
Chapter I: Introduction

A. Purpose of this Plan Update

This update of the *City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan* is intended to update the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan to meet State legislative requirements and address emerging issues and opportunities. This *Plan* will allow the City to guide growth, development, and preservation by:

- Identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation over the planning period (2018-2028);
- Recommending types of future land use for specific areas in and beyond the City limits;
- Preserving and enhancing natural areas, cultural resources and agricultural lands in the area;
- Identifying needed transportation, recreational, and community facilities and services to serve the City;
- Directing private housing, economic development, and other investment in the City; and
- Providing detailed strategies to implement Plan recommendations.

This *Plan* is being prepared under the State of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Plan legislation, adopted in 1999 and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This legislation requires nine specific elements adopted under prescribed procedures that have legal standing for decisions related to zoning, subdivision of land, and official mapping.

The remainder of this *Plan* is organized in nine chapters containing all of the required elements. Each chapter begins with background information on the element (e.g., land use, transportation, economic development), followed by an outline of the City's policy desires related to that element, and ends with detailed recommendations for the element. The final chapter (Implementation) provides recommendations, strategies, and timelines to ensure the implementation.

This update of the *Plan* was prepared by City staff under the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan was prepared by Vandewalle & Associates, and the vast majority of content in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan will be retained and re-adopted. There has been tremendous change in the City of Beloit since 2008 (see Chapter II), and this update will evaluate, reaffirm, and/or change the City's goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations. The following chapters have been updated:

- Chapter I: Introduction
- Chapter II: Issues and Opportunities
- Chapter IV: Land Use
- Chapter VII: Housing and Neighborhood Development

The other chapters not specifically listed above were not updated in 2018 and retain their original language as adopted in 2008. The chapters that were not updated 2018 remain fully relevant and are in full force and effect.

B. Planning Process

A lengthy and robust public engagement effort was a primary component of updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. The goal of this public engagement effort was to identify the opportunities and challenges facing Beloit, and to ensure that this *Plan* capitalizes on the community's opportunities and addresses the community's challenges through locally-specific goals, objectives, and policies.

In November 2017, the City Council adopted a Resolution establishing a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee comprised of elected and appointed officials, City staff, civic leaders, and interested residents. In the same Resolution, the City Council approved a detailed update process and public participation plan to ensure that this *Plan* accurately reflects the vision, goals, and values of City residents. This included not only formal requirements outlined in §66.1001, but also more informal mechanisms intended to increase the scope and breadth of public input.

The Steering Committee met in November 2017 and reviewed demographic trends and development trends and plotted a public engagement strategy. The Committee met in December 2017 for a City-wide bus tour of existing neighborhoods and new development projects. The Committee met in January 2018 and prepared a list of questions for the public opinion survey, and also explored the results of the 2017-2020 Rock County Community Health Assessment. The public opinion survey was launched in late January 2018 and was promoted on numerous websites, social media platforms, and in hard copy at public buildings such as City Hall and the Library. The public opinion survey received a tremendous response, and nearly 600 completed surveys were received by the time the survey closed in March 2018. The Committee reviewed the first 500 surveys in February 2018 and the final 100 surveys in May 2018. A summary of the completed public opinion surveys can be found in Chapter II.

The Steering Committee met in March and April 2018 to review and update the Land Use and Housing goals, objectives, policies, and Future Land Use Map contained in this *Plan*. The Steering Committee held Community Open Houses in June 2018 and approved draft updates to the above-referenced chapters on August 14, 2018.

Due to this extensive public participation process, the recommendations of this *Plan* are generally consistent with other adopted local and regional plans, long-standing state and regional policies, and sound planning practices.

C. General Regional Context

Established as a village on February 24, 1846, Beloit was officially incorporated as a city by the State of Wisconsin on March 31, 1856. One hundred and sixty years after incorporation, the City of Beloit covers approximately 17 square miles. Located in Rock County at the intersection of Interstates 39/90 and 43, Beloit has large areas of newer commercial and industrial activities as well as an historic downtown along the Rock River.

Situated on the Wisconsin-Illinois state line, Beloit is about an hour south of Madison, an hour southwest of Milwaukee, less than two hours from Chicago's Loop, and one-half hour north of Rockford, Illinois. The City of South Beloit, Illinois borders Beloit to the south; the Town of Turtle lies to the east; and the Town of Beloit borders the City to the west and north.

D. Selection of the Planning Area

This *Plan* includes recommendations for lands within the City's planning area. The planning area for this *Plan* has been selected as to include all lands in which the City has both a short-term and long-term interest in planning and development activity. The planning area includes all lands currently within the City of Beloit, those lands in the City's Sewer Service Area, as approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and other unincorporated areas within the City's 3-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction as authorized under Wisconsin Statutes. The extraterritorial jurisdiction is depicted in Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries; it does not extend into Illinois.

E. Concurrent Planning Efforts

Other directly related planning efforts were taking place during the update of this *Comprehensive Plan*. These and other efforts were considered during the completion of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

City Center Plan Update

Parks and Open Space Plan Update

Bike and Pedestrian System Plan Update

BMHS Campus Master Plan

Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries