
Chapter III: Agricultural, Cultural, and Natural Resources

- Work with surrounding Towns and amended regulations to limit the conversion of farmland in areas not identified for development in this Plan.
- Promote farming through an economic development strategy that focuses on businesses that process agricultural products.
- Natural resources – such as the Rock River and Turtle Creek – will enhance City form and livability, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and stormwater management.
- Work with other public agencies and private developers on maintaining accurate inventories of environmental resources and preserving them through development.
- Improve access to existing environmental corridors, like those formed by Turtle Creek and Springbrook Creek.
- Celebrate the City’s rich cultural and built history and future through “live” community events, public art, and historic preservation. Actively promote these inside and outside the community.

The Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter provides background on these resources in the City of Beloit and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The information will be used to guide future land use decisions so that these resources may be protected to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the information can help determine areas that may not be suitable for development based on environmental opportunities and constraints, including unfavorable soils, floodplains, wetlands, and groundwater impacts.


AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

A. Character of Farming

Farming is a key part of the heritage of the Beloit area, still plays a significant role in the lives of area residents and remains an important part of the economy. The farmland in the Rock River basin is some of the most fertile in the upper Midwest. Rock County ranks among the top counties in Wisconsin in the production of corn, soybeans, and food-grade soybeans. The County is also home to numerous food processors and agricultural supply companies that utilize agricultural products.

Farming is the dominant land use in the towns surrounding the City. The Town of Turtle recently updated its Land Use Plan, which recommends the continuation of agricultural uses in the majority of that town. The Town's Zoning Ordinance contains appropriate agricultural zoning districts to implement this recommendation. The Town of Beloit 1997 Master Plan recommends the preservation of agricultural lands in the western portion of that town—west of the City.

Approximately one-third of land within the City remains in agricultural use. However, this is considered an interim use within the City limits given the availability of an urban level of services, such as sewer and water.



By being a leader in processing local agricultural products, Beloit will be a leader in sustainable food supply chains and farming.

B. Assessment of Farmland Viability

The Natural Resources Conservation Service groups soils based on their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. These capability classifications are based on numerous criteria that include, but are not limited to, the soil's salinity, capacity to hold moisture, potential for erosion, depth, and texture and structure, as well as local climatic limitations (e.g. temperature and rainfall). Under this system of classification, soils are separated into eight classes.

Generally, Class I and Class II soils are the best suited for the cultivation of crops. Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use. These soils can sustain a wide variety of plants and are well suited for cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands. Class II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the types of plants that can be grown or that require simple conservation practices or soil management techniques to prevent deterioration over time. However, these practices are generally easy to apply, and, therefore, these soils are still able to sustain cultivated crops, pasture plants, range lands, and woodlands.

Soils in Class III have limitations that, under natural circumstances, restrict the types of plants that can be grown, and/or that alter the timing of planting, tillage, and harvesting. However, with the application and careful management of special conservation practices, these soils may still be used for cultivated crops, pasture plants, woodlands, and range lands.

Soils in capability classes IV through VIII present increasingly severe limitations to the cultivation of crops. Soils in Class VIII have limitations that entirely preclude their use for commercial plant production.

Map 6 depicts the locations of Class I, II, III, and IV or lower soils in and around the City of Beloit. Generally, Class I soils are located in and beyond the eastern portion of the City. This is also, unfortunately, the area of greatest development pressure given the location of the Interstates, soil and subsurface suitability for development, market inertia, and other factors. Class II soils are prevalent throughout the area.

C. Farmland Preservation Efforts

Beloit area farmers can participate in several federal, state, and countywide programs and initiatives that are intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs including the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetland Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers two important farmland preservation programs: the Farmland Preservation Credit Program and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program.

The Farmland Preservation Credit Program strives to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and provides property tax relief to farmland owners. To qualify for the credit, farmland must be 35 acres or more and zoned for exclusive agricultural use or be subject to a preservation agreement between the farmland owner and the State. All program participants must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the State Land Conservation Board. It should be noted that claims for both of the Farmland Preservation Credit and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit are documented for the municipality in which the claimant lives, which may not be where the farm is actually located. In 2005, there were 14 claims for this credit in the City, totaling \$5,893 and an average of \$421 per claim. Participation in the Town of Turtle was significantly higher with 29 claims totaling \$21,611, an average of \$734. The Town of Beloit had 15 claims, but with a larger total of \$9,892.

The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides direct benefits to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres. The credit is computed as a percentage of up to \$10,000 of property taxes, with the maximum credit of \$1,500. In 2005, there were 30 claims for this credit in the City, constituting a total of \$7,304 and an average credit of \$243. Participation in the Town of Turtle was somewhat higher with 38 claims totaling \$10,558, an average of \$277. Participation in the Town of Beloit was similar to the City's with 25 claims totaling \$8,037, an average of \$321.

D. Agricultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies

1. Goals

- a. Preserve agricultural lands in areas in the City's planning area, except in places and timeframes advised by this Plan for future urban development.

2. Objectives

- a. Maintain agriculture as a significant economic activity within Beloit's planning area.
- b. Work with surrounding jurisdictions, especially the Towns of Beloit and Turtle, to preserve farming as a viable occupation in areas consistent with this *Comprehensive Plan*.
- c. Recognize the value of farmland as open space near the municipal limits, creating a sense of separation between "city" and "country" and enhancing the identity of both places.
- d. Protect farm operations from incompatible land uses and activities that may adversely affect the capital investment in agricultural land, improvements, and equipment.

3. Policies

- a. Carefully consider the location of productive agricultural lands before making decisions on the expansion of City services or growth.
- b. Utilize intergovernmental agreements and extraterritorial powers in support of this *Plan* to limit intensive development in productive farming areas, generally to a non-farm development density not exceeding one new lot for every 35 acres of ownership. Amend the City's subdivision ordinance to reinforce this standard. Map 10: Future Land Use identifies future "Agricultural" areas where this standard should be exercised.
- c. Maximize the intensity/density of use of lands currently in the City and future annexed lands to minimize the conversion of agricultural land. See Chapters Four and Seven for recommendations regarding redevelopment of lands currently within the City.
- d. Encourage the interim use of open lands for farming within the Long Range Urban Growth Areas shown on Map 10: Future Land Use, until the land is ready for planned development per the policies outlined in the Land Use chapter.
- e. Encourage agricultural-related industry, such as food and other bio-based product manufacturing, in the City as a means to support the economic health of both the City and agricultural areas.

Promoting consumption of locally grown products will result in less transportation resources to move food along with a healthier lifestyle.

E. Agricultural Resource Recommendations and Programs

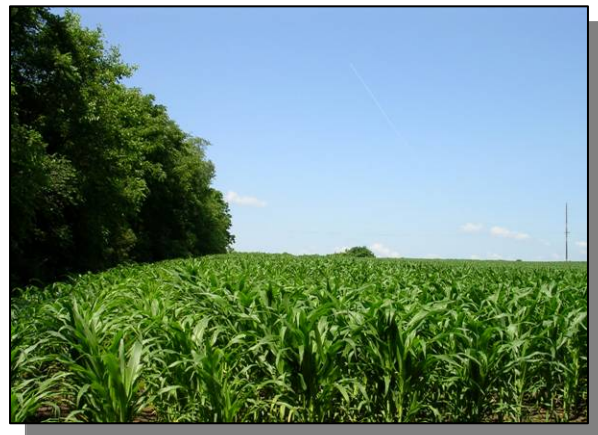
Beyond the policies outlined above, the City of Beloit will work on programs designed to help retain the area's agricultural base. Examples of these types of programs—described further in Chapter Seven: Economic Development—include:

1. Continue Promotion of "Food Cluster" Industries

Given its proximity to major population centers, Interstate highways, and a rich agricultural hinterland, Beloit has been and will continue to be an attractive home for industries processing agricultural products for food. The growing number of such industries also will help attract others to a growing "food cluster." Helping existing food cluster businesses grow and attracting new businesses to that cluster is a cornerstone to the City's economic strategy. In addition to benefiting the City through jobs and tax base, such industries increase the economic viability of area farmers, who are often their suppliers.

2. Advance New Uses for Agricultural Products

Advances in technology are opening up new markets for traditional agricultural products. The "new uses" economy is focused on finding new ways to use and process corn, soybeans and other carbohydrate-rich farm products into plastics, fuel, other energy sources, and even pharmaceuticals. At the same time that production costs are declining to process these carbohydrate-base materials, environmental regulations and "green" economic incentives are increasing the cost of other hydrocarbon- or petroleum-based products.



3. Promote Direct Marketing of Farm Products to Consumers

Direct marketing to consumers is a commonly used strategy to add value to locally produced agricultural products. This is a viable strategy for producers in the Beloit area given proximity to raw products and growing local and regional populations. Beloit is well-positioned to take advantage of the local food movement as an economic, farmland preservation, and community health initiative.

Map 6: Soil Suitability for Agriculture

NATURAL RESOURCES

Understanding the area's natural features sheds light on locational constraints and opportunities for particular land uses. It also provides a framework for future growth. For instance, it is essential to understand the location of environmentally sensitive areas where development is not appropriate. This will prevent severe developmental or environmental problems that may be difficult or costly to correct in the future.

Maintenance of these natural features is important for community appearance and the functions they perform for natural communities. Map 7 depicts natural features in and around the City of Beloit, many of which are described in more detail below.

A. Natural Resource Inventory

1. Landforms/Topography

The City of Beloit is situated along the banks of the Rock River. The central portion of the City is generally flat with the eastern and western portions gently rolling. As shown on Map 7, steep slopes exceeding a 12 percent grade are found along the western bank of the Rock River through the Town of Beloit up to Big Hill Park, as well as other small pockets in the City. Slopes that have between 12 percent and 20 percent grade present challenges for building site development, and slopes that exceed a 20 percent grade are not recommended for any disturbance or development.

2. General Soils Information

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development on certain soils include slumping, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes, and high water tables. In general, the soils in the central and northern portions of the City of Beloit are porous and present some challenges for the use of on-site wastewater treatment systems, but does not present challenges for sewered development. The soils on the far west side of the City present challenges for on-site wastewater treatment systems as well as sewered development, however new technology is expanding opportunities. There are no limitations on soils on the far eastern portion of the City east of the Interstate for either on-site wastewater treatment systems or sewered development.

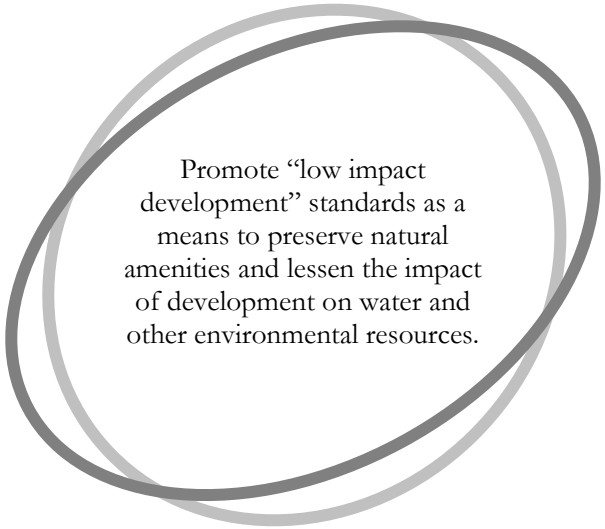
3. Metallic and Non-Metallic Minerals

While there are no extraction activities in the City of Beloit, under State Statutes (295.20), landowners who want to register their property as a nonmetallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the County where the mineral deposit is located. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered nonmetallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable nonmetallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period.

Registration is effective for 10 years and renewable for an additional 10 years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take effect after the registration has expired.

4. Ground Water

Groundwater is comprised of the portion of rainfall that does not run off to streams or rivers and that does not evaporate or transpire from plants. This water percolates



Promote “low impact development” standards as a means to preserve natural amenities and lessen the impact of development on water and other environmental resources.

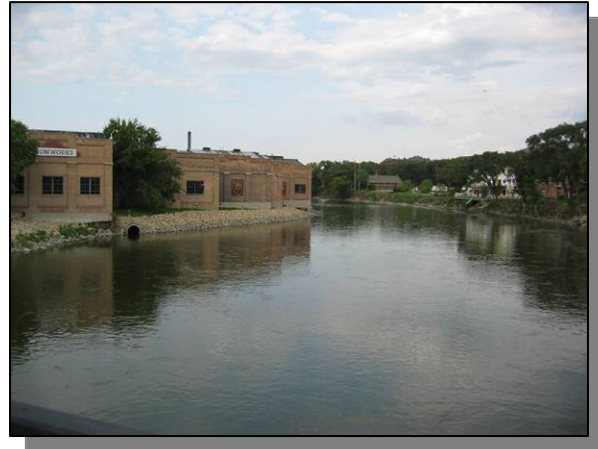
down through the soil until it reaches the saturated zone of an aquifer. Groundwater supplies all of the water for domestic, commercial and industrial uses in the City. The quality of groundwater in Beloit is generally good. However, groundwater contamination is of concern in many parts of the south-central Wisconsin as a result of the varied characteristics of the bedrock and surficial geology. Areas with sandy soils, thin soils, or fractured bedrock are the most susceptible to contamination from specific urban and rural land uses.

Specifically, the soils on the far western side of the City are part of the Edmund-Rockton-Whalan association, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, which are not suitable for septic tank filter fields.

In rural areas, the most common groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen, which can come from improperly functioning on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septage application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, and decaying plant debris.

5. Watersheds and Surface Waters

Straddling the Rock River, the City is entirely within its drainage basin. The City is further divided into four smaller watersheds: the Lower Sugar River, Bass Creek, Blackhawk Creek, and Turtle Creek. Originating just north of the Horicon Marsh, the Rock River collects water from eleven Wisconsin counties before entering Illinois on its way to the Mississippi River. In addition to the Rock River, there are smaller water bodies in the City including Turtle Creek, Lenigan Creek, and Springbrook Creek.



6. Wetlands

Wetland habitats comprise approximately 2 percent of the City's total land area. These ecosystems play significant roles in maintaining the quality of groundwater and surface water and provide valuable habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. The City's wetlands have been identified and mapped by WisDNR through its Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory.

7. Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in the 100-year storm event (e.g., a storm that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year). The State requires local regulation of development in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains to avoid both on-site and up- and downstream property damage. In the City of Beloit, floodplains are mainly located along Turtle Creek.

FEMA is in the process of revising floodplain maps for the Beloit area. Preliminary drafts of these maps depict expanded floodplain designations for some portions of the City.

8. Wildlife Habitat and Rare Species Occurrences

Species of wildlife that are common to the southeastern Wisconsin region are rabbits, squirrels, woodchucks, raccoons, muskrats, and beavers. Larger mammals such as white-tailed deer, coyotes, and foxes also inhabit the region. Common bird species include: pheasants, cardinals, robins, wood thrushes, great blue herons, and killdeer.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), there are occurrences of aquatic endangered species in the southwest and northeast areas of the City. There were occurrences of both aquatic and terrestrial endangered species in the southwest and the areas surrounding Rock River. Detailed information regarding the types of endangered animals, plants, and natural communities can be found at the Department of Natural Resources' website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/nhi/countymaps/>.

9. Land Legacy Places

In the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, the DNR identified those key places around the state that are critical to meeting Wisconsin's conservation and outdoor recreation needs over the next 50 years. One of the places in Rock County is the Lower Rock River north of the City of Beloit. The Lower Rock River and its tributaries flow through some of the most productive farmland in Wisconsin. The river and its major tributaries slowly wind through relatively flat terrain with reasonably long stretches of undeveloped shoreline, much of which is forested or open wetland. The Yahara River and Turtle Creek, major tributaries to the Lower Rock, both support rich and diverse mussel and fish populations.

B. Natural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies

1. Goals

- a. Protect natural resource features in the City of Beloit and the surrounding area.

2. Objectives

- a. Preserve streams, drainageways, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, woodland areas, and other significant natural features.
- b. Direct development away from natural areas, drainageways, critical infiltration areas, and floodplains to prevent future problems.
- c. Cooperate with other units of government on the protection of regional natural resources and environmental systems, such as the Rock River, Turtle Creek, and Raccoon Creek.
- d. Minimize any potential conflicts between resource extraction and neighboring uses in rural areas.

3. Policies

- a. Preserve environmental corridors by prohibiting new buildings in wetlands, stream banks, floodplains, and on slopes greater than 20 percent. Also, strongly discourage placement of new buildings on hydric soils outside of wetlands and on slopes between 12 percent and 20 percent where other more appropriate sites are available.
- b. Improve access to underutilized natural resources in the City, such as the City-owned portions of the Turtle Creek Greenway.
- c. Protect the water quality of the Rock River, Turtle Creek, and their tributaries by:
 - Retaining stormwater through requiring Best Management Practices.
 - Encouraging low impact development strategies for stormwater management that include water conservation, rain gardens, and maximizing pervious surfaces.
 - Maintaining or providing vegetative buffers where development abuts waterways.
 - Partnering with agencies like the Rock River Coalition on watershed protection initiatives.
- d. Review the City's stormwater management system to ensure that it is achieving maximum effectiveness, including enforcing erosion control and stormwater management ordinances and requiring high quality stormwater management plans with development proposals.
- e. Protect groundwater resources by maximizing infiltration of clean water in known groundwater recharge areas, supporting the clean-up of environmentally contaminated sites, and minimizing potential future sources of contamination, particularly in wellhead protection areas.
- f. Preserve woodlots and other environmental areas that serve to protect wildlife and vegetative resources.
- g. Consider adopting a Heritage Tree ordinance to protect outstanding or unique trees in the City.
- h. Consider preparing an urban wildlife management plan with the assistance of the DNR.

- i. Pursue flood studies and Letters of Map Revision (LOMR) to support remapping of FEMA-proposed expanded floodplains in key areas of the City, including, Downtown and the Interstate 39/90/43 interchange area.
- j. Implement the recommendations of the Stateline Bike and Pedestrian Plan and the City's Park and Open Space Plan to develop a regional trail system that utilizes environmental corridors as key linkages—for example along Turtle Creek.
- k. Discourage the establishment of new mineral extraction operations within the City limits, except where they are associated with a development project on the same site and are operated according to safe and clean standards.

C. Natural Resource Recommendations and Programs

The City and surrounding area contain incredible natural resources that will require concerted, on-going, and coordinated efforts to maintain and enhance, including the following efforts:

1. Protect Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors are important elements of the natural resource base. They help create the form and character of the City. They have environmental, ecological, passive recreational, stormwater management, groundwater protection and recharge, erosion control, wildlife, timber, and scenic value. Environmental corridors also have severe limitations for development; therefore, minimizing development in these areas also protects private property.

For the City, environmental corridors are shown on Map 10: Future Land Use and described more fully in the Land Use chapter. They represent the composite of adopted floodplain, wetland, steep slope (20%+), and drainageway and waterway buffer areas. There may be a need—through future efforts like a Sewer Service Area (208) Plan update—to reconcile different definitions of what constitutes an environment corridor between the City and County.


Existing development and farming uses should be allowed to continue within mapped environmental corridors, but some improvements may be limited. New buildings that do not replace old buildings and significant expansions to existing building footprints should not be allowed, unless the environmental corridor boundary is determined to be in error or environmental protection laws are otherwise followed. Environmental corridors should also be maintained of sufficient width and ground cover to provide movement of wildlife and fulfill their other functions. Maintained lawns and formal landscaping within environmental corridors are strongly discouraged.

2. Improve Access to the Turtle Creek Greenway

Beloit is fortunate to have a wealth of natural resources and recreational amenities. These features improve the quality of life for residents and make Beloit attractive to visitors. One of the City's largest public natural areas is the Turtle Creek Greenway. Currently, this area is not being utilized to its fullest potential.

Recommendations for increasing use include:

- Increasing visibility and access. Existing points of public access from adjacent roadways should be better marked and developed. Another opportunity to increase access would be through collaboration with the City of Beloit Water Resources Division. The Division is considering constructing a sewer service access road through the Greenway behind the Turtle Creek Subdivision. This road could be suitable for dual use as a recreation trail, and would even be



Opening up access to existing resources like Turtle Creek will improve the mental and physical health of Beloit residents.

eligible for funding assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

- Pursuing acquisition and preservation of new sections of the Turtle Creek floodplain both to the north and south of the existing greenway corridor when such lands become available. These are prime candidates for DNR grant funding.
- Working with property owners adjacent to the Greenway to restore natural landscaping on public lands, and to more clearly delineate boundaries between public and private landholdings.

3. Maintain and Protect Water Quality

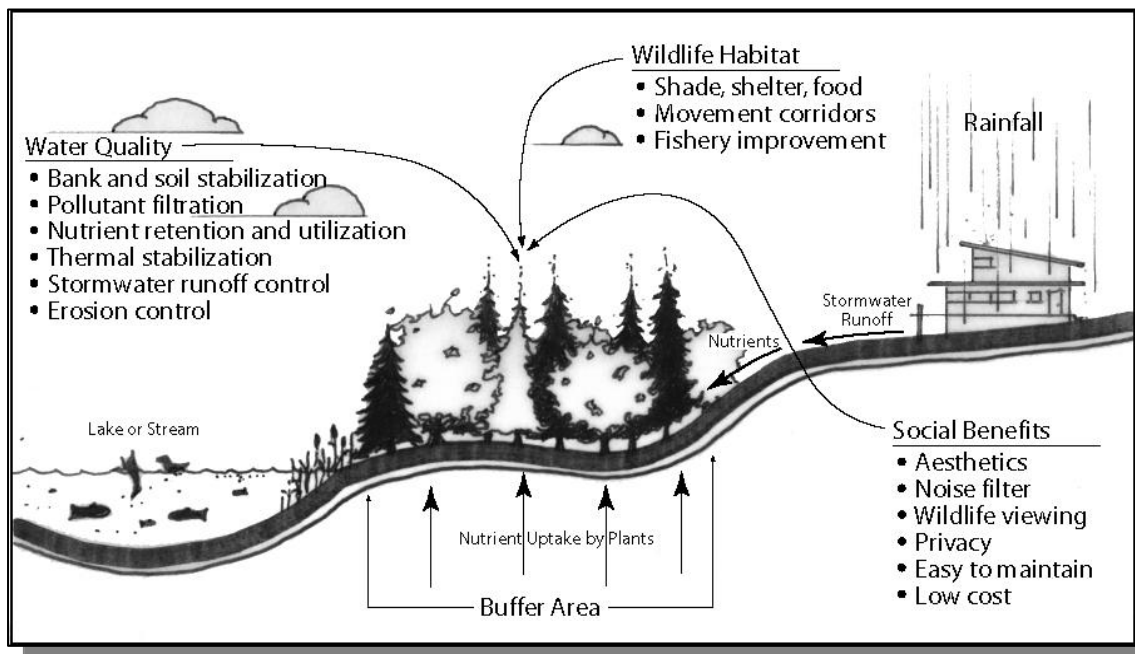
The Rock River and Turtle Creek are key natural features in the City, forming the backdrop for much of the development and activity in the community. General recommendations designed to support the objectives of protecting the quality of the City's water resources are offered below.

Vegetative Buffers

Vegetative buffers between developed areas and water bodies provide many benefits, including the protection of water quality, flood control, stream bank stabilization, water temperature control, and room for lateral movement of stream channels. Trees and shrubs retained in buffer areas provide the benefit of buffering noise from watercraft, providing privacy to residents, and serving as nesting areas for songbirds.

The following buffering techniques illustrated in Figure 9 can maximize water quality protection, habitat, and erosion control benefits in buffer areas around rivers and creeks in the City, particularly in areas that currently have limited development (i.e., not most of the Rock River corridor in the City).

Figure 9: Example of Vegetative Buffer



Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Plans

The City will help ensure erosion control and stormwater management techniques for protection and continued improvement of its water quality. Unmanaged construction sites are one of the greatest contributors to off-site sediment runoff. Under Wisconsin law, erosion control plans are required for all construction sites over 1 acre in area. Erosion control techniques include silt fencing, minimizing disturbed areas, and quickly reestablishing vegetation.

In particular, stormwater management and erosion control systems will be components of all planned new development areas, including subdivisions and commercial projects. Stormwater management techniques include natural drainage swales and retention and detention basins. These techniques control the quantity and improve the quality of water run-off during storms and enhance groundwater recharge, which is particularly critical near waterways such as the Rock River and Turtle Creek.

Map 7: Natural Features

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The City of Beloit and the entire region were once home to the Mound Builders and Winnebago Native American tribes. A French fur trader who had a good reputation with the Native Americans, Joseph Thibeau, settled at the southwestern corner of present day State Street and Shirland Avenue. Thibeau sold Caleb Blodgett, Beloit's first permanent settler, "three looks" of land, which marked Beloit's beginning as a village.

With the arrival of the New England Immigrating Company in 1836, the future of the fledgling community was assured. This group came from Colebrook, New Hampshire, led by Dr. Horace White. They bought land from Caleb Blodgett, started developing it, and soon family and friends were moving to the area.

Until the year 1857, Beloit was known as Blodgett's settlement. Later it was called New Albany, but a citizen committee soon renamed it as Beloit. Although the exact history remains disputed, it seems that the name Beloit was coined from a French word *balotte*, meaning "handsome ground." The current spelling was then fashioned after Detroit, Michigan, which the community saw as a great symbol of trade and growth.

The Beloit township government formed in 1842. Beloit was established as a village on February 24, 1846, two years before Wisconsin achieved statehood. Beloit College was founded in the same year. Beloit was officially incorporated as a city by the State of Wisconsin on March 31, 1856.

Beloit has always been a community welcoming of different cultural, ethnic, and racial heritages. The first African Americans living in Beloit were Emmanuel Craig, a coachman, and his family, who arrived in the mid-1830s. African Americans arrived in large numbers from America's south in the middle part of the 20th Century, attracted by the growing number of good-paying industrial jobs. An oral history of the African American community in Beloit is available at Historical Society. More recently, other minority groups have contributed to Beloit's culture, including the Hispanic community.

Preservation of historic and cultural resources fosters a sense of pride, improves quality of life, and provides an important social and cultural continuity between the past, present, and future. The following sections describe the significant historic and archeological resources in the City of Beloit

A. Historic Resources

Founded in 1910, the Beloit Historical Society seeks to contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the community's history. The Society operates two sites, the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead, and Lincoln Center, which houses its offices, exhibits, and collections.

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, school houses, and turn-of-the-century homes – that create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. The AHI identifies 1,231 documented structures in the City of Beloit. While there are several unique properties like the Beloit Water Tower and Fairbanks Flats, this list is mainly comprised of churches and residences.

There are six properties in the City listed on the National or State Historic Registers including the Bartlett Memorial Historical Museum, the Bluff Street Historic District, and the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle. Historic Districts and properties are shown on Map 12: Community Facilities, with the three main historic districts described as follows:

- The Bluff Street Historic District represents one of Beloit's oldest residential neighborhoods, dating back to the 1840's. A vast majority of Beloit's early commerce leaders and working class citizens chose this area on the western bluffs of the Rock River to settle and build their homes. This district includes properties along Bluff Street from Shirland Avenue



north to Merrill Street. The majority of the homes in this district were constructed before 1900 with the Lanthrop-Munn House and the Selvy Blodgett House listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Both are examples of the Greek Revival style.

- The Merrill Street Historic District consists of four homes in the 100 block of Merrill Street built in the late nineteenth century, commonly referred to as the “Brasstown Cottages”. The homes were originally constructed using the same floor plan. The “T-Plan” design is two rooms wide and three rooms deep. The homes originally served as residences for some of Beloit's early factory workers, and showcase one of the City’s earliest working class neighborhoods.
- The College Park Historic District is particularly significant because it is part of Caleb Blodgett's claim. The district is bounded by Clary Street to the north, Grand Avenue to the south, Pleasant Street to the west, and Wisconsin Avenue to the east. The district is part of the Hopkins Survey of 1840, the first plat of Beloit. The areas residential and institutional structures have numerous examples of architectural styles popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The neighborhood has several examples of homes built in the Prairie School architectural style. Although the earliest settlers of the district were those associated with Beloit College, the neighborhood grew to include a varied demography of Beloit’s citizens. The core elements that contributed to the development of the district are Beloit College, Horace White Park, which was patterned after a New England town square, and the residences of Beloit's early settlers. These elements merge to form a cohesive unit representing the cultural, architectural, and historical elements unique to this district.

B. Archeological Resources

There are over 40 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 insure 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.

Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Many of these sites are located on private land, and may not be viewed by the general public.

C. Cultural Activities, Recreation, and the Arts

The culture of the City of Beloit is as diverse as the people who live here. The following is a sample of the many cultural, recreational, and artistic opportunities in and near the City in 2007 from the Visit Beloit website. While an effort was made to identify all events and venues, this list may not be comprehensive.

1. Festivals and Events

Winterfest - January

This 2-day festival features the toboggan races, Klondike Derby, indoor winter carnival, and a variety of family activities and new special events each year.

Beloit International Film Fest - January

This major cooperative undertaking of the Greater Beloit community, area businesses and organizations, and Beloit College, brings thousands of visitors to the area for the four-day festival in January. Venues include restaurants, art galleries, theatres, and even the chapel on the Beloit College campus. The mix of films provides an opportunity to see rare classics, foreign language films, and the latest creations of leading filmmakers as part of the Beloit Midwest Film Makers Competition.

Birds & Blooms - April

Both people and birds flock to this colorful event. Habitat experts, renowned birders and nature enthusiasts gather to share helpful information regarding our various feathered friends. Hundreds of artistic (and useful) birdhouses, adorned by local artisans, are displayed and then auctioned to support Beloit's magnificent riverfront.

Miss Beloit Pageant - April

The Miss Beloit Scholarship Pageant is the first step toward the state Miss Wisconsin and national Miss America Pageants. The young woman chosen as Miss Beloit represents her city and is available for civic and school speaking, parades, and other functions as requested by individuals or groups in helping out her city on any project needed, all available with no cost for her services. Every contestant in the Miss America system chooses a platform. This program requires them to choose an issue relevant to society that she feels needs the public's attention and a call to action. She becomes the advocate for that platform.

Scholarship amounts offered in the Miss Beloit pageant in 2008 were \$4850. This included a talent scholarship from Major Pattern, Jon Wenger; an interview scholarship from Pam Ruegger; and the Billy Amundsen Scholarship from Roger and Vicki Bryden and Stephanie Klett. The public may at any time give and designate a scholarship for the Miss Beloit Pageant. Help is also given our scholarship fund by David Gleischner, Beloit Body and Fender, who pays our sponsorship fee. Other scholarships are available to our former contestants as they come farther along with their continuing education, these scholarships may be applied for simply because a young woman became a contestant in a Miss America preliminary pageant.

Farmer's Market - May through October

The Beloit Farmers Market allows shopping for fresh homegrown vegetables and fruit, delicious baked goods, and fresh flowers. Bargains abound in this open-air market every Saturday morning on State Street and East Grand Avenue in Downtown Beloit.

ArtWalk - May

Businesses throughout downtown Beloit transform into fine art galleries with many venues featuring live music and hors d'oeuvres. After hours hot spots offer live music on Friday night and a trolley is available throughout the weekend event.

Music at Harry's - June through September

Free concerts are enjoyed on the riverfront several Friday evenings during the summer. The series features a variety of music including jazz, blues, swing and big band.

Beloit Triathlon - June

This annual event draws 300 local, regional, and national athletes and features a ¼-mile swim, 15-mile bike ride, and 3-mile run.

Back to Beloit - June

Back to Beloit was the culmination of Mrs. Fannie Byrd's dream that originated in 1976. The thought came to her that it would be nice to have a reunion of Beloiters, from near and far to come together. Gradually, her dream began to take shape. A group of Beloit families started talking about a special weekend to reunite African Americans who grew up, were associated with or still lived in/around the Beloit area. A random survey of current and former residents confirmed that coming together for food, fun, and fellowship was an excellent idea.

The first Back to Beloit reunion was held June of 1996. The schedule of events included a banquet/program on Friday night. On Saturday, a morning tour of Beloit to visit some of the old neighborhoods, an afternoon picnic with activities for both the young and old to enjoy and an evening dance. The weekend



concluded with a Memorial Breakfast with a candle lighting service honoring the departed. Back to Beloit - An African American Homecoming has since become a bi-annual event held Father's day weekend. The group participates in the Memorial Day parade and maintains a website: www.backtobeloit.org.

Friday's in the Park - June-August

This free noon concert series occurs every Friday during the summer, offering a wide variety of music and food.

Bushnell Wheeler Ice Cream - June

This event is a wonderful way to stay cool on a hot summer day, enjoying homemade ice cream, cake, and lively music while touring the lovely grounds of this 1850's restored Italianate gem. Open tours and refreshments are compliments of the South Beloit Historical Society.

Southern Wisconsin Airfest - June

Wisconsin's second largest Airfest features the daring feats of many of the country's most expert flyers.

Fourth of July Festival - July 4

Residents and visitors celebrate the Fourth with an outdoor concert on the riverfront by the Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra followed by fireworks display.

Gospel-N-the Park - July

This is an annual event which includes local and recording gospel artists. It takes place the third Saturday in July at Telfer Park in the City of Beloit. This event is coordinated by a special committee called the "Gospel-N-the Park" committee. This committee is composed of citizens from different churches, different denominations and from the business community of Beloit and Janesville.

RiverFest - July

RiverFest is one of Wisconsin's largest music festivals. The 4-day weekend features nationally known entertainers, including over 50 bands performing blues, jazz, rock and roll, country, oldies and Top 40.

Boat Races - August

Life on the River really starts jumping when the boat races come to town. Precision, high-speed boats race along the banks of the rolling Rock River.

Celebrate Downtown Weekend - August

This weekend event includes sidewalk sales, a street dance, concessions, and other family activities to celebrate Downtown Beloit.

Turtles in the Park - August


Hundreds of uniquely decorated turtles are auctioned to support the Arts in Beloit. Other family-oriented activities include turtle races, turtle sundaes, and the turtle dip.

Antique Auto Show & Flea Market - Last Sunday in August

This popular yearly event draws more than 125 dealers and over one hundred finely restored antique automobiles.

On the Village Green - September

More than 80 arts and crafts artisans gather for this one-day shopping extravaganza in Horace White Park.



Beloit's cultural amenities –
recreation, entertainment, and
the arts – create an
educationally and spiritually
enriched community.

Heritage Days - September

Beloit's heritage is celebrated during this festival. Beckman Mill offers an opportunity to see the mill in operation, enjoy old fashion craft demonstrations, wagon rides and more. Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead has entertainment, food and special family activities.

AutoRama - September

This is an annual car show, swap meet, and arts and crafts sale. It is one of the largest automotive one day events in the Midwest for classics, collectibles, street rods, and trucks.

Fall Festival on the Rock - September

This family event features pony rides, kids' games, crafters, food court, horseshoe and volleyball tournament, music, and much more.

Lighted Holiday Parade - November

Choral music, community sing, Santa's arrival, and a tree lighting celebration kick off the holiday season. Dozens of lighted floats wind their way through the downtown streets of Beloit.

Bushnell Wheeler Holiday Open House - November

All decked out for the holidays and ready for company, the Bushnell Wheeler House welcomes visitors for a complimentary holiday tour.

Holidazzle - December

This event features artists and specialty craftspeople in over 40 locations in Downtown Beloit with one-of-a-kind gifts and unique pieces of art. Other activities include live music, Santa visits, children's events, and holiday treats.

2. Public ArtCelebration

Noted sculptor, O.V. Shaffer recently directed the relocation of his sculpted piece titled "Celebration" which now graces the entrance park of Beloit's beautifully restored riverfront. The prairie grasses planted at its base represent the landscape that greeted our first industrial settlers.

Wood Family Fishing Bridge

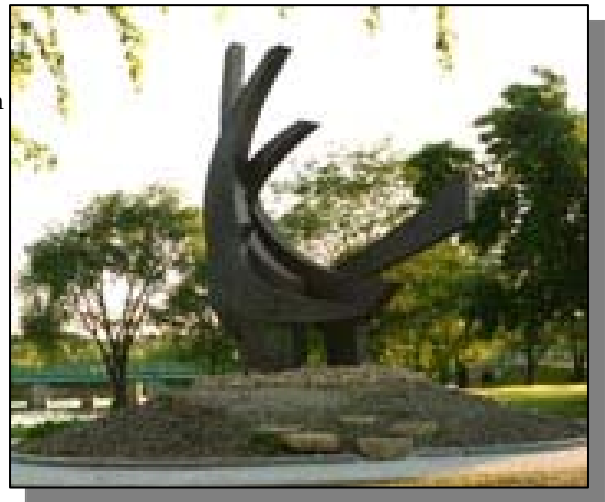
Siah Amajani, acclaimed public art designer, reworked an existing river structure and added an elevated diesel locomotive replica in honor of Beloit's heritage of engine building at Fairbanks Morse.

Forged on the Rock

This river's edge "picturescape" blends historical photographs, brilliantly colored glass and original foundry pieces designed to honor the original Beloit Iron Works complex. It offers a visual treat to experience as you walk, skate, run or bicycle along the riverfront paths. Forged on the Rock was commissioned by Hendricks Development Group and designed by The Larsen Group.

Confluence

Located at the Beloit Public Library, this sculpture represents the confluence of Turtle Creek with the Rock River. It was dedicated in 1975 as a gift from the Beloit Bicentennial Committee.



Source

Located at the Rotary River Center, this sculpture is a gift to the people of Beloit from the Colonel Robert Morse Foundation. The mythical turtle carried the world on its back. This sculpture of a mythical turtle carrying the world on its back represents the source of life for native peoples.

The Landing

Sculptor O.V. Shaffer sculpted “The Landing” for the heart of downtown Beloit on the west bank of the Rock River. The sixty-foot tall sculpture is composed of twin stainless steel columns with silhouettes of people paying homage to the workers that built Beloit at its base. The sculpture was commissioned by the Neese Family Foundation.

SLU the Turtle

This whimsical piece was funded by the Society for Learning Unlimited, to welcome children and grandchildren to the playscape at Turtle Island in Riverside Park.

Turtle Geoglyph

Geoglyphs are land forms created to be fully visualized from a higher elevation. The Turtle Geoglyph references Beloit’s Turtle Mound heritage. It is a ground hugging sculpture that allows people to walk into the Geoglyph and sit at a council ring element to enjoy the Riverside Park, the Rock River, and the lagoon and to engage in conversation. Significant parts of the design are beautiful tiles designed and made by all fifth grade students in the Beloit Public School District. Dedicated in 2003, this sculpture was funded by Beloit 2000 and the First National Bank as part of the on going improvements associated with the RiverFront Project.

3. Theatre and Performing Arts

Beloit Fine Arts Incubator

Beloit’s newest addition to the art scene is located in a refurbished Beloit landmark. Located at 520 East Grand Avenue, the Beloit Fine Arts Incubator consists of an art gallery and will house a co-op of artists’ studios. The art gallery showcases both resident artist works and traveling exhibits. Classes and special exhibits held throughout the year.

Beloit Civic Theatre

The Beloit Civic Theatre has been presenting Broadway's best to audiences from the stateline area for over 70 years. Founded as the Beloit Little Theatre Guild in 1932, the name of the Guild was changed to the Beloit Civic Theatre in 1948. In 1952 it was incorporated as a non-profit organization. Profits go to a scholarship fund which helps graduating students going on to study the performing arts. This volunteer theatre group puts on three productions each year. Performances are held in the Elizabeth Remholz Theatre at Beloit Memorial High School.

Beloit College International Performing Arts Series & Lecture Programs

Throughout the academic year, Beloit College provides internationally known artists, performers, and lecturers. The Wright Museum of Art and the Logan Museum of Anthropology bring leading authorities and their collections to the campus regularly. The Beloit College Theatre Department also presents nationally honored student productions.

Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra

The Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra includes local and nationally renowned musicians performing a variety of music. Performances are held at Eaton Chapel in Beloit College.



New Court Theatre

An integration of professional and community actors, the New Court Theatre presents exciting productions each summer. The plays are presented at the Kreske Theatre in the Laura Aldrich Neese Performing Arts Complex on the Beloit College campus.

Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre

For over 50 years, students of the Beloit College Theatre Company have been performing throughout the academic year in the Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre on the Beloit College campus.

4. Attractions and Museums

The Angel Museum

The Angel Museum holds the largest privately held angel collection in the world. Listed in the Guinness Book of World Records, and located at 656 Pleasant Street, the Angel Museum displays several thousand angels that are part of the Berg collection and the more than 900 black angels donated by TV host Oprah Winfrey.

Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead

This restored 1857 Victorian homestead, barn, and 1873 one-room schoolhouse is located at 2149 St. Lawrence Avenue. Fine period furnishings and a newly restored kitchen display how 'the upper middle class' lived at the turn of the 20th century.

Beloit Historical Society Lincoln Center

Located at 845 Hackett Street, the Lincoln Center includes changing exhibits revealing the history of the Beloit area. The Center includes the Ted Perring Sports Hall of Fame and the Arthur Missner Veterans Gallery. The Historical Society also sponsors numerous programs, events, and workshops throughout the year.

Logan Museum of Anthropology

View artifacts from around the world at the internationally renowned Logan Museum of Anthropology at Prospect Avenue and Bushnell Street. Displays include Native American baskets, Pre-Columbian and Prehistoric Native American ceramics, and archaeological specimens from the Beloit area.

Wright Museum of Fine Art

Appreciate the beautiful architecture of the Wright Museum, at Prospect Avenue and Bushnell Streets, as well as the fine art displayed. More than a dozen exhibitions, drawn from the permanent collection, regional and student artists, and national touring shows fill the gallery year round.

American Industrial Art Gallery

The Ironworks building at 655 Third Street is home to the American Industrial Art Gallery which features nine thousand square feet of display area for artistic reinterpretations of the original hardwood paper-making patterns. These exhibits represent a mix of American craftsmanship and historic industrial ingenuity.

Stone Water Tower and Water Works Pump House

The Water Works Pump House Visitor Information Center is located at 1003 Pleasant Street. Built in 1885, the pump house was the site of Beloit's first municipal water system. Restored in 1992, it houses Visit Beloit, the Friends of the Riverfront, the offices of Riverfest, and the City's Leisure Services Department. Built in 1889, and on the National Register of Historic Places, the stone tower is a visible community landmark.

Beloit Snappers

The Beloit Snappers play at Pohlman Field in Telfer Park. The Snappers are the Class A affiliates of the Minnesota Twins. The season runs from April through early September.

Beloit College Campus

Established in 1846 (two years before Wisconsin became a State), Beloit College is Wisconsin's oldest college in continuous service. The 40-acre wooded campus includes 28 buildings of diverse architectural styles, four of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Serving over 1,100 students from over 40 countries, this liberal arts school is ranked among the top undergraduate colleges in the U.S.

Bushnell Wheeler House

The Bushnell Wheeler House is located on the bluffs overlooking South Beloit and Beloit at 542 Wheeler Avenue. This historic Italian Villa now houses the South Beloit Historical Society. The House includes original furniture and other period pieces. Also on display are the stories and inventions which are unique to the history of South Beloit including the evolution of the speedometer and the electric brake.

Gallery ABBA

Gallery ABBA is a component of the Myers Institute for the Art of Business and Business of Art (ABBA) located in downtown Beloit. Gallery ABBA features professional, semiprofessional, and amateur artists within the Beloit College network of students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Poetry Gardens

Designed by world-famous public artist Siah Armajani, the 14,000-square foot garden is located next to the Logan Museum on the Beloit College Campus.

**5. Recreation**

Beloit has a wide variety of parks and recreational facilities. See Chapter Six: Utilities, Community Facilities, and Civic Organizations for a complete description of these resources.

D. Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs**1. Goals**

- a. Preserve and enhance the City's historic character and rich culture.

2. Objectives

- a. Maintain the balance between the City's urban advantages and small town characteristics.
- b. Celebrate the City's racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.
- c. Promote the historic downtown area as a central gathering space in the City.
- d. Encourage the growth of civic and neighborhood organizations.
- e. Engage residents in the betterment of the community through increased involvement in civic activities.

3. Policies and Programs

- a. Maintain and enhance the cultural integrity of the City through preservation and enhancement of historic, cultural, and archeological resources.
- b. Help preserve historic homes, structures, and districts that contribute to the cultural heritage of the Beloit area, focusing on existing historic districts and buildings, including Fairbanks Flats.
- c. Update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance as necessary to implement the recommendations in this *Plan*.
- d. Promote a continually increasing presence of the arts in the City, especially Downtown.

- e. Continue to work with Visit Beloit, Beloit Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Beloit College, Downtown Beloit Association, the School District, and other community organizations to promote cultural facilities and events for local residents and tourism development.
- f. Continue to support and promote community events and programs that celebrate the unique history and culture of the City, attempting to increase attendance from both residents and visitors.
- g. Continue to mark significant places with displays of public art as evidence of culture and beauty, and as a signature to the City. Maintain and promote existing installations.
- h. Support efforts to retain the Beloit Snappers in the community.
- i. Expand the City's wayfinding signage system. Beloit's community and downtown entryways are currently marked with distinctive welcome signs. The growing number of visitors to Beloit would benefit from expanding the wayfinding signage system to include other destinations and locations. Getting to and from downtown to the Interstate system can be particularly challenging to visitors.

