capital stack that could include sources like private financing, revolving loan funds, tax increment financing, grant programs, and local fundraising. These are all important components of building the capital stack for projects. However, the different requirements attached to each funding source can sometimes cause complications. Careful consideration should be taken for understanding how these funding sources interact with each other when structuring a deal. When paired thoughtfully, a project's capital stack can facilitate major projects that would not be possible without these forms of public financing.



The City should utilize the following strategies within existing and potential new TIF districts that could be created over the planning period. Below are six strategies and best practices the City can continue to employ in managing TIF districts for maximum impact:

- 1) Regularly Reviewing TIF Plans and Individual TID Parcels: On an annual basis, this includes reviewing adopted TIF Plans and ongoing parcel-by-parcel management. Every spring, when new preliminary assessments are released, each parcel in every district should be reviewed to be sure the assessment includes the correct properties and has accurately captured the values.
- 2) Update Cashflow Projections: For a complete picture of each district's true financial state, update the TID's long-term cashflow projections annually.
- 3) Communicate with Property Owners, Partners, and Prospective Developers/Businesses: The best ways to keep communication open include regular outreach, advertising available sites, developer recruitment, tracking available funding sources and grants, and updating and distributing existing condition information.
- 4) Have a Well-Defined Process for Getting Deals Done: To create a well-defined process there must be clearly defined roles for staff and elected officials, development of a standardized inquiry and negotiation process, and provision of supporting materials that are widely available for distribution, when needed.
- 5) Engage the JRB as a Full Partner: Best practices for communication with members of the Joint Review Board include updating the JRB annually with up-to-date accounting and finances, sharing City strategies for promoting growth and what's anticipated to occur each year, discussion of potential TID needs, and soliciting feedback on JRB preferences prior to amendments or new districts.
- 6) Continuously Monitor Other Opportunities: Over time, the City must monitor changes to property ownership, tax delinquency, or new properties coming on the market in key locations.

### **Increase Access to Affordable, Quality Childcare**

As described in the call-out box below, there has been an increasing awareness of the impact of childcare on the workforce. Simply put, parents can't go to work if they can't find childcare. In recognition of this problem, communities have started taking an active role in addressing the issue. Rock County recently allocated \$1.3 million of its federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to create a local childcare grant program. Childcare providers are eligible to receive up to \$100 per child served per month, subject to certain caps. Another approach can be found in the City of Sun Prairie's newly created Childcare Supply-Building Grant programs. The grant allocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act and grants from the WI Dept of Children and Families to secure financial assistance for projects that enhance their services or facilities. The City recently completed a Beloit Childcare Supply Action Plan that should serve as the catalyst for driving change in this area. It is recommended that the City and its partners implement this plan over the planning period.



### Foster Entrepreneurs and Small Business Start-Ups

As a diverse urban community, Beloit should explore ways of cultivating entrepreneurship and fostering new businesses started by area residents. Entrepreneurs are defined by their ability to create new products, services, or methods of production to meet local needs. Entrepreneurship can take many forms, ranging from the part-time home occupation to the start-up businesses that grow into firms that require their own facilities and employees. Individually or collectively, these activities can greatly enhance the overall economic health of the community. The following continued and new approaches are advised to foster greater entrepreneurial activity in Beloit:

- Bringing together networks of individuals and agencies that can provide training and funding assistance. The City can be a key player in connecting prospective business owners with training and funding that already exist at local school districts, universities, and technical colleges, in addition to numerous County, Regional, State, and Federal programs, agencies, and private organizations to provide would-be entrepreneurs with information and financial assistance on an array of issues including training, grants, and on research on specific products and services.
- Promoting a “buy local” campaign among Beloit residents to enhance markets for small, locally-owned businesses. This could be carried out through the media, partnerships with local organizations, or through signage marking locally-owned businesses.
- Collaboratively creating and fostering business incubator space. This may be in the form of a structure that is leased to a new or small business on terms highly favorable to the tenant. This allows new business to direct more revenue into growing a business and building a reserve of capital that will eventually allow the business to construct or move to a permanent site. However, incubators can also be “created” formally or informally older spaces in different parts of the City. The City could collaborate with partners such as UW-Whitewater and Beloit College on this effort.
- Creating reasonable standards for home occupations that allow home-based businesses to start and flourish, without negatively affecting the neighborhood environment. Once a business grows beyond a home-based business status, it should move on to incubator or other space in a district zoned for business use.

### Childcare Impacts on the Economy and Local Workforce

Employers across Wisconsin are facing unprecedented hiring challenges. While many factors influence the current workforce shortage, local municipalities can position themselves to better attract and retain high-quality employers and stimulate their local economies by supporting efforts to address an often-overlooked barrier to employment: the lack of affordable and accessible childcare.

A new report from the Wisconsin Economic Development Institute titled *Childcare in Wisconsin and its Impact on Workforce and the Economy* reveals the significant impact that the current shortage of childcare has on local workforces and the statewide economy. Data from the report clearly illustrates that a lack of available childcare services throughout Wisconsin has a major impact on the ability of businesses to recruit and retain employees. Nearly 60% of Wisconsin employers said that decreased access to quality childcare has resulted in difficulty hiring new employees, workers reducing their hours, and employees using more paid and unpaid leave. The scarcity and high cost of quality childcare in Wisconsin has made it significantly more difficult for parents to enter, re-enter, or remain in the workforce as inflation continues to rise and wages remain stagnant over time.

A recent article from UW-Extension titled *Wisconsin’s Housing Dilemma* highlights the interconnectedness of housing, childcare, and jobs. Labor supply is hindered by the lack of affordable housing available for those workers to live in or near the community. Furthermore, the lack of affordable quality childcare lowers the number of individuals available to work, which in turn hurts the ability of childcare providers to hire workers. Communities often approach these as separate issues. It is recommended that Beloit take a comprehensive approach to these interrelated issues.

Efforts to develop partnerships, programs, or policy solutions that address this issue will support both the local workforce and employers and could be a significant location decision factor for people and businesses looking to locate within the community. Approximately 80% of Wisconsin employers believe that the economy is heavily impacted by the availability of affordable, quality childcare. In addition, 73% of businesses believe that without the expansion of childcare services statewide, Wisconsin employers will continue to face workforce shortages in the future.

Sources: WEDI, 2023 UW-Extension, 2023



### **Spark Economic Development by Building on Beloit's Arts and Culture**

The City should work with local artists, interest groups, and the Beloit area schools over the next decade to increase, highlight, and integrate arts and cultural components within existing neighborhoods, redevelopment projects, and new developments. Economic development activities should continue to build on these initiatives while creatively seeking new opportunities.

The creative economy is a dynamic component of the region's overall economy that leverages human creativity and ideas to create and develop unique intellectual property, knowledge, and technology. Industries often associated with the creative economy include artists, musicians, makers, and designers, which are an important source of commercial and cultural value in a community. This community is often comprised of entrepreneurs and small businesses that generate local investment and contribute to community identity. However, utilizing creativity and new information to improve or create new products and services is possible in any industry.

One way for Beloit to support and coordinate a successful environment that helps to grow specific aspects of the creative economy is through the development of an Arts and Culture Plan. This place-based plan can help develop a vision and action plan focused on strengthening and growing local arts and cultural assets and their impact on the greater community. Key strategies that could be further explored through this process include:

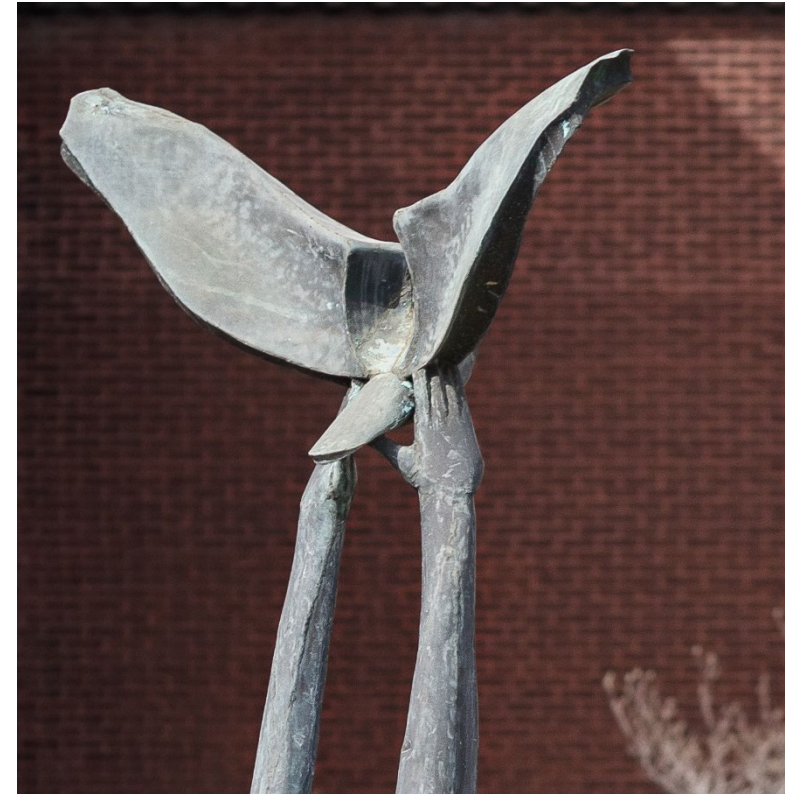
- Partnering with regional stakeholders, local art-focused groups, and local schools to increase artist spaces, education, events, and integration of art in public spaces.
- Establish and support existing advocacy groups that could help lead these efforts in conjunction with public and private partners.
- Inventory community assets and identify opportunities for new public art, cultural events, and education activities.
- Gather baseline data to determine benchmarks and inform goal setting.
- Strengthen the connections between existing area schools and City programming.
- Prioritize the integration of placemaking components into new development and redevelopment projects.

### **Collaborate on Regional and State Economic Growth Initiatives**

Beloit's future economic health depends not only on what can be done solely through local efforts, but how well the City collaborates, communicates, and connects with county, regional, state, and federal partners, initiatives, and programs.

In conjunction with maintaining cooperative regional partnerships, there are several ways the City can proactively prepare for future funding opportunities as they present themselves. This includes identifying projects that are ready to implement but are waiting for resource availability, prioritizing projects identified in adopted plans or reports, and leveraging quantitative analysis and the incorporation of goals into policies to support their implementation. A few such projects could include:

- Continued planning, analysis, and implementation of regional, county, and state-wide economic, outdoor recreation, and tourism strategies and projects (ex. Madison Regional Economic Partnership (MadREP) Advance Now 2.0, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) grants and tax credits, Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, etc.).



- Collaboration with Rock County, SLATS, the Janesville MPO, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation on large-scale transportation and transit planning projects (ex. county, state, and federal highway projects, regional transportation and transit plans, etc.).
- Working with county and state public health entities on planning, assessments, and implementation (ex. Community Health Improvement Plan, Community Health Assessment, State Health Improvement Plan, etc.).
- Leveraging county, regional, and state housing funding (ex. Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) grants and tax credits, Wisconsin Department of Administrations' Consolidated Plan programming and federal monies, Beloit Area Communities Housing Demand Analysis recommendations, etc.).

### **Build And Maintain Relationships With The Business Community**

Beloit should strive to continue building and maintaining productive relationships with the overall business community, ranging from the largest employers to small locally-owned businesses. A key component of this effort is open lines of communication and predictability. A successful example of this collaboration can be found in West Allis, WI. The City conducts an annual business survey to get feedback from local businesses on how they are doing and what else is needed in the community. This provides a forum for the City to receive feedback in a structured way that can be tracked over time. Additionally, the City of Beloit should explore a streamlined business and development handbook. This can provide more certainty for businesses on what they can expect when working with the city and what is expected of them. These forms of clear communication will further inform strategies for fostering entrepreneurs and small business start-ups and attracting new businesses to Beloit.

### **Attract Diverse New Businesses and Prepare the Local Workforce for Changes**

Business attraction and workforce preparedness are additional economic strategies, along with growing new businesses and retaining/expanding existing businesses. Attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers will help expand the local economy and provide a sustainable economic future. Techniques for attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers are often similar to those used to retain existing businesses and workers. The City has a range of these and other tools at its disposal that it will utilize. Strategies include:

- Build on the community's support of existing local businesses and those that cater to local customers to attract new locally oriented businesses.
- Develop an inventory of a broad range (e.g. size and location) of sites that are ready for construction.
- Continue to utilize a predictable and streamlined approach to development approvals.
- Identify and market specifically to target economic clusters or capitalize on the community's place-based assets.
- Continue to work with regional entities in the formation of groups organized around particular business/industry clusters to guide schools in providing appropriate workforce training and help policy makers understand industry requirements for success.
- Define and identify the workforce skillsets available within the community, and market the City's quality labor force, highlighting skills, dedication, and availability as workforce assets.





- Grow the local entrepreneurial base through regional collaboration with educational institutions and other organizations.
- Continue to collaborate with regional organizations and local interest groups to increase tourism by leveraging the cultural and recreational assets of the region to attract new and support existing restaurants, entertainment, and lodging options.
- Adapt to economic, technology, and workforce shifts as they continue to evolve and change through regional collaboration, infrastructure investment, local planning initiatives, and understanding the needs of local employers.
- Develop partnerships, programs, and policy solutions that address the shortage of quality, affordable childcare.

#### **Foster an Eco-Industrial Park as Part of the City's Gateway Business Park Expansion**



Beloit has been successful over the last two decades in attracting and retaining large employers within its Gateway Business Park. As this area continues to grow over the planning period, it is recommended that a new Detailed Area Plan be developed associated with future potential expansion efforts. As part of this plan, there may be additional opportunities to foster an increasingly eco-friendly business environment. This includes protecting and enhancing natural and economic resources by reducing waste, pollution, energy consumption, impervious surfaces, and the overall carbon footprint. Together, this creates a more sustainable development pattern, which can increase economic efficiencies and improve environmental quality. Most businesses have some level of dependency on another businesses in relationship to products, logistics, parts, employee skills, etc. However, within an Eco-Industrial Park, this can be further expanded to include by-product synergies such as waste by-products being reused for something else, district or area energy production, wastewater, or stormwater systems, and shared parking or employee transportation, to name a few.

Examples of Eco-Industrial Parks are prevalent throughout the world and are a key to striving toward a more sustainable future. The City can foster this development approach through recruiting businesses that have synergies with existing businesses, working with businesses to identify synergy opportunities that could be fulfilled by a different business's operations, ensuring that when new businesses locate in the area they proactively plan for district or area-wide shared resource opportunities, and bringing businesses together to foster dialog on ways to improve existing synergies.





## 9. INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES





# CHAPTER 9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

Intergovernmental cooperation is the relationships, the culture of collaboration, and the formal or informal agreements in which officials of two or more jurisdictions communicate visions, coordinate on plans and policies, and address and resolve issues of mutual interest.

Many longstanding challenges related to land use, transportation, natural resources protection, and more have been difficult for a single jurisdiction to address, as they exist within regional systems, independent of municipal boundaries. For this reason, they will require action and cooperation with other jurisdictions within the region. As noted throughout this plan, Beloit has many different overlapping, adjoining, or abutting governmental jurisdictions. Without communication, coordination, and partnerships with these entities, it will be impossible for the City to fully achieve the vision, goals, and recommendations of the public as summarized in this plan.

This chapter is intended to promote consistency between this plan and plans for neighboring jurisdictions, provide opportunities for increased collaboration and partnerships, and promote efficiencies between jurisdictions. Also, see Map 1 in [Appendix C](#).

## GOALS AND POLICIES

Improve, Increase, and Establish Intergovernmental Relationships And Agreements With Surrounding Jurisdictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work cooperatively with the Towns of Beloit and Turtle when joint planning opportunities arise on the City’s borders.</li><li>• Coordinate with Beloit area school districts and Beloit College on development projects and future planning of needed facilities.</li><li>• Pursue joint services and facilities where consolidating, coordinating, or sharing services or facilities will result in more efficient service provision or cost savings.</li><li>• Work to resolve any differences between the City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan and plans of adjacent communities.</li><li>• Exercise extraterritorial review authority on all future land divisions within the City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction.</li><li>• Only extend public utilities and services to lands that have been annexed into the City of Beloit.</li><li>• Continue to work with the City of Janesville and Rock County on HOME Investment Partnership Program Consortium activities.</li><li>• Continue to work jointly with the City of Janesville and Rock County with fair housing planning efforts.</li><li>• Expand collaboration between internal City of Beloit Departments on planning initiatives and advocacy for shared projects, policies, and goals of this plan.</li></ul>
Collaborate On and Take a Leadership Role in Regional Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage state, regional, county, and local organizations to assist with planning, funding, and implementation of this plan.</li><li>• Collaborate with other governments and nonprofit agencies on planning for regional systems that encompass more than just the City of Beloit’s boundaries.</li><li>• Actively monitor, participate in, and review and comment on other future planning initiatives that are undertaken by overlapping or are adjacent to entities.</li></ul>

## CHAPTER 9: STRATEGIES SUMMARY

The City intends to pursue a multitude of strategies to bring these goals to fruition. This Comprehensive Plan highlights a few of the most important strategies in further detail below. They include:

- Collaborate and take a leadership role in regional initiatives.
- Develop, implement, and enforce long-term intergovernmental agreements with neighboring municipalities.

### STRATEGIES

#### Explore Intergovernmental Agreements with Neighboring Jurisdictions

The City should initiate and participate in intergovernmental discussions with surrounding governments with the goal of achieving consistency among comprehensive plans and implementation programs. These discussions would ideally result in formal intergovernmental agreements committing each community to the mutually acceptable outcomes of these discussions.

In general, formal agreements help communities minimize competition for development, ensure that future development is of high quality and appropriately managed, provide all parties with a greater sense of certainty on the future actions of others, and promote municipal efficiency in an era of diminishing government resources. Formal intergovernmental agreements may cover:

- **Municipal Boundary Agreements:** Intergovernmental boundary agreements frequently suggest limits or guidelines to long-range City annexation, generally in exchange for some compromises from a participating town. Such compromises may include the town's agreement not to legally contest any annexation petition that is within the agreed annexation area and/or to limit town development in the possible future annexation area. Provisions for future maintenance, upgrades, or extensions of roads affected by annexations are often also covered in intergovernmental agreements. A boundary agreement can define future boundaries or areas of land use controls where two or more cities and villages jurisdictions overlap.
- **Urban Service Area Agreements:** Some intergovernmental agreements include provisions that define where public sewer and/or water services may be extended and where they may not cover the term of the agreement. These areas largely define where more intensive urban (publicly sewered) growth may occur. Some agreements include provisions that do not allow intensive development with onsite waste disposal (septic) systems in such designated or planned areas.

#### Intergovernmental Agreements Under Wisconsin Law

There are two main types of intergovernmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes. The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more municipalities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a "66.0301" agreement is limited by the restriction that the municipalities must be able to exercise equal powers. Another second type of intergovernmental agreement is a "cooperative (boundary) plan" under Section 66.0307 of Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but the "66.0307" approach does not have some of the limitations of the "66.0301" agreement format.

An increasingly common approach is for communities to first enter into a "66.0301" intergovernmental agreement, which in part directs the communities to then prepare a "66.0307" cooperative plan covering issues such as boundary changes.



- **Future Land Use Agreements:** Frequently, intergovernmental agreements include maps or descriptions that specify future land uses or development densities considered acceptable or unacceptable. Some agreements also include provisions that the communities will then amend their comprehensive plans to be consistent with the future land use provisions in the agreement, or to not amend their comprehensive plans in a manner that would be inconsistent with the agreement. Mutually acceptable, more detailed arrangements with all neighboring jurisdictions would come into effect with a potential intergovernmental agreement.
- **Shared Services Agreements:** As budgetary constraints continue to evolve over time in the region, intergovernmental agreements for services may become increasingly critical. For example, shared agreements could be for police, fire, EMS, parks, sanitation, utilities, and other services. Cooperation and a collaborative approach to evaluating the service needs of the entire region may point to the need for increased service-based agreements between the City and neighboring jurisdictions.

Any one or combination of the intergovernmental agreements listed above should specify the length of time that it is applicable. Twenty years is a typical timeframe, as this corresponds with the comprehensive plan time horizon. Occasionally, agreements have provisions for automatic extensions if neither party decides to withdraw. Most agreements also include provisions for periodic review and possible amendments if both parties agree. This keeps the agreement top of mind and allows for adaptations as conditions change. It is recommended that the City explore intergovernmental agreements following adoption of this plan.

### **Collaborate On and Take a Leadership Role in Regional Initiatives**

Because many of the City's goals and objectives relate to issues that extend beyond municipal boundaries, Beloit intends to maintain an active and open dialogue with surrounding communities, jurisdictions, and entities. A few specific opportunities to participate in regional initiatives include:

- **Economic Development.** Various economic development organizations such as the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation, Madison Region Economic Partnership, and Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce work beyond the boundaries of Beloit to advance economic development efforts. It is recommended that the City continue to play an active role in all regional economic development activities.
- **Natural Resources, Parks, and Trails.** Inherently, these amenities transcend boundaries in terms of their location, jurisdiction, and connectivity. Because they play a pivotal role in providing a high quality of life to residents and act as regional tourism amenities and destinations, it is recommended that Beloit continue to work with WI DNR, Rock County, and others to enhance the connectivity, protection, and useability of these assets.
- **Transportation.** Within the City of Beloit, there are local, county, and state roadways. Maintaining, planning, and improving these roadways requires coordination between local, county, regional (e.g. SLATS), and state jurisdictions. As the City continues to grow, evolve, and change, it is increasingly important to evaluate needs and collaborate on major projects to increase efficiency and effectively allocate resources. Additionally, as the City's demands for public transit services evolve over time, Beloit should continue to collaborate with Rock County, Janesville, and SLATS on regional bus, rail, and paratransit service provision, planning, and funding.



- Education. The majority of children residing within the City of Beloit attend the School District of Beloit; however, there are other schools also serving City residents including the Beloit-Turner School District, Clinton Community School District, Lincoln Academy, Rock County Christian School, and Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School. It is critically important for Beloit and these schools to continue to partner together on future planning, school siting, services, and workforce development efforts, as recommended throughout this plan. Additionally, there are several area higher-education institutions near Beloit. It is recommended that the City continue to partner and work with these entities, focusing on regional initiatives.
- Climate Action, Sustainability, Equity, and Public Health. There are many local and regional groups working on various projects and programs related to advancing these initiatives. As documented throughout this plan, Beloit should play a key leadership role in advancing these topics as at the local and regional level to improve health outcomes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and waste, increase energy efficiency, improve social equity, evaluate and expand equitable services, and prepare for climate change.
- Housing. The City can play a leadership role in partnering with regional entities to continuously evaluate local and regional housing needs, collaborate on programming efforts, and leverage alternative funding sources in order to better align housing development with community goals and values and to meet unmet housing needs.







## 10. ACTION PLAN





# CHAPTER 10: ACTION PLAN

To advance the vision and goals of this plan, specific actions will be required based on the strategies described in each individual chapter. This chapter provides a roadmap for the City with prioritized action items for implementation, including potential partners and timing.

## ZONING ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

A key recommendation to assist in implementing this plan is a full reevaluation and rewrite of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. The following are recommended strategic amendments:

Figure 10.1: Recommended Zoning Ordinance Changes

Topic	Action Item
High Impact Zoning Districts	Create new Zoning Districts and regulations for heavy industrial, mining, intensive outdoor commercial, intensive outdoor storage, and adult entertainment uses pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 59.69.
Incentivize Front Porches and Avoid Snout Houses	Allow smaller front setbacks for residential developments that incorporate a porch and require front-loaded garages to be setback from the front plane of the structure and/or a maximum façade percentage standard for front-loaded garages.
Mobile Home Regulations	Create a new Zoning District for mobile home uses that includes enhanced performance and design standards to provide formal regulatory control rather than relying on conditional use permits to regulate such uses pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 59.69.
Short Term Rentals	Add tourist rooming houses/short term rentals as a new accessory land use with regulations that are compliant with Wisconsin Statutes 66.1014.
Affordable Housing	Consider an affordable housing height or density bonus within new multi-family or mixed-use developments.
Flexibility in Multi-Family Zoning Districts	Utilize a form-based approach to regulate multi-family development that provides bulk dimensional standards for different unit types and configurations rather than a maximum density threshold.
Allow Two-Family By-Right	Consider allowing all forms of two-family development (duplex, twin house, two flat) in existing single-family zoning districts.
Implement Sustainability Incentives	<p>Modify the current landscaping requirements to provide a point-based landscaping system that requires defined standards for each portion of the site, but provides flexibility for application on any given site.</p> <p>Codify raingardens and bioswales within the landscaping section of the Architectural Review and Landscape Code and reduce points needed if one is included in new development.</p> <p>Create standards in the Architectural Review and Landscape Code to protect environmentally sensitive areas on-site and that creates opportunities for contiguous habitat areas between sites.</p> <p>Add electric vehicle charging as a permitted accessory land use in all districts and consider requiring charging stations for certain land uses. Within residential areas, charging stations should be oriented toward the interior of the structure, whereas other land uses should have the ability for charging stations inside or outside the structure. Design guidelines should accompany this land use to ensure appropriate scale and location on the site.</p>



Topic	Action Item
Implement Sustainability Incentives	Integrate sustainability and green development best practice standards within local ordinances (ex. LEED, Green Building Council, Universal Design Standards, etc.). Add alternative energy production land uses such as solar and wind to be principal and accessory land uses in the Zoning Ordinance. Allow accessory land uses of this type in all zoning districts.
Increasing Mixed-Use Opportunities	Establish a new land use for mixed-use and/or live-work buildings that requires a defined percentage of nonresidential to be included on the ground floor, instead of the upper story dwelling unit land use. Make this new land use by-right in all commercial, office, and institutional districts.
Accessory Dwelling Units and In-Family Suites	Allow ADUs and in-family suites in all single-family districts with updated requirements and conditions for each.
Address Commercial Zoning District Bulk Standards	Remove maximum densities and instead utilize a form-based approach with defined bulk dimensional standards for regulating residential densities in these districts. Coupled with this, reduce minimum front yard setbacks for these districts to incentivize buildings oriented toward the street with parking in the rear. Reduce side setbacks in all districts to allow multiple buildings on separate lots to be directly adjacent to one another like the Central Business District Zoning District. Allow more than one building per lot through a mechanism that doesn't require a Planned Development every time. Increase maximum heights across all Commercial Zoning districts to accommodate higher density developments.
Adjust Parking Regulations	Consider either reducing or eliminating minimum parking standards across all districts, establishing maximum parking standards, and requiring minimum bicycle and/or electric vehicle parking standards. Require at least one pedestrian and bicycle access point be provided from the sidewalk on all street frontages within all districts.
Enhance Design Standards	Update the Architectural Review Code to codify context-sensitive design standards related to material types, building orientation, architectural features, and screening that is customized by land use, but also provides flexibility in individual designs.
Update Sign Regulations	Remove all content-based requirements from the Sign Ordinance to reflect compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court Reed v. Gilbert decision.
Reduce Minimum Lot Sizes	Consider a flat bulk dimensional minimum lot size for each residential zoning district (ex. 6,000, 8,000, 10,000 square feet) and reduce those minimums to accommodate more diverse housing unit types such as small-lot single-family, two and three-flats, townhomes, and a variety of multi-family types and scales.
Explore Overlay Zoning Districts	Consider the use of a variety of overlay zoning districts to assist in implementation of this plan for transit-oriented development, environmental protection, artist or maker spaces, etc. Overlay districts could provide area-specific provisions for bulk dimensional standards like density, height, or setbacks, customized design standards, or variability in the types of permitted land uses.

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 10.2 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the City intends to complete to implement this plan. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including other jurisdictions, governments, and groups. This list is not exhaustive. It includes the strategies and recommendations that are likely to be near-term actions. The City Council may choose to pursue additional actions or prioritize other actions as conditions change. Additionally, to track progress with implementation of this plan and level of achievement towards meeting the community's goals, the City's Strategic Plan should continue to guide the data indicators and measures used to judge success and progress.

The table has four different columns of information, described as follows:

- **Topic:** The first column identifies the chapter or topic area of this plan where additional information regarding the recommendation may be found or more generally describes the overarching category in which the Action Item falls under.
- **Action Item:** The second column lists the specific steps, strategies, and actions recommended to implement key aspects of the plan.
- **Potential Partners:** The third column implies that City staff will take the lead on most (if not all) Action Items, but also lists other agencies, groups, or entities who would be a valuable partner in the pursuit of accomplishing that Action Item.
- **Implementation Timeframe:** The fourth column responds to the comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a stated sequence. The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Each timeframe is defined as follows:
  - **In Progress** means that the Action Item has been initiated or addressed at some level, but it is not yet complete and remains an implementation priority corresponding to strategies in the Plan. In Progress status often used for Action Items that were identified in past Comprehensive Plans or have been long-established objectives of the City. These Action Items should be continuously reevaluated to make sure that progress is being made.
  - **Short** means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 5 years, following the adoption date of this plan.
  - **Medium** means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 10 years, following the adoption date of this plan.
  - **Long** means that the Action Item should be pursued 10+ years, following the adoption date of this plan.





Figure 10.2: Implementation Action Items

	Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Partner with local groups and organizations to increase diverse community engagement and educational events.	School Districts, Local Interest Groups, Rock County	Ongoing
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Periodically update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and continue to add additional properties, structures, and districts to the local register.	City	Ongoing
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Provide increased in-house City staff training on sustainability and climate action best practices.	County, Higher Education Institutions	Short
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Complete a City of Beloit Historic Preservation Plan to update existing condition information, address regulation and ordinance changes, and provide an action plan for documenting, preserving, and maintaining the community's unique historic and cultural assets.	City, Local Interest Groups, State	Short
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Consider a consistent community-wide branding initiative and marketing plan to unify and widely-distribute Beloit's brand to residents, business, and tourists.	City, Local Interest Groups	Short
	Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Identify new community garden sites and expand community garden spaces on existing vacant lots or parkland throughout the City.	City, School District, Local Interest Groups	Medium
	Agricultural and Natural Resources	Complete updates to relevant municipal ordinances to allow lawns and green space to be replaced with native plantings and gardens.	City	Short
	Agricultural and Natural Resources	Monitor changes to stormwater management best practices and continue to ensure that the City's Zoning, Subdivision, and Stormwater Ordinance are reflective of those practices and policies.	City	Short
	Agricultural and Natural Resources	Complete an update to the community-wide tree inventory and develop an Urban Forestry Management Plan.	City	Medium
	Agricultural and Natural Resources	Partner with the DNR and Rock County to increase wayfinding and interpretive signage for all natural areas in and around the City.	DNR, County	Medium
	Land Use	Require neighborhood or areas plans in advance of new or expansions to existing neighborhoods, business parks, or key community corridors.	Developers and Property Owners	Ongoing
	Land Use	Use the Future Land Use Map as the basis for all public and private sector development decisions and land use change, including annexations, zoning map	City	Ongoing

Topic		Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
		amendments, conditional use permits, subdivision approvals, and extension of municipal utilities.		
	Land Use	Conduct and complete corridor revitalization plans for key community corridors, beginning with Madison Road and Prairie Avenue. Following completion, implement the recommendations of each plan.	City, School District, Local Interest Groups, Property Owners	Short
	Land Use	Complete an update of the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan.	City, Local Interest Groups, Property Owners	Medium
	Land Use	Create new neighborhood associations across the City and, once established, complete neighborhood revitalization plans for each.	City, Local Interest Groups, Property Owners	Medium
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Participate in regional planning for expanded bus transit systems and passenger rail.	County, SLATS, Janesville, SMTD, and Neighboring Municipalities and MPOs.	Ongoing
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Leverage county, regional, state, and federal opportunities for grants and alternative funding sources to support transportation and community facilities projects.	County, SLATS, Neighboring Municipalities, State	Ongoing
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Continue to use and update the City's Capital Improvement Plan and annually review for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.	City	Ongoing
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Implement the City of Beloit Open Space and Recreation Plan. Update the plan every 5 years.	County, School District, Local Interest Groups	Ongoing
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Establish a local sustainability award that is annually awarded.	Rock County	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Conduct a Park Fee Needs Assessment and update the City's Subdivision Ordinance to reflect new parkland dedication, fee-in-lieu of parkland dedication, and park improvement fee standards.	City	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and	Conduct a parking analysis in the downtown area to better understand existing issues and create an action plan for how to resolve those issues.	City, Local Interest Groups, Chamber	Short



Topic		Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
	Community Facilities			
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Develop a City Green Infrastructure plan/policy.	City	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Update the City-wide Official Map.	County, SLATS, Towns	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that requires all future street projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and placemaking infrastructure. Complete updates to the City's Subdivision Ordinance to reflect requirements for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and narrower street design.	City	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Implement the City's utilities and community facilities recommendations in Figure 6.1.	City	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Prepare for transportation technology changes by planning for future electric vehicle (EV) chargers that have the greatest community impact through an EV charger siting analysis.	City, Local Energy Providers	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Implement the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and pursue becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community as designated by the American League of Bicyclists.	SLATS, County, Towns, State	Short
	Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Complete a City Climate Action or Renewable Energy Action Plan.	Utilities, local and regional interest groups, County	Short
	Transportation	Adopt a City-wide Sidewalk Policy for infilling the existing network and all new development. Investigate and consider implementing a sidewalk utility to fund sidewalk infill projects.	City	Medium

	Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
	Housing	Complete an update to the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan (NRSA) for the Hackett and Merrill Neighborhoods.	City	Short
	Housing	Conduct or provide training opportunities for City staff and officials on housing to stay up to date on this constantly evolving topic.	Higher Education Institutions	Short
	Housing	Implement the TID Housing Plan by leveraging funding available through the newly-established Affordable Housing Fund.	City	Short
	Housing	Develop and implement a City-wide housing approach and strategy that includes collaborative action steps that will be taken to improve housing availability and affordability throughout Beloit.	County, Local Interest Groups, Developers, School District	Short
	Housing	Create and utilize a landlord enrollment program and database to track rental units across the community to improve communication and accountability related to rental properties.	City	Short
	Housing	Create a set of pre-approved housing plans that can be used by property owners to facilitate expedited infill development processes.	City	Medium
	Economic Development	Contribute to partnerships between local institutions and employers on workforce development training.	School District, Higher Education Institutions, Local Businesses	Ongoing
	Economic Development	Implement the Beloit Childcare Supply Action Plan. Continuously track progress and update the plan within the next 10 years.	County, Local Interest Groups	Ongoing
	Economic Development	Establish a webpage with tools and resources for entrepreneurs and small-business startups. Develop a strategy for widely distributing this information to residents, businesses, and schools.	County, School District, Higher Education Institutions	Short
	Economic Development	Create and distribute an annual online business survey to gather information and track economic development progress over time.	Local Interest Groups	Short
	Economic Development	Develop a new Detailed Area Plan for the potential expansion of the Gateway Business Park and strive to incorporate eco-industrial park principles within that plan.	Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation	Short
	Economic Development	Complete a City of Beloit Arts and Culture Plan to increase collaboration with the arts community and prioritize future public art installments.	Local Interest Groups, School District, Higher Education Institutions	Medium
	All	Participate in county, regional, and state updates to existing plans and development of new plans.	County, SLATS, and State	Ongoing
	All	Explore and improve upon City communication methods to engage the whole community in innovative ways, including maintaining an up-to-date website,	City, Local Interest Groups	Ongoing



Topic		Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
		providing multi-lingual and ADA-accessible options, utilizing the e-notify system and more.		
	All	Continue to identify opportunities for property acquisition to guide land use, housing, economic development, and other goals.	City, Property Owners	Ongoing
	All	Complete an annual Progress Update tracking the implementation of this Action Plan.	City	Annual
	All	Complete a full rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the recommendations of this plan. See Figure 10.1.	City	Short
	All	Advance the initiatives in Chapter 3 to increase collaboration between the City and all Beloit area schools to improve education in the City.	City, School District	Short
	All	Complete a full update of the City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan by 2034.	City	Long