

2020

A Vision
for the
City Center

Beloit2020

The Spirit of Civic Enterprise



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	p.1
Executive Summary	p.2
Introduction	p.3
Planning Process and Context	pp.4-14
Framework and City Center Principles	pp.15-20
City Center Goals	pp.21-27
City Center Districts	pp.28-38
City Center Vision Map	p.39

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City Center Planning Committee

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David Botts, Public Works Director, City of Beloit
Julie Christensen, Community Development Director, City of Beloit
Andrew Janke, Economic Development Director, City of Beloit
John Nicholas, Vice President of Administration, Beloit College
Dan Schooff, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners, Public Service Commission
Mike Slavish, Director of Real Estate, Hendricks Development Group

City of Beloit

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City of South Beloit City Council
Beloit College
Beloit School Board
Beloit Economic Development Corporation
Beloit Memorial High School Students and Staff
Beloit Memorial Hospital
Chamber of Commerce
Downtown Beloit Association
Citizens of Beloit and South Beloit
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Beloit 2020 further acknowledges the City Councils of Beloit and South Beloit for their unanimous endorsement of resolutions supporting this Vision. Both resolutions were approved in June 2005.

Executive Summary

Beloit's City Center is the heart of the Rock River Valley. This 700-acre area includes the cities of Beloit and South Beloit. It is envisioned to be the economic, cultural, social, educational, and civic center for 100,000 people within a 10-mile radius from the Beloit Visitor Bureau.

In 2004, Beloit 2020 initiated the City Center Vision project to establish a compelling, market-based 15-year direction for the future of the City Center. The result is a Vision that aims to effectively position Beloit's City Center for a future that promises significant economic, technological and social change.

Public and stakeholder participation have been significant throughout the visioning process. Focus groups and community meetings in April 2005 were the highlights of this engaging dialogue about the City Center's future.

The Vision for City Center

Beloit's City Center will be the confluence of the marketplace, ideas, culture, and the exceptional.

Beloit City Center Principles

1. Focus on the River
2. Animation: Establish a diversity of uses and balance of activities
3. Renewal: Encourage compactness and intensity of development
4. Connection: Create physical linkages to places within and beyond the City Center
5. Build a positive identity

The Vision organizes the City Center into nine districts. Each district has a unique visual character, mix of land uses, special features and development potential. Each district contains essential elements for a successful City Center, and each district requires attention in order for the whole City Center to reach its potential.

The Vision Map provides more detailed recommendations for the City Center by showing recommended land uses, river links, activities centers, special streets, key intersections, trails and neighborhood redevelopment areas.

The Vision sets the agenda for the work that needs to be completed over the next 15 years. As the Vision is disseminated to the broader public, a master plan must be developed with specific action plans to transform the many opportunities that have presented themselves as part of the visioning process into reality.

Beloit City Center Goals

In 2020, the City Center will provide the community with the following qualities and advantages:

- Community pride
- Continuous learning, innovation and creativity
- Strong economy and diversity of jobs
- Unique character
- Vibrant mix of activities
- Balanced transportation system
- Quality and accessible open spaces
- Range of housing options
- Compact and walkable
- Healthy and sustainable
- Clean and safe

Introduction

Purpose

For centuries, the city center was the heart and defining symbol of a community and region. It was the center of economic, social, civic, and cultural activities, a place where people came together to conduct business, meet, be entertained, share information and ideas, and live. It established a community's overall identity and personality through its physical attributes and social interactions. It was a vibrant and exciting place.

After World War II, many of the economic and social functions of the central city moved to the periphery, which not only impacted economic vitality but also cultural, civic and living conditions. The result has been a decline of the city center, which has adversely affected community identity, as well as social, civic and cultural gatherings and institutions.

This cycle is changing. We are in a new era – an era of grand economic, technological and social change. Competitive communities around the world are embracing these changes and distinguishing themselves in the marketplace for jobs, residents and visitors by refocusing on their city centers. Competitive communities have strong, healthy and vibrant city centers that provide a high quality of life for existing residents and are major attractions for new residents and businesses. Successfully revitalized city centers include strong leaders; active institutions; adaptive reuse of existing buildings and sites; historic preservation; a mix of housing types and prices; a diverse economy; an abundance of parks and recreation facilities; educational opportunities; arts and cultural activities; and safe and efficient transportation choices, systems and networks.

Beloit must become well positioned to prosper in this new era. Our citizens, businesses, institutions, attractions, festivities, natural environment, location and record of success allow us to embrace the future full of optimism and excitement. This Vision provides directions to ensure that we succeed in this new era. To achieve this Vision, we must work together toward a clear and achievable goal. The goal of this Vision is to create a framework for the Beloit City Center and to establish a set of principles that will guide its future to become a great place. The Vision builds on our past, capitalizes on our strengths, and creates opportunities for our continued future success. Our Vision is broad and grand. It focuses on the Rock River that flows through the city, creates an overall strategy for continued economic renewal, inspires animated places and activities, provides connections, and is based on market realities and a positive identity.

Author David Brooks, in his book *On Paradise Drive*, encourages us to be future minded in the following passage: "The capacity to see the present from the vantage point of the future. It starts with imagination, the ability to see a vision with detail and vividness, as if it already existed. Then the future-minded person is able to think backward from that vision; to ask, 'what must I do to take the future that is in my head and make it exist in the world?'"

What is a Vision?

The Vision is the big picture concept of where the City Center is going over the next 15 years and beyond. It describes the desired City Center and generally how it might get there. It is, by its nature, very general; it is focused on visioning and doesn't drift toward too much detail or specific solutions. This is somewhat different from conventional planning documents, which identify specific redevelopment sites, improvement projects, and implementation strategies.

This Vision provides a starting point for the update of a more detailed City Center Master Plan, which will provide detailed recommendations necessary to achieve the vision.

Visioning establishes a framework for ideas and information; it makes a connection between the market condition and trends, past and present planning initiatives, goals and guiding principles, and action steps to achieve the vision.

Our Vision for the City Center will pull us into the future.

Process

| VISION ELEMENTS |

The Vision described in this report includes:

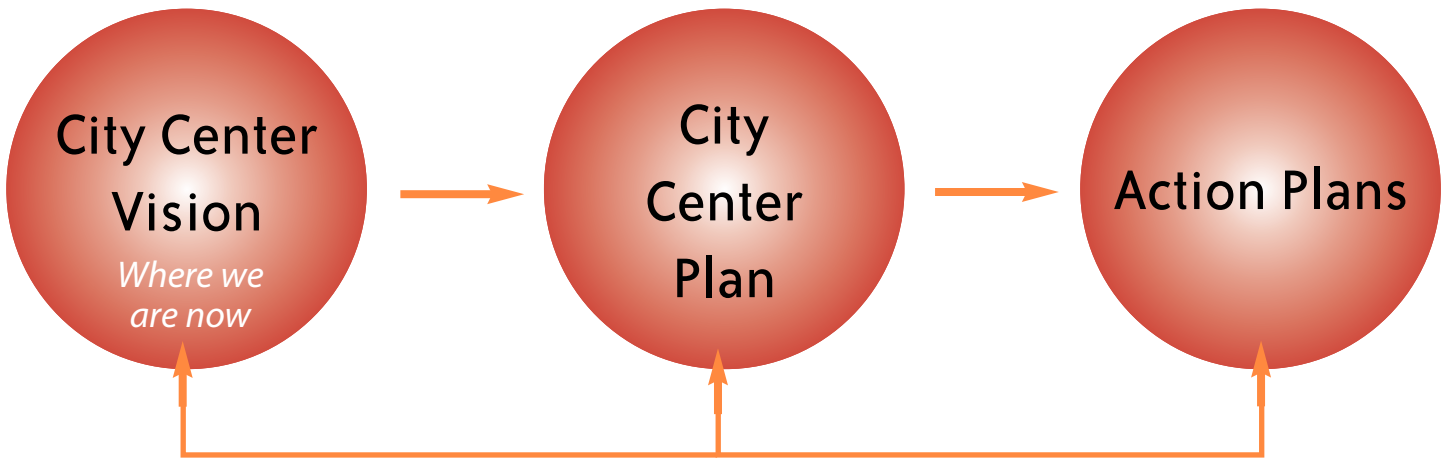
- The City Center in the Region
- The New Economy and the role of the City Center
- An understanding of the planning context (location and previous planning efforts)
- Process
- City Center Vision, Goals
- City Center Principles
- City Center Districts

| CITY CENTER PLAN |

The future City Center Plan will set out in detail the path from vision to implementation. It will provide:

- District and site specific recommendations in narrative and graphic forms;
- Land use, zoning and development recommendations;
- Design guidelines and illustrations;
- Implementation and action plan;
- A second phase of the market assessment, including the identification and feasibility of specific project opportunities and a market-based implementation plan.

P R I V A T E / P U B L I C P R O C E S S



| STEPS |

- Vision: Big picture concept for the future of the City Center described in this document
- City Center Plan: Detailed path from vision to implementation
- Action Plans: Strategies, steps and projects to implement the Plan

Focus for the Vision

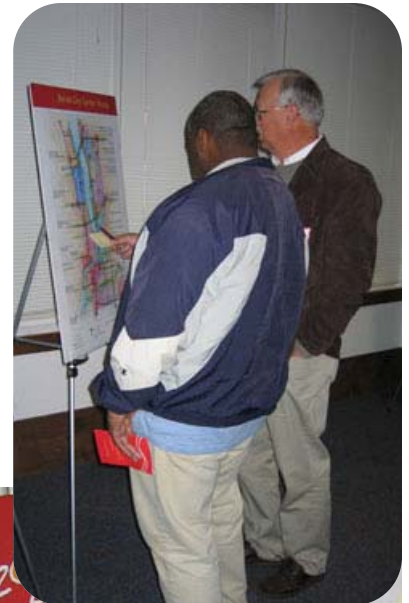
Vision Public Input Sessions

Engaging the public and stakeholder groups in a dialogue about the desired future of the City Center was the most important ingredient in creating this Vision. These focus group input sessions occurred April 27-29, 2005 at the Beloit Rotary River Center.

Focus group participants were asked to imagine what they would like the City Center to be in the year 2020 and then to actively help create and refine this Vision for the City Center.

Focus group participants included:

- Beloit 2020
- Neighborhood & City Residents
- Downtown Beloit
- Visit Beloit
- School District
- Beloit Memorial Hospital
- Cities of Beloit and South Beloit
- Elected & Appointed Officials
- Chamber of Commerce
- Realtors
- Businesses
- Beloit Foundation
- Beloit College
- Youth



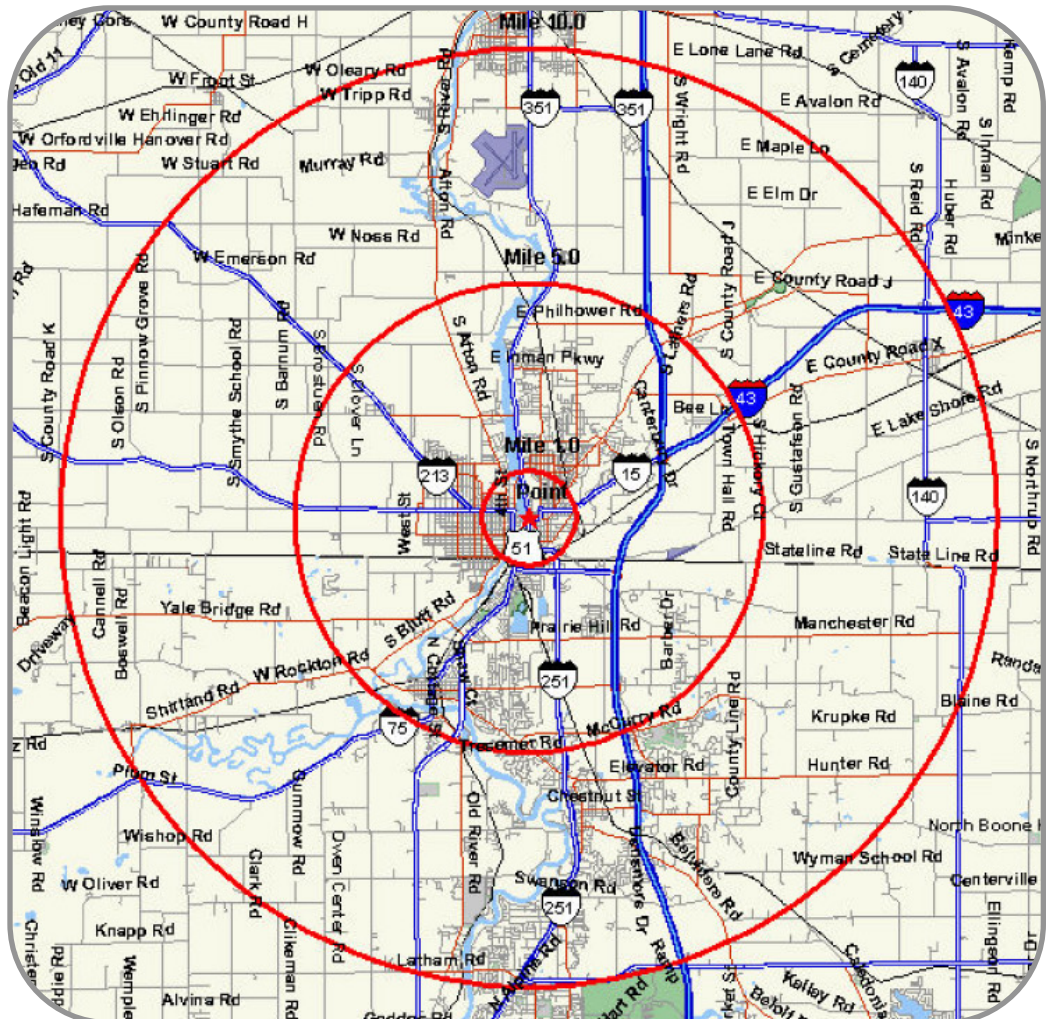
A Regional Center

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION...

The City of Beloit is *strategically located in the heart of a cluster of communities* from Chicago to Milwaukee, up Wisconsin's Fox River Valley, across to the Twin Cities of Minnesota, down through the Quad Cities and back to Chicago, named *the "Circle City"* by distinguished regional planner Phil Lewis. This regional city contains within its circumference wonderful natural features such as the driftless area, vast agricultural lands, and impressive urban development at the center. Notably, Beloit is 60 miles from Milwaukee, 50 miles from Madison and 90 miles from Chicago.

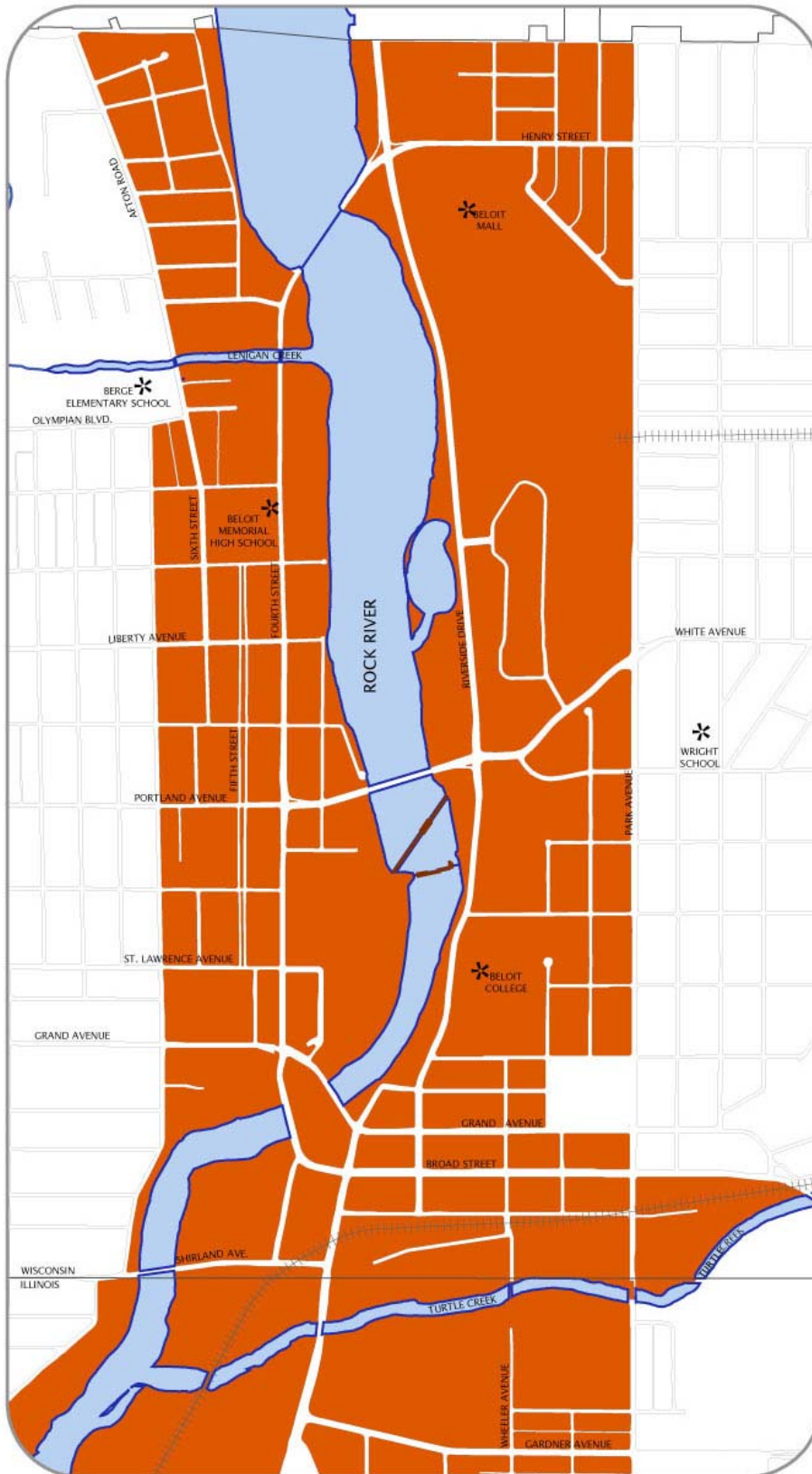


Beloit City Center is the center of the Rock River Valley, and is a regional economic, cultural, educational, and entertainment hub.



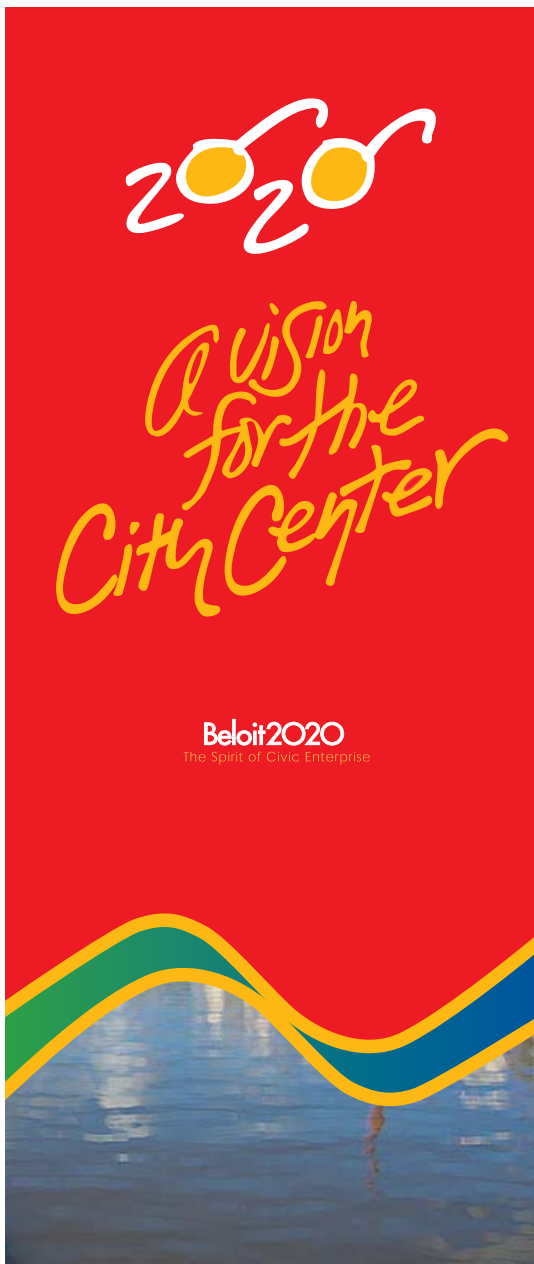
City Center

City Center
Here and Now



- Study Area
- City of Beloit Municipal Boundary

Refocusing on the Center



Like a great novel, once you become a part of Beloit's fascinating story it is impossible to let go. The story contains a cast of colorful and dedicated actors, a grand stage - the river and its banks, a first class international college, vibrant industrial and commercial districts, historic neighborhoods, and a variety of cultural events.

The City Center area is what attracted people to Beloit and where the City was founded. It was on this prime land along the shores and bluffs of the Rock River that Native Americans chose to build their effigy mounds, and early settlers decided to build their new homes and businesses.

What makes Beloit's story compelling is that the next chapters will continue to delight and engage people in a journey of imagination and opportunity. Visit Beloit's *Public Art in Beloit City Center* captures the spirit of this future in its catchphrase "off the walls and into the open." The idea is to expect the unexpected in a community with a rich industrial heritage, a strong arts community, and a riverfront system of parks and trails rarely experienced in communities of Beloit's size.

Some of Beloit's opportunities include positioning itself for the continuously changing international economy, technological advances, national and regional demographic shifts and social preferences, and changes in state funding and priorities.

A New Economic Era

THE MARKETPLACE

One of the first steps in creating this Vision consisted of conducting an Overview of the Beloit Marketplace. The key findings of this assessment include:

- Median household incomes are comparable to the state and national averages within a short drive of the City Center (about 10 minutes), and are projected to increase within the next five years.
- The number of people in age brackets over 55-years old is increasing. By 2008, the number of people who are 55 years and older will increase by over 20%. In general, these individuals are empty nesters (no children at home) and are within their prime wage-earning years. This also leads to an increase in spending power and has positive impacts in the areas of retail, housing, leisure and entertainment.
- While the Beloit downtown housing market is fairly undeveloped, the pricing of rental units is considerably high for the Beloit area (\$860 to \$975 per month) with a 100% occupancy level. This is an indication there is unmet demand for downtown living and the opportunity for growth is healthy. Currently there are a number of initiatives to increase the number of housing units in the immediate Grand Avenue area. These initiatives will bring more people downtown and help foster economic growth and development.
- Efforts to stop the conversion of single-family units into multi-family units in the City Center are working, which reduces the number of rental units surrounding downtown Beloit and increases homeownership.
- The population of people living within a 10-15 minute drive of the City Center is expected to grow by 4 - 6 % between 2001 and 2008.
- The Beloit area has more theaters, museums, and attractions than most markets of this size. All of these attractions and museums are a potential source of visitors from outside of the Beloit market and can potentially bring visitors to the City Center.

A New Economic Era

Beloit has been a regional economic center throughout its history and will continue to serve this function in the future. The City has a well deserved reputation as a producer of high quality industrial products. Its position at the border of the industrial heartland and the agricultural breadbasket provided opportunities to develop and produce the machines used for transforming agricultural commodities into consumer goods along with machines used for the production of all types of power - water, wind, diesel and electrical.

Similar to the national economy, Beloit's economy has fundamentally changed over the past half century. It has transitioned away from an exclusive focus on industry to that of a diversified economic center. While industrial uses remain significant employers in the City, the growth of office, services, and education provide the genesis for a stable, diverse, and healthy economy during this century.

The new economy requires a variety of different skills and people, which will expand the diversity of Beloit's population. Economist and management guru Peter Drucker, in *The Next Society*, explains, "The only fast growing group in the American workforce is knowledge workers, people whose jobs require formal and advanced schooling." Knowledge workers are the new capitalists, and knowledge has become the key and only scarce resource, he adds. Expanding Beloit's workforce to include a greater percentage of young skilled workers will position the City to remain a vibrant regional economic center far into the future.

A New Economic Era

The vision for the City Center's continued renewal must be based on goals that are feasible in either the private sector or through a private-public partnership approach. Realistic targets need to reflect the economy, the character of the population, the existing development context, the assets that can be leveraged, and the resources the City can use to leverage private investment and attract business.

| PLACE-BASED ECONOMY |

- Beloit's economy must build on its strengths - its people and their relationships, the City's history, the vibrant and beautiful RiverFront, an outstanding international college and local schools, strategic location, cultural activities and features, and lands well suited for new development.
- Beloit must be a clean and green city. The Rock River and park system are natural focal points. Physical development in the City Center - buildings, streets, and public gathering spaces - should enable the river to flow throughout the City.
- Beloit's locally owned businesses must remain and grow in the City Center - they are the community's economic engine.
- The workforce needs to be continuously trained, consist of creative minds, and people excited about working here. In order for Beloit to retain and attract the best people, the average City income levels must be competitive with state and national levels.
- The economy must be further diversified to provide opportunities for people of all income levels in a variety of professions.

| INFRASTRUCTURE |

- Great public streets and gathering spaces set a positive tone and establish the character of the physical environment. It is important they convey a positive image about the City.
- Changing technology must be considered in every City Center decision, including how to incorporate features such as fiber optic networks and wireless facilities.
- People must be able to move around the City Center by foot, car, bike, and transit conveniently, safely and enjoyably.
- Parking must be convenient and easy to find.

| LIVING |

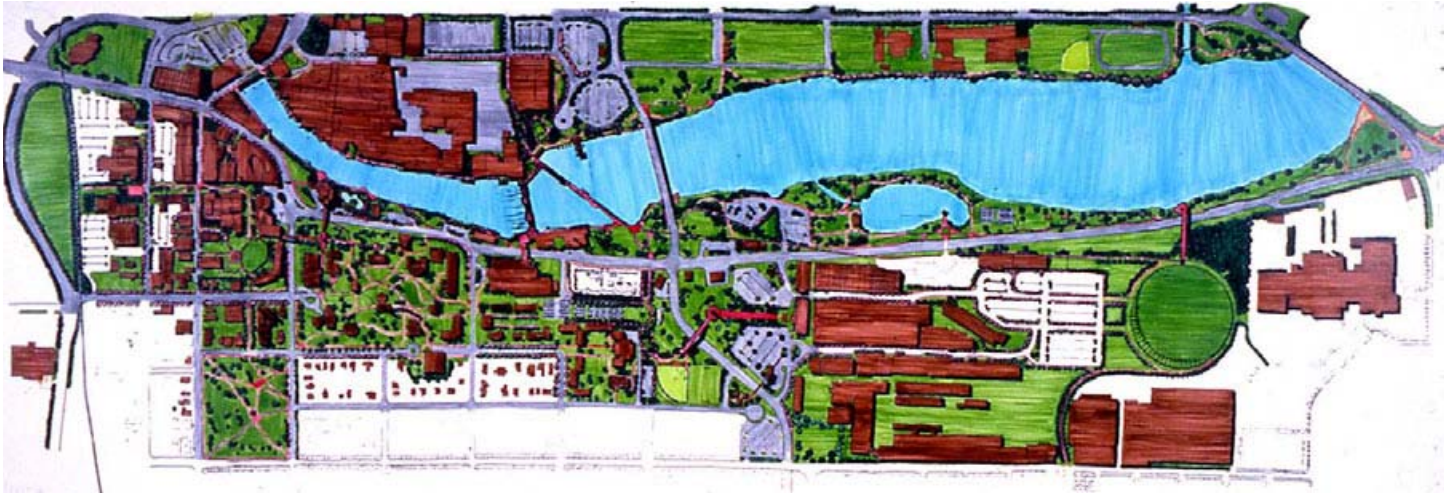
- New residential developments create a customer base for local businesses. People are moving back to downtowns across the country to enjoy vibrant urban lifestyles. Beloit is uniquely positioned for this trend because of the abundance of vacant or under utilized land, and the opportunities for outstanding waterfront views - an amenity few communities can offer. There is demand in the City for urban living and this demand must be met - it will attract a more diversified workforce and generate new economic opportunities for entertainment, shopping, and dining businesses.
- Arts, recreation, and entertainment are key components to vibrant urban neighborhoods.
- Homeownership is increasing in the City Center. This change will continue to create stability and improvements in neighborhoods, and create more customers for neighborhood businesses.
- Mixed-use developments consisting of office and housing supports retail by creating more customers, supporting longer business hours, and increasing rents. There should be an emphasis on expanding mixed-use developments throughout the City Center.

| PARTNERSHIPS |

- This Vision will be achieved by reinforcing Beloit's existing partnerships and forging new partnerships among the private, public, and non-profit sectors.
- The economic environment must promote existing business expansion, new businesses, small-businesses, and incubators. The entrepreneurial spirit must be cultivated in the City Center; it should remain a place for innovation.

This Vision establishes a framework for a healthy economy by capitalizing on the City's assets.

A History of Success



Past Planning Efforts

Beloit 2000's (now Beloit 2020) first major initiative involved the development of the RiverFront Project Concept Plan ("Lewis Sketch Plan"), prepared by the distinguished landscape architect and regional planner Phil Lewis of the University of Wisconsin, and the RiverFront Master Plan prepared by Schreiber/Anderson Associates and Vandewalle and Associates. These plans gave priority to rebuilding and expanding the riverfront's infrastructure of parks, special event spaces and circulation systems as a means of creating a positive image for the city as a whole, increasing tourism, and stimulating private development in the city's center. The remarkable results of that effort launched Beloit's renaissance.

Subsequently, a number of plans have been completed or are in progress to improve the City Center. Some plans address one component of the City Center, such as the transportation system or aging housing, while others impact a particular area such as the Beloit College Campus Master Plan.

City Center Plans

- The Lewis Sketch Plan
- The Beloit RiverFront Master Plan
- City Center ... On Common Ground: Opportunities at the Center
- Beloit RiverFront Phase II

Specific Area Plans

- Beloit College Campus Master Plan
- Conceptual Plan for the Riverbend Site
- Maple Avenue Redevelopment Plan
- Stateline Area Bike and Pedestrian Plan
- Neighborhood Development Initiative
- Riverwalk Linkage
- The City of Beloit Transit Development Plan
- Riverside Drive Plan
- Beloit Riverside Park Master Plan
- Downtown Design Master Plan
- Iron Works Plan
- Beloit Mall Redevelopment Plan
- Other Private Development Plans

Other Plans

- Beloit Comprehensive Plan

A History of Success

Beloit has enjoyed remarkable success over the past 15 years in revitalizing its City Center.

These photos depict some of the resulting physical improvements. More importantly, the positive spirit this effort has created throughout the community is as strong as it ever has been.

Up on the Bluff Before



Up on the Bluff After



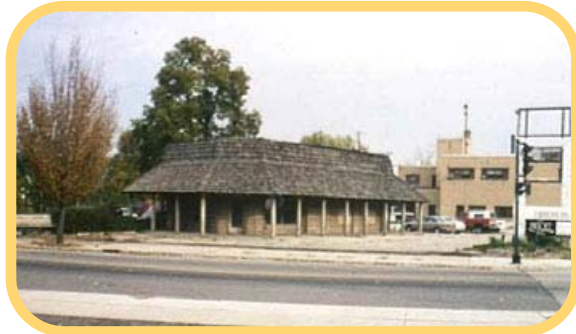
444 E. Grand Avenue Before



444 E. Grand Avenue After



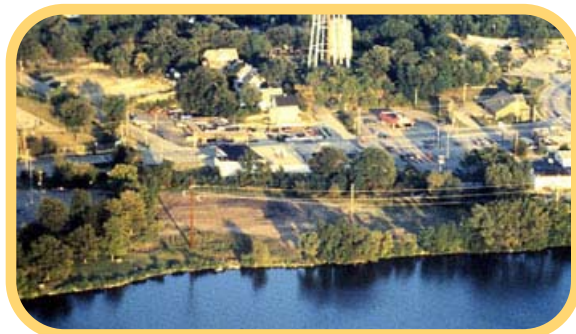
The Beloit Inn Before



The Beloit Inn After



The RiverWalk Before



The RiverWalk After



Build on Our Strengths



We have a lot to be proud of in our City Center. Our community's assets provide us with a good place to live, play, learn, work and shop, and provide a solid foundation from which to improve in the future. Some of our greatest assets are:

- Dedicated people who care about and make a difference in Beloit.
- Dedicated, proactive organizations and city government that invest in our neighborhoods, parks and open space systems, transportation networks, and business districts to continuously make them better places.
- The Rock River, RiverFront, park and trail system, and creeks, which collectively provide natural, scenic, recreational, social, and learning amenities.
- Strong educational system with a first class international institution, Beloit College, on a magnificent campus; Blackhawk Technical College; and a quality K-12 school system.
- Strong local businesses providing good jobs and contributing to the community's organizations and educational institutions in many ways.
- An abundance of public art, providing stimulation and scenic values.
- Historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods that preserve our culture and heritage.
- A vibrant and continuously expanding and improving downtown.
- A community motivation to reuse brownfields and greyfields.

Why Now?



Civic Partnership

In the late 1980s, the vision of a renewed City Center for Beloit began with the formation of a unique civic partnership of business, government, civic organizations, families, non-profit organizations and educational

institutions, under the banner of the Beloit 2000 Development Corporation. This visionary organization, recently renamed Beloit 2020, continues to lead efforts to renew and animate the City Center and expand connections to and within it.

Beloit 2020's commitment and determination to improving the quality of life in the City Center has remained steadfast for over 15 years. Beloit 2020 initiated the update of the 1996 City Center Master Plan in summer 2004 to set the stage for the continuing revitalization of the City's Center begun in 1990 with the RiverFront Project Master Plan. The organization hired the design and planning firm of Schreiber/Anderson Associates to develop this two-part project. The first part is to develop a Vision for the future of the City Center. The second part will be to create a master plan which establishes a detailed path between the vision and implementation.

Beloit 2020 and Schreiber/Anderson Associates have jointly created The Beloit RiverFront Master Plan and The Beloit City Center Master Plan among other specific area plans and projects.

Why Now?

Beloit has enjoyed tremendous success with the implementation of many of its existing plans' recommendations. In addition, a series of new planning efforts have been completed since the City Center Master Plan's adoption or are currently underway. The goal of the Vision is to present a fresh direction for the future of the City Center that ties together Beloit's past accomplishments and existing initiatives into a unified grand plan for the future.

This will position Beloit to capitalize on its many opportunities for continued success, expand and tie together improvements within and beyond the riverfront into neighborhoods and activity centers, and enhance the quality of life and economic environment. The vision will guide continued private-public partnerships which, in turn, will renew, animate, and connect the City Center. A detailed Master Plan will follow, similar to earlier renewal efforts in the City, to identify specific projects.

Over the past 15 years, the Beloit City Center has experienced a dramatic renaissance around the RiverFront.

The decay and blight along the Rock River in the late 1980s has been reversed - it is once again the City's greatest asset and regional attraction.

The Framework

A VISION FOR THE CITY CENTER.....
*Beloit's City Center will be the confluence
of the marketplace, ideas, culture and
the exceptional.*

BELOIT CITY CENTER PRINCIPLES

- (1) Focus on the River
- (2) Animation: Establish a Diversity of Uses and Balance of Activities
- (3) Renewal: Encourage Compactness and Intensity of Development
- (4) Connection: Create Physical Linkages to Places Within and Beyond the City Center
- (5) Build a Positive Identity

Focus on the River



- (a) Buildings and developments will be oriented to the river.
- (b) Public views of the river from streets and open spaces will be preserved, expanded, and emphasized as defining features of City Center.
- (c) Private views of the river outside of the public view sheds will be maximized.
- (d) Green spaces should define the river and creek edges, streetscapes, and weave throughout City Center providing transportation, entertainment, public gathering and recreational opportunities.



Dennis Flood 2004



Dennis Flood 2004



Existing & Potential City Center Images

Animation

| Establish a Diversity of Uses & Balance of Activities |

- (a) Mix of uses that function in a mutually supportive fashion to create a diverse and lively business and leisure environment.
- (b) City Center should be alive with people, uses, activities, and urban design with a mix of shops and restaurants, visitor attractions, housing, interesting buildings, and quality streetscapes and public gathering spaces.
- (c) Uses should include: housing, retail, entertainment, recreation, restaurants, education, civic, office, light manufacturing, and service.
- (d) Increasing housing with river views in the Grand Avenue District should be a high priority.
- (e) Employment should continue to be a major activity in the City Center.
- (f) Recreation will be a major attraction and significantly contribute to the quality of life for Beloit residents, and will be the distinguishing feature of the City Center.

Existing & Potential City Center Images



Renewal

| Encourage Compactness & Intensity of Development |



- (a) Adaptive reuse of buildings will continue to facilitate innovative approaches to the use, re-use and reinvention of previously used buildings and sites while retaining qualities of the City's history and efficiently reusing existing materials.
- (b) City Center will be a compact place where uses and buildings are located close or adjacent to one another, seamlessly integrated, and all existing gaps between uses and buildings are filled.
- (c) Compactness will create a critical mass of activity that is easily accessible by foot and will facilitate pedestrian activity. It will also efficiently reuse land and infrastructure.
- (d) Foster a critical mass of uses and activities.
- (e) Continuity along the street with interesting facades and businesses.
- (f) Appropriately scaled infill development and the productive use of upper story building space for offices or housing can significantly increase the mix and efficiency of land use.

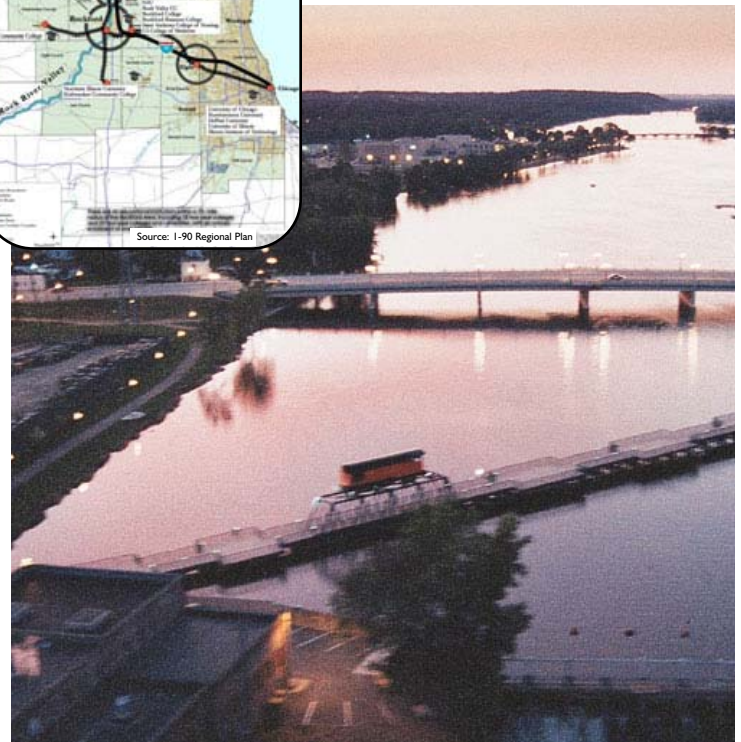


Potential City Center Images

Connection

| Create Physical Linkages to Places Within & Beyond the City Center |

- (a) Vehicular access and parking must be convenient and efficient.
- (b) Pedestrians must have a clear priority in the transportation system to encourage walking and enliven the streets. Sufficiently wide walkways and amenities are needed to enhance the experience.
- (c) Well defined circulation patterns will ensure a high quality pedestrian environment, efficient vehicular access, and access to mass transit.
- (d) People must be able to walk between activity centers using linkages that are direct, physically attractive, and convenient. Pedestrian connections should create an integrated network defined by distinctive streetscape treatments, open spaces, and active street-level uses, tying together the City Center activity as well as linking the city center with adjacent neighborhoods.
- (e) City Center is a place for everyone and will provide connections between people, cultures, ages, and races.
- (f) Physical and social connections will be strengthened between neighborhoods on the east and west sides of the Rock River.



Existing & Potential City Center Images

Build a Positive Identity

Existing & Potential Images



(a) City Center is a destination.



(b) Building on existing strengths with new initiatives and development.

(c) A positive identity will create this as a desirable, safe, interesting place for people to interact.



(d) Retailing, cultural attractions and activities, entertainment, recreation and special events programming contribute to an image of the city center as an exciting place to be.

(e) Housing and the promotion of urban living are also important in shaping the City Center's image as a safe, well-maintained, and livable environment.



(f) Gateway or arrival points must clearly mark and celebrate the entrance to City Center.

(g) Public art should be prolific throughout City Center and continuously provoke imagination and exploration.



City Center Goals

BELOIT CITY CENTER GOALS: IMAGINING THE CITY CENTER IN 2020 AND BEYOND

The following statements are what we imagine people will say about the City Center in the year 2020.

- [Pride]** Beloit is a great place, an engaging place, and a place people are proud to be from and can't wait to visit or relocate to. New and old residents are active ambassadors of and for the City Center.
- [People - Human Capital]** The Beloit City Center is a place of continuous learning, innovation and creativity. It is home to high quality educational institutions - Beloit College, Blackhawk Technical College, Beloit High School, strong neighborhood elementary schools, and a modern public library. This is a continuously learning and improving community where its people possess the skills and knowledge needed to compete in the world economy while also being a culturally rich society. Human capital is the foundation of the Beloit community.
- [Economy and Jobs]** Beloit retains and attracts high quality businesses and people.
- [Character]** There is a special feeling or unique sense of place people experience in the Beloit City Center.
- [Activity Center]** There is a great mix of things for people to do throughout the year; Beloit is a destination for regional, national and international visitors, businesses, and students.
- [Mobility]** The balanced transportation system provides people with choices in how to travel to/from and around the City Center. People want to live in the center because of the ease and enjoyment of moving around this active, engaging part of the city and region.
- [Open Spaces]** The Rock River, Turtle Creek and Lenigan Creek have excellent water quality and are celebrated through continued and expanded recreational and entertainment opportunities around these natural treasures. Properties along their frontages will continue to be acquired, preserved and improved, and public access to and use of these waterways will be enhanced in ways that contribute to their long-term health.
- [Living]** There is a range of housing choices for an economically diverse resident population within and immediately adjacent to the City Center. Everyone wants to find a home here, and most can.
- [Compactness]** The City Center is a stimulating place for pedestrians and activities because it is compact and walkable.
- [Healthy, Sustainable]** The Beloit City Center is the origin of a healthy and environmentally sustainable community and region. City leaders will engage Beloit's citizens in "green" initiatives that will secure the future of the City Center as an environmentally and economically viable community. People will enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle in the City Center with an abundance of opportunities to travel on foot or by bike. It will also be a destination for people to exercise and recreate on land or in water.
- [Clean and Safe]** The City Center is a clean and safe environment. Public and private buildings, sites, parks and open spaces, and streets are well designed and highly maintained to enhance the City Center's image as a clean and attractive place. City Center is a safe place for everyone to enjoy. Designing for safety will increase the sense of security for residents, workers, students, and visitors.

City Center Goals

GOAL 1 | PRIDE

Beloit is a great place, an engaging place, and a place people are proud to be from and can't wait to visit or relocate to.

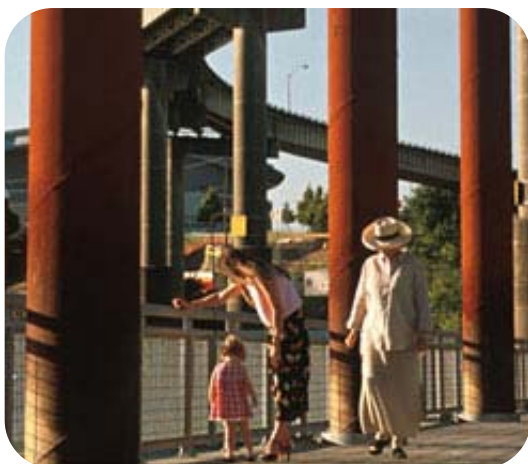
People who live in or visit the City can't wait to share their wonderful stories about this place with their friends, family and co-workers because they have such an enjoyable time here; businesses are relocating to Beloit because this is the place to be; and the City Center is the main attraction. It is the highest source of civic and cultural pride for Beloit, containing beautiful historic and new buildings; an attractive and active riverfront; good jobs; concentration of culture, arts, and entertainment venues and activities; and engaging street life and gathering places.

People think our City is attractive, has a lot of fun things to do, good jobs, clean and vibrant neighborhoods, healthy natural resources; our City is a model for what other communities should strive to become.

Cultural diversity is celebrated and is a source of pride for the community, workforce, and educational system.

Maintain and build on the momentum of the great changes that have occurred over the past 15 years.

Potential
Images



GOAL 2 | PEOPLE-HUMAN CAPITAL

The Beloit City Center is a reputable place for continuous learning. It is home to high quality educational institutions — Beloit College, Blackhawk Technical College, Beloit Memorial High School, strong neighborhood elementary schools, a modern public library — and in a region with other quality institutions. This is a continuously learning and improving community where its people possess the skills and knowledge needed to compete in the world economy while also being a culturally rich society. Human capital is the foundation of the Beloit community.

The educational institutions provide people of all ages, interests and income levels places to grow personally and professionally within the community.

The institutions are physically and actively well connected and integrated into the community. Plans for these institutions and for the City and neighborhoods share the same visions and are well coordinated; resources are shared to collectively implement all plans for the Beloit City Center.

Residents, businesses, visitors, and organizations take full advantage of and support these institutions.



City Center Goals

GOAL 3 | ECONOMY AND JOBS

Beloit retains and attracts high quality businesses and people.

There are good jobs in Beloit and particularly in the City Center. People earn enough money to buy a house, support a family, and invest in their homes, neighborhoods, and community. Beloit retains its top talent for its own positions and successfully recruits new talent from around the country. It is a place people want to relocate to both because of the community and the rewarding career opportunities.

Existing businesses continue to expand and prosper in the community and new businesses locate in Beloit because of its dynamic economy and high caliber workforce.



GOAL 4 | CHARACTER

There is a special feeling or unique sense of place people experience in the Beloit City Center.

The City Center is beautiful and engaging. It consists of a rich collection of historic buildings, including the College, high quality new buildings, the scenic river and river front, well maintained neighborhoods that residents are extremely proud of, and quality recreational areas and public gathering places.

Perceptions. The attractiveness of the built and natural environments, the variety of activities and abundance of people throughout the area collectively create a vibrant, engaging area where people are safe. The vibrant City Center spills over to the school system and creates a variety of engaging learning experiences; the school system benefits from the City Center's improvements and people want to send their children to school in Beloit.

Entrances and gateways to the City and to the City Center in particular are welcoming and inviting - people are excited to be here.



Existing & Potential Images

City Center Goals

GOAL 5 | ACTIVITY CENTER

There is a great mix of activities for people to enjoy in the City Center throughout the year; Beloit is a destination for regional, national and international visitors, businesses, and students.

People are living downtown and in the surrounding neighborhoods that are well connected to the City Center; this is the most appealing place to live because of the interesting activities, and attractive public buildings and gathering places. It is easy to walk around, to recreate along the riverfront, to experience the vibrant neighborhoods, and interact with a diversity of people.

The downtown, riverfront, and Beloit College are well integrated and connected between each other and with the larger community, and offer an abundance of activities.



GOAL 6 | MOBILITY

The balanced transportation system provides people with choices in how to travel to, from and around the City Center. People want to live in the City Center because of the ease and enjoyment of moving around this active, engaging part of the city and region.

The City Center's compact and dense development pattern make walking and biking easy, enjoyable and safe to move from one activity or destination to another. Buildings, properties (public and private), signs, lights, and streetscapes are oriented to the pedestrian. The engaging atmosphere makes people want to walk or bike throughout City Center.

Automobiles arrive in the City Center via attractive gateway corridors, move slowly throughout the area, particularly downtown, and conveniently find a place to park. Once parked, people can easily move to multiple destinations on foot or by bus/trolley.



City Center Goals

GOAL 7 | OPEN SPACES

The Rock River, Turtle Creek and Lenigan Creek have excellent water quality and are celebrated through continued and expanded recreational and entertainment opportunities around these natural treasures. Properties along their frontages will continue to be acquired, preserved and improved, and public access to and use of these waterways and greenways will be enhanced in ways that contribute to their long-term health.

The RiverWalk Path will be expanded and extended. The deck over the Rock River will be removed, providing an additional link in the City's path system.

The river bend area will become a community focal point for a high quality, signature development that both contributes to the vibrancy of the City Center and is environmentally sensitive to the area in which it is located.



Existing & Potential Images

GOAL 8 | LIVING

There is a range of housing choices for an economically diverse resident population within and immediately adjacent to the City Center. Everyone wants to find a home here, and most can.

There are strong, well maintained, safe neighborhoods with single family homes for individuals and families of various sizes and incomes. Residents take great pride in their houses and properties and continuously invest in them - making them great places to live for generations to come.

New, higher end housing units exist in the City Center, attracting retirees, professionals, and new families.

New developments and redevelopments provide quality housing choices with a variety of types, sizes, designs, and costs, creating more places for people to live in the City Center.



Potential Images

City Center Goals

GOAL 9 | COMPACTNESS

To promote City Center as a stimulating place for pedestrians and activities, it must be compact and walkable. Compact development consists of smaller lot sizes, multistory buildings, smaller streets, more efficient parking, and integrally designed public open spaces and community facilities. Compactness creates a critical mass of activity easily accessible by foot. It also establishes an area as an attractive one-stop activity center where a person can make one automobile trip, park their car, and then walk to multiple places.

Vacant and under utilized parcels should be developed or redeveloped to increase animation through pedestrian movements, economic exchanges, and social interactions.

Compact and higher density development should also be encouraged to efficiently use land, public services and facilities. Ensure compact and densely developed areas are well connected to urban open spaces and the RiverFront.

Compact building design can increase the use of alternative modes of transportation, and such areas should be well integrated with transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. In addition, while parking still must be accommodated in densely developed areas, it should be on the sides, behind, or under buildings. Compact development anticipates and appropriately accommodates parking and service areas.



GOAL 10 | HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE

The Beloit City Center is the origin of a healthy and environmentally sustainable community and region. Significant recreational and open space amenities announce the City's environmental focus. The City Center's many educational institutions are the source for innovative environmental technologies. The City Center itself is a lab for new environmental tools including green roofs, water gardens, cutting edge stormwater management practices and other "river friendly" techniques. Community leaders will engage citizens of Beloit in "green" community and governmental initiatives that will secure the future of the City Center and the region as an environmentally and economically viable community.

People will enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle in the City Center with an abundance of opportunities to travel on foot or by bike. It will also be a destination for people to exercise and recreate on land or in water.



City Center Goals

GOAL 11 | CLEAN AND SAFE

The City Center will be a clean and safe environment.

Public and private buildings, sites, parks and open spaces, and streets will be well designed and highly maintained to enhance the City Center's image as a clean and attractive place.

Attractive trash receptacles will be easily accessible. Litter and graffiti will be promptly removed. Vacant properties will be held to a high standard for cleanliness and upkeep. Air and water quality will also remain high, while noise and light pollution will remain low.

City Center must be safe for everyone to enjoy. Designing for safety will increase the sense of security for residents, workers, students, and visitors. Crime occurs where opportunities exist, access to a crime site is available, surveillance is low, and where there is little human activity near a potential site. Safe urban design can eliminate or reduce these areas through such measures as increasing the number of people in City Center, lighting, signage, landscaping, cleanliness, and a walkable environment.



City Center Districts

The boundaries of the City Center are illustrated in The Regional Center section of this Vision. Within City Center, however, are several distinct areas. Each of these areas has a unique visual character, mix of uses, special features, and development potential.

While the uses and activities spill over from one area to the next, this Vision establishes these areas as districts to create a planning framework for understanding how these areas function and interrelate within City Center. General descriptions of these districts are provided here.

Rock River Parkway District

The Rock River and adjoining greenway trail system define this district and provide outstanding scenic, recreational, and natural features for all City Center.

Water Tower District

Site of the construction of Beloit's historic Eclipse windmills, this area remains a significant employment center and will be further developed into a major mixed-use destination.

College Park District

Beloit College and the adjoining historic neighborhood anchor this district, which is connected with employment, commercial, entertainment, and recreational areas.

Grand Avenue District

This district is City Center's commercial and entertainment core, providing vibrancy that ripples throughout Beloit.

Turtle Creek District

Quaint Turtle Creek runs through this district, which will transition over time to a neighborhood north of the creek and expanded employment on the south side.

Blackhawk Business District

This emerging business district enjoys an outstanding location at the intersection of Blackhawk and Gardner Avenue, and the near Turtle Creek and Rock River Parkway Districts.

Iron Works District

Centrally located, this district serves as the crossroads for a mixed use neighborhood and employment center, with immediate access to the high school and Rock River Parkway.

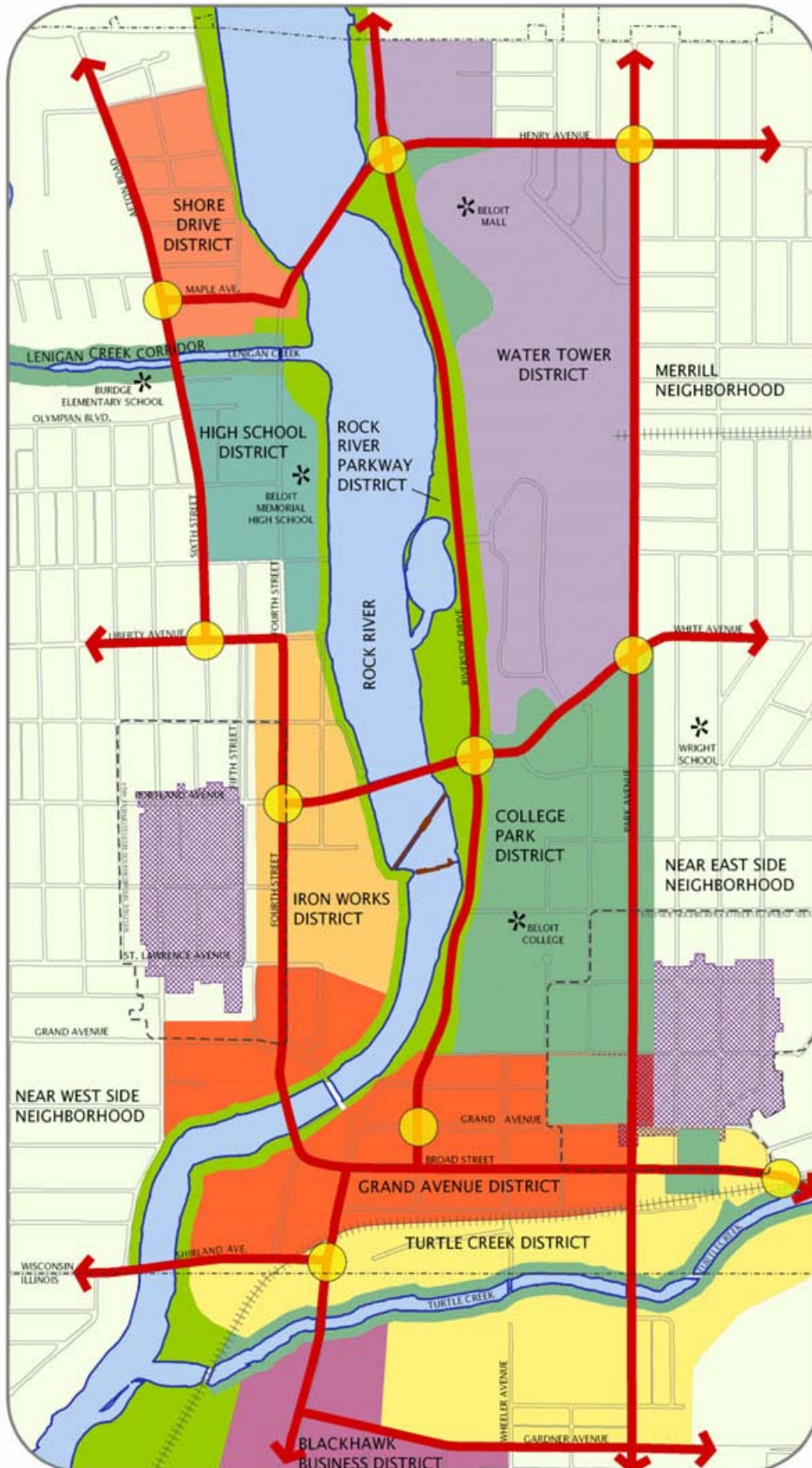
High School District

Beloit Memorial High School is one of the community's most significant landmarks for its educational functions, social interactions, variety of activities, and presence along the river. The high school is the primary influence in this district.

Shore Drive District

Historically, this area provided a major community gathering and recreational space along the Rock River's shores. Today, this district consists of the charming Lenigan Creek, Shore and adjacent neighborhoods, historic buildings and sites, and the redeveloping Maple Avenue, with new and redevelopment opportunities in several places.

City Center Districts



- Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas
- Pilot Neighborhoods
- Primary Entrance Zones
- City of Beloit Municipal Boundary
- Neighborhood Redevelopment Areas

Beloit2020
The Spirit of Civic Enterprise

SAA

0 625 1250
Project 1969 | January, 2005

Rock River Parkway District

River Parkway Streetscape



Fun interaction between Peoples & Cultures



Healthy, Active Community



Public Art



Existing & Potential City Center Images



Rock River Parkway District: Past, Present, & Future

Renewal of the Rock River Parkway District set in motion the revitalization of the City and has created the remarkable opportunities that are now available for the next 15 years and beyond for the City Center.

Connections to, through and within Beloit pivot on this central parkway. It provides spectacular connections and linkages along its banks and across the Rock River to employment centers, shopping districts, schools, parks, neighborhoods and natural areas. These connections and linkages will be expanded further up and along its banks and deeper into the community to increase its presence and impact throughout Beloit.

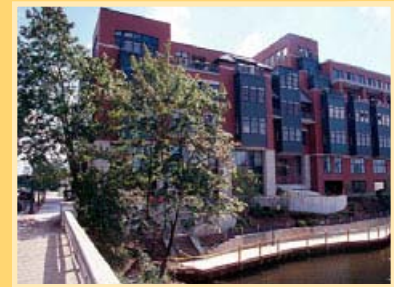
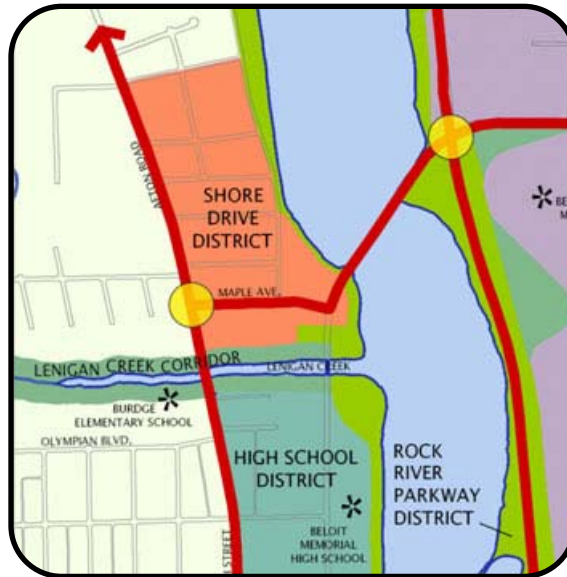
Animation throughout this district attracts people to the City Center; improves the quality of life for all residents and visitors; creates fun interactions between peoples and cultures; spurs economic activity; strengthens neighborhoods and business districts; provides outstanding learning opportunities; establishes a scenic and vibrant recreation and entertainment atmosphere; and creates a positive image of a clean, healthy, intelligent, and active community.

views of the rock river parkway district today

The Rock River Parkway District is the past, present and future of Beloit; it is the reason Beloit exists.



Shore Drive District



Riverfront Housing



Strong Recreational and Natural Resources



Great Neighborhoods

Craig Wilson-Kite Aerial Photography



Walkable Connections and Recreation

Renewal within the Shore Drive District will:

- Focus on and around Maple Avenue
- Enhance this neighborhood as a good place to live
- Create a walkable neighborhood with convenient and attractive connections to the Rock River Parkway, the Shore and Wootton Parks, great schools, the Lenigan Creek Corridor, attractive streetscapes, and all of the animation these activity centers provide.

The Lenigan Creek corridor provides a high quality of life for the surrounding neighborhoods, the business district, and schools as a small, outstanding recreational and natural resource. It offers important bike and pedestrian linkages to the Rock River and RiverWalk Path, and along the converted rail corridor.

Existing & Potential City Center Images

views of the shore drive district today



Water Tower District

A Revitalized
Beloit Mall



Employment
Center



A Walkable
Urban District



Anchor
Businesses / Employment



Existing & Potential City Center Images



The Water Tower District will become a diverse, energetic place in the City Center.

The renewal of the Water Tower District will:

- Expand urban living opportunities with riverfront views.
- Grow existing businesses and incubate creative businesses.

Animation will become a reality in this district through:

- The redevelopment of the Beloit Mall into a mixed-use development;
- Technology or incubator businesses may also emerge here;
- New riverfront housing, parks, and cultural destinations;
- Attractive and convenient connections to the river, historic neighborhoods and Beloit College; and
- New transportation linkages to facilitate business development and improve access (including pedestrian access to the river).
- The development of Pageant Park

views of the water tower district today



College Park District

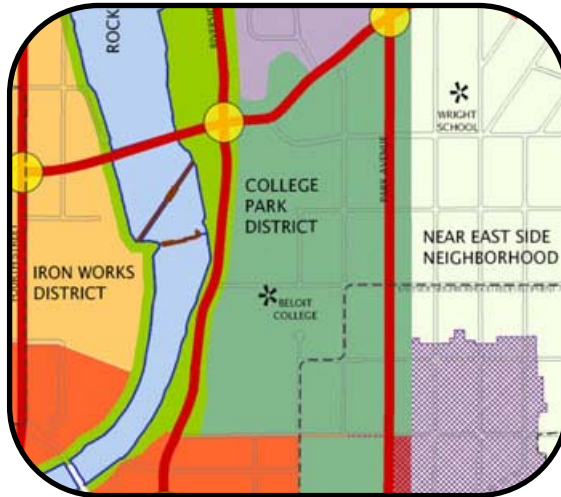
“Reveal the sense of prospect and high ground between the rivers.”

“Respond to the river and the downtown by transforming the west bluff.”

“Preserve and be a part of the Neighborhood.”

“Deepen the connection with the regional landscape.”

-Beloit College Campus Master Plan



A Pedestrian Campus



Campus - City Integration



Connect the Physical Landscape



Historic Campus Housing

The renewal of the College Park District will:

- Further animate the Beloit College campus and adjacent areas by integrating the Rock River and the Beloit College campus both physically (walking paths, landscaping) and visually.
- Create new and stronger connections to and synergy with the Grand Avenue and Water Tower Districts and historic neighborhoods.

The youth, creativity, energy, history, and vibrancy of the campus and campus neighborhoods establishes an anchor of activities, cultural venues, and beautiful places and buildings that serves as the foundation for a positive image of the Beloit City Center.



Beloit College Campus Master Plan

Existing & Potential City Center Images

views of the college park district today



Grand Avenue District

River Integration



Streetscapes with Pedestrian Interest



Riverfront Access from the District



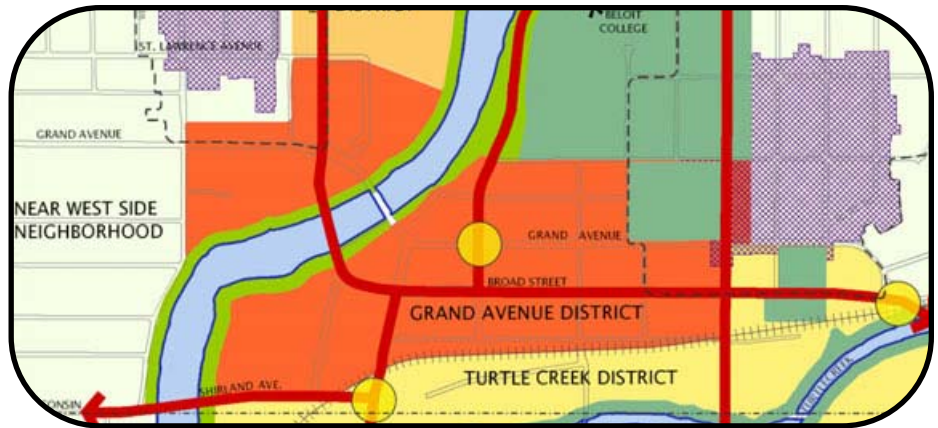
Dining



Existing & Potential City Center Images

The Grand Avenue District is....

- The animation focal point for the City Center and Region
- Alive and stimulating with an abundance of interesting entertainment, shopping, dining, arts, architecture, urban housing, and public gathering spaces.



The river flows into and through this district, and becomes a significant part of the spirit of this dynamic area. All roads and paths throughout the region, city and City Center arrive here. It is the core of activity, creativity, and stimulation.

views of the grand avenue district today



Turtle Creek District



The renewal of the Turtle Creek District will:

- Include a significant mix of new uses and buildings.
- Revitalize this scenic waterway, and surrounding natural environment.
- Take advantage of strong connections to the Grand Avenue, Rock River Parkway and College Park Districts.
- Result in a nice place to live, work, recreate and visit.

New urban living, retail and entertainment activities will animate this district as a lively urban neighborhood along the banks of the Turtle Creek. Future residents and employees in the Turtle Creek District will be located within a walkable urban neighborhood convenient to shopping, dining, entertainment and employment opportunities. The south side of this district will develop into a quality urban employment node providing good jobs in a convenient location, and establishing the Turtle Creek corridor as natural amenity to attract and retain businesses and employees.



Walkable Neighborhoods



Compact, Urban Residential



Turtle Creek: A Residential Amenity



Turtle Creek: Animated

Existing & Potential City Center Images

views of the turtle creek district today



Blackhawk District

Street-Defining Buildings



Revitalized Urban Business District



Pedestrian Friendly Urban Business District



The renewal of the Blackhawk Business District will:

- Create an enhanced business district centered at the intersection of Gardner Avenue and Blackhawk Boulevard.
- Evolve into a vibrant urban node in the City Center area for South Beloit residents.
- Capitalize on its location and access to Turtle Creek, the Breezeway, and regional transportation networks.
- Integrate with the Turtle Creek, Grand Avenue, and Rock River Parkway Districts both physically and aesthetically.

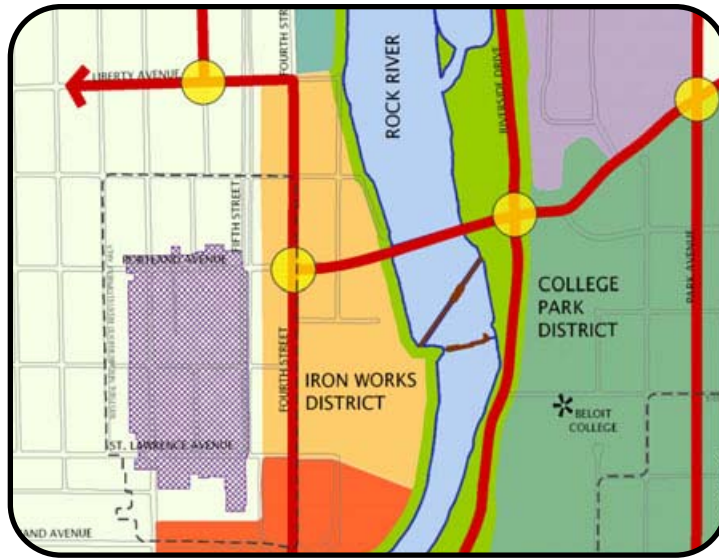


Existing & Potential City Center Images

views of the blackhawk district today



Iron Works District



Renewal within the Iron Works District will continue to:

- Connect the business district and neighborhood to the Rock River Parkway District;
- Revitalize and enhance employment in the City Center;
- Beautify and expand the streetscapes and public gathering spaces;
- Strengthen and increase the urban living opportunities;
- Preserve and enhance the south end of the Iron Works District as an arts, performance and public gathering space.

The retail core of this district is an active and attractive neighborhood-oriented shopping and service district situated in the middle of a vibrant employment center (south), the strong neighborhood (west), good schools (north), and a magnificent riverfront (east). People want to live and work in this area because of its central location; dynamic environment; and connections to the Grand Avenue, Rock River Parkway, and High School Districts.



Civic Spaces



Green Plaza



Reconnect to Riverfront



Neighborhood Service/Retail



Rehabilitated Building Stock

views of the iron works district today



High School District

High Tech Education



High Quality Campus Spaces



A Community Activity Center



A Walkable Campus



The High School District...

....animates the City Center and entire community through its essential educational function and extracurricular activities and programs. Its integration with the Rock River Parkway District furthers its fundamental role as a center of gravity for the City. This district becomes further connected to and integrated with all districts through an expanded Grand Parkway system.

The High School site is expanded for increased program use.

Existing & Potential City Center Images

views of the high school district today

