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## Chapter Ten: Economic Development

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

- Working in collaboration with the CDA and UW-W, the City will promote the development and marketing of the Whitewater University Technology Park.
- Utilize a variety of strategies to promote investments in the downtown.
- Actively work to recruit a variety of new business and industries to Whitewater, including retail businesses; reserve areas around the Highway 12 interchanges to high-quality development.
- Pursue the redevelopment of key sites throughout the City.

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### Chapter Introduction

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs to promote the retention and expansion of the City's economic base. This chapter includes an assessment of new businesses and industries desired in the City, an assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and recommended strategies for economic development and redevelopment.

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### Economic Development Framework

#### **Labor Force**

The City's labor force is the portion of the population employed or available for work. It includes people who are in the armed forces, employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, 8,324 residents, or 69.8 percent, of City residents age 16 or older were in the labor force. Of this total, 1,083 (or 9.1 percent of the labor force) were unemployed.

The percentage of the City's labor force employed by sector in 2014 is shown in Figure 10.1. Over 30 percent of Whitewater's labor force is employed in the educational, health, and social services sector. About 20 percent is employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services sector; and an additional 13 percent is employed in retail trade.

These data reflect the strong presence of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in the community, both in terms of jobs for University staff and faculty, as well as jobs that support the student population.

**Figure 10.1: Occupational Groups, 2000**

Occupational Group	Percentage of Labor Force
Educational, health, and social services	31.2
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	20.2
Retail trade	12.8
Manufacturing	12.4
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management	5
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	1.8
Construction	2.6
Other services (except public administration)	3.4
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1.6
Wholesale trade	2.4
Information	2.2
Public administration	2.6
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 10.2a: Jefferson County Employment Projections**

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Farm Employment	1,990	1,960	1,930	1,900	1,860	1,830
Agricultural Services	640	700	770	840	910	980
Mining	30	30	30	30	30	30
Construction	2,420	2,620	2,860	3,100	3,340	3,570
Manufacturing	11,210	11,430	11,730	12,050	12,410	12,790
Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities	2,210	2,370	2,570	2,770	2,980	3,200
Wholesale Trade	1,790	1,860	1,960	2,060	2,170	2,290
Retail Trade	9,760	10,280	10,940	11,630	12,330	13,070
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	2,240	2,230	2,220	2,210	2,210	2,220
Services	12,660	14,000	15,680	17,380	19,100	20,850
Federal Civilian Government	200	190	190	180	170	170
Federal Military Government	260	260	260	260	260	260
State and Local Government	4,230	4,520	4,890	5,270	5,660	6,060
<b>Total Employment: Jefferson County</b>	<b>49,640</b>	<b>52,440</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>59,660</b>	<b>63,430</b>	<b>67,330</b>

Source: Woods & Poole Economics: 2006 State Profile, Wisconsin

Jefferson County employment projections were provided by Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., a regional economic and demographics analysis firm (Figure 10.2a). These data predict the County's total employment to grow approximately 36 percent by the year 2030. Over this time period, the most significant increase in jobs is projected to be in the service sector (65 percent increase). By 2030, the percentage of employees working on farms is projected to decrease by eight percent. Projections are not available at the City level.

**Figure 10.2b: Walworth County Employment Projections**

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Farm Employment	1,324	1,266	1,242	1,218	1,195	1,171
Agricultural Services	893	1,155	1,253	1,352	1,451	1,552
Mining	32	28	28	28	28	28
Construction	3,080	2,988	3,368	3,746	4,121	4,493
Manufacturing	10,163	9,307	9,645	10,002	10,382	10,790
Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities	2,010	1,707	1,810	1,916	2,025	2,139
Wholesale Trade	1,831	1,602	1,696	1,793	1,897	2,008
Retail Trade	9,347	10,416	10,812	11,223	11,654	12,108
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	2,902	3,220	3,500	3,779	4,061	4,351
Services	13,537	15,638	17,950	20,281	22,639	25,032
Federal Civilian Government	244	196	194	193	192	191
Federal Military Government	314	325	327	329	331	333
State and Local Government	6,324	6,934	7,519	8,119	8,735	9,368
<b>Total Employment: Walworth County</b>	<b>52,001</b>	<b>54,782</b>	<b>59,344</b>	<b>63,979</b>	<b>68,711</b>	<b>73,564</b>

Source: Woods & Poole Economics: 2006 State Profile, Wisconsin

Walworth County employment projections are shown in Figure 10.2b. These data predict the County's total employment to grow approximately 41 percent between the years 2006 and 2030. Over this time period, the most significant increase in jobs is projected to be in the service industry, which is expected to double. By 2030, the percentage of employees working in mining, in federal government, and on farms is projected to decrease.

### **Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is another characteristic of a community's labor force. According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 89 percent of the City's population age 25 and older had attained a high school level education or higher. This percentage is comparable to many other comparison communities. The percentage of residents in Whitewater that have obtained a college degree or higher was approximately 35 percent; which is considerably higher than the majority of comparison communities, except the Town of Whitewater.

**Figure 10.3: Educational Attainment, 2014**

	Percent High School Graduates (or higher)	Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher
City of Whitewater	89.0%	35.1%
City of Delavan	82.3%	16.2%
City of Elkhorn	91.5%	21.8%
City of Fort Atkinson	91.6%	26.8%
Town of Cold Spring	91.2%	34.4%
Town of Koshkonong	90.9%	30.3%
Town of Lima	85.2%	23.2%
Town of Whitewater	92.5%	41.0%
Village of Palmyra	90.5%	10.7%
Jefferson County	91.7%	23.3%
Walworth County	90.3%	26.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Income Data

Figure 10.4 presents income statistics for the City of Whitewater and nearby communities. According to 2010-2014 American Community Survey estimates, the City's median household income was \$30,281 and its average per capita income was \$16,097. Both figures are considerably less than most other surrounding communities, but reflective of the City's large student population. In the City of Whitewater, median household income has decreased from \$31,793 in 2000.

**Figure 10.4: Income Comparisons—Neighboring Communities, 2014**

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
City of Whitewater	\$30,281	\$16,097
City of Delavan	\$48,199	\$20,321
City of Elkhorn	\$50,910	\$23,746
City of Fort Atkinson	\$47,868	\$26,041
Town of Cold Spring	\$73,750	\$25,526
Town of Koshkonong	\$71,458	\$34,609
Town of Lima	\$53,625	\$26,908
Town of Whitewater	\$72,212	\$34,976
Village of Palmyra	\$47,500	\$22,404
Jefferson County	\$54,522	\$26,349
Walworth County	\$54,522	\$27,321

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 10.5 compares income statistics for the City of Whitewater with other college communities of similar size. When compared to other college communities, Whitewater’s median household income is significantly lower. Similarly, Whitewater’s per capita income is also lower than most of the comparison communities, with the exception of the City of Platteville.

**Figure 10.5: Income Comparisons—College Communities of Similar Size, 2014**

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
City of Whitewater	\$30,281	\$16,097
City of La Crosse	\$40,340	\$21,723
City of Menomonie	\$37,155	\$18,289
City of Oshkosh	\$42,860	\$22,367
City of Platteville	\$39,756	\$15,836
City of DeKalb, IL	\$38,357	\$19,088

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

### **Commuting Patterns**

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, Whitewater residents spent an average of 18 minutes commuting to work. More than half of Whitewater residents commuted outside of the City for employment. Seventy percent of the City’s workers traveled to work alone; approximately eight percent carpooled; seventeen percent walked to work; and only one percent took public transportation.

### **Economic Base Analysis**

The City of Whitewater has several significant employers, the largest of which (by far) is the University of Wisconsin—Whitewater. Figure 10.6 lists the City’s largest employers.

**Figure 10.6: Major Employers**

Rank	Employer	Product or Service
1	University of Wisconsin—Whitewater	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
2	Generac Power Systems, Inc.	Motor and Generator Manufacturing
3	Whitewater Unified School District	Elementary and Secondary Schools
4	Fairhaven Corp	Continuing Care Retirement Communities
5	Universal Electronics, Inc.	Printed Circuit Assembly Manufacturing
6	City of Whitewater	Municipal government
7	Trostel LTD	Gasket Packing & Sealing Device Mfg
8	Husco INTL Inc	Fluid Power Valve and Hose Fitting Manufacturing
9	Wal-Mart	Discount Department Stores
10	Schenck Process LLC	All Other Industrial Machinery Manufacturing
11	Provisur Tech	Food Product Machinery Manufacturing
12	Golden State Foods Corp	General Line Grocery Merchant Wholesalers
13	Productive Living Systems, Inc.	Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse
14	First Citizens State Bank	Commercial Banking
15	Toppers Pizza of Whitewater Wisconsin	Limited-Service Restaurants
16	Compass Group HE Services	Caterers
17	Lavelle Industries, Inc.	Rubber Product Manufacturing for Mechanical Use
18	Nelson's Bus Service, Inc.	School and Employee Bus Transportation
19	John's Disposal Service, Inc.	Solid Waste Collection
20	UW—Whitewater Foundation, Inc.	Grantmaking Foundations
21	Frawley Oil Company, Inc.	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2009 Note: Daniels Sentry, Arrow Financial Services, Trek Bicycle Corporation, The Charlton Group Inc was removed and Schenck Accurate, Inc. Weiler & Co. Inc were modified in 2017*

## Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The WisDNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or brownfields, in the State. The WisDNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Examples of brownfields might include a large abandoned industrial site or a small corner gas station. Properties listed in the WisDNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community.

According to the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS), as of May 2009, there were 19 contaminated sites in Whitewater that were either in need of clean up or where clean up was already underway. Of the 19 incidents shown, eight are classified as LUSTs, or leaking underground storage tanks. These tanks are, or were, known to be contaminating the soil and/or groundwater with petroleum. Nine sites in the Whitewater area are classified as environmental repair, or ERP sites. These sites are often older and have been releasing contaminants to the soil, groundwater, or air over a long period of time. One of the sites is listed as AC, or abandoned containers. Abandoned containers may contain potentially hazardous contents, but no known discharge to the environment has occurred. One of the sites is listed as VPLE, or Liability Exemption, which is a voluntary action in which a property owner conducts an environmental investigation and cleanup of an entire property and then receives limits on future liability for that contamination under §292.15, Wisconsin Statutes. Many of the properties on the BRRTS list will need special attention for successful redevelopment to occur.

The locations of these environmentally contaminated sites were considered when making the land use recommendations in this *Plan*. The City encourages remediation and redevelopment of these sites for economic development where appropriate, and will require appropriate remediation as a condition of any development approval.

## **Existing Economic Development Plans**

### **City of Whitewater Action Plan for Downtown Revitalization, 2005**

In 2005, the Community Development Authority of the City of Whitewater commissioned Vierbicher Associates to develop a revitalization action plan for the downtown. This effort resulted in eight goals to achieve a revitalized downtown for Whitewater. These goals are listed below as well as the status of each as of May 2009.

1. Establish an organizational structure for implementing downtown revitalization.
  - Whitewater became a designated Main Street community in June 2006—the Main Street community functions as the organizational structure to implement downtown revitalization in the City of Whitewater.
2. Establish a management structure for downtown revitalization.
  - An Executive Director, hired as part of the Main Street community initiative, serves as liaison between the City and property owners. The Executive Director answers to the Board of Directors.
3. Increase the number and mix of residential units in the downtown.
  - As a result of the Main Street initiative, more than 60 residential units have been created on the second and third floors of downtown buildings.
4. Increase downtown employment levels.
  - Over 43 jobs have been created as a result of the Main Street initiative.
5. Improve existing building conditions.
  - Over \$8 million dollars have been devoted to infrastructure and building improvements.
6. Create downtown destinations.
  - Work is in progress on this initiative. Examples of work completed to date include relocation and restoration of Stone Stable to Cravath Lake Front Park; Restoration of the Historical Depot building in Cravath Lake Front Park; and installing 3-D public art in Cravath Lake Park. The City continues to work on recruitment of shops.
7. Increase the level of coordination and communication between downtown stakeholders.
  - The Executive Director and administrative staff produce quarterly newsletters, weekly reports, monthly reports to the Planning Board, and quarterly reports to the Common Council. In addition, a new website has been created.
8. Develop an integrated design theme.
  - Work is in process on developing a branding theme for “The Triangle,” including commercials and print ads promoting shopping, eating, and recreation in The Triangle.

### **Strategies for Retail Recruitment Report, 2008**

In 2008, the City hired the firm The Retail Coach, LLC to prepare a retail market analysis and develop a recruitment strategy to help attract new retail businesses to the community. Key results of the analysis include the following:

- Whitewater is underserved in several retail categories.
- The City lacks lodging options.
- Residents must travel outside the community to find many retail goods and services.

- New restaurants and more specialty stores downtown could attract more tourists.
- New retail on the bypass will allow the City to stretch its retail market.

The study also identified several locations throughout the City where retail development would be appropriate and identified several other strategies for attracting retail development, including the following:

- Continue to partner with UW-Whitewater to develop a University Technology Park.
- Continue business development efforts to attract new primary jobs to the community.
- Host an annual Whitewater Area Economic Summit, inviting state leaders and developers.
- Recruit industrial and retail developments to attract the retiring baby boomer demographic to the community.
- Initiate a Whitewater Commercial Exchange.
- Work regionally to develop allies and partnerships and share resources.
- Recruit unique businesses from the Chicago-Cook County area to the Whitewater downtown.
- Attract a diverse range of businesses to the downtown, including antique stores, fine dining, art stores/galleries, and specialty shops.

### **Whitewater University Technology Park: Feasibility Study and Strategic Implementation Recommendations, 2008**

In 2008, the City, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, hired a consultant team to complete the Whitewater University Technology Park: Feasibility Study and Strategic Implementation Recommendations—a master plan for a potential University Technology Park. The University Technology Park is intended to accommodate high quality technology and research industries that complement the academic strengths of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

The Technology Park was originally planned for a 250-acre area south of the Highway 12 bypass and west of Highway 59, along an extension of Indian Mound Parkway. In May 2009, the City announced plans to instead develop the Technology Park in the southeastern section of the City's existing business park. The Technology Park will be located on 125 acres bounded by Innovation Drive, Howard Road, Bluff Road, and Moraine View Park. The UW-Whitewater Innovation Center will be located on five acres immediately east of the Moraine Park. This center will be designed to foster the development of new businesses with a focus on UW-Whitewater research.

Targeted land uses for the Technology Park include agribusiness, software and information technology services, education and training services, financial services, and self-employed consultants. Light assembly, research facilities, office uses, and a limited range of directly supportive commercial uses (e.g., café, coffee shop) may also be appropriate (see the Land Use chapter for a refined description). Given factors such as the need to ensure a protected environment for Technology Park investment, this is not the location in the City for heavy industry. Emphasis will be placed on creating an environment that will support and provide amenities for Technology Park development. These include high quality building and site design, natural area preservation, sustainability and ecologically-sound development practices, energy efficiency and reliability, and high-speed telecommunications. Particular attention will be paid to environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, including opportunities to share and recycle excess energy between businesses. The provision of reliable and redundant sources of power will also be important to the future operations of the potential Technology Park, as will be access to high speed telecommunication technology.

At the time of writing, the City had just received a \$4.7 million federal Economic Development Agency grant to assist with the development of the University Technology Park, and site and building plans for the Innovation Center were being prepared.

## **City Economic Development Groups**

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### **Whitewater Community Development Authority (WCDA)**

The Whitewater Community Development Authority (WCDA) is the primary economic development organization for the City of Whitewater. WCDA has been working in the community since the 1980s. Prominent projects the WCDA has provided assistance with include the development of the Whitewater Business Park, the Whitewater Creek Path and Enterprise Drive, redevelopment of the Hawthorn Melody Dairy into Water's Edge Condominiums, and new water and sanitary sewer mains. WCDA also facilitates residential development in the City and is working to bring new housing options to Whitewater.

### **Downtown Whitewater, Inc.**

Downtown Whitewater, Inc., was established in 2005 as a result of a joint effort of citizens, the business community, WCDA, and the City of Whitewater to address downtown revitalization. As part of this effort, the City applied for and received designation status from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce as a Main Street community in 2006. Downtown Whitewater, Inc.'s mission is to improve and preserve Whitewater's quality of life by strengthening the historic downtown as the heartbeat of the community through concentrated efforts in organization, education, design and beautification, promotion, and overall revitalization.

### **Whitewater Tourism Council (WTC)**

The WTC partners with area organizations to organize and sponsor special events in the community. The Council also provides partnership funding via the Community Tourism Program (CTP) to local non-profit agencies to promote tourism in the City. The CTP is a matching grant reimbursement program that is awarded to non-profit groups that hold events that generate tourism and appeal to markets beyond Whitewater. The CTP is awarded on a monthly, first come, first serve basis.

### **Whitewater Technology Park Committee**

At the time this *Plan* was written, a Whitewater Technology Park Committee had formed to oversee the development of the Technology Park. The Committee was working on several fronts to bring the Technology Park to reality, addressing issues such as developing a business plan and mission statement for the park and considering financing options, including the identification of grant monies.

## **City Economic Development Programs**

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### **Economic Development Loan Program**

This program offers three types of loans: Industrial Development, Commercial Enterprise, and Micro-Loans. Industrial Development Loans are primarily granted to larger projects and targeted to manufacturing businesses. Commercial Enterprise Loans are made to larger retail and service businesses. Both the Industrial Development and Commercial Enterprise loans are given at a four percent interest rate and can be used for asset expenses, such as land or building acquisition, building construction, or purchases of machinery. The Micro-Loan program is intended for small and start-up businesses. This program offers a maximum loan of \$15,000 and may be used for a greater number of purposes.

### **Façade Loan Program**

Façade program loans are funded by a combination of local and federal dollars and are available to owners of commercial buildings to make improvements to the exterior of their buildings. This program is primarily

targeted to the downtown district, although any building may be eligible. Certain design guidelines may apply. Applicants should consult with the program coordinator prior to submitting an application.

### **Façade Grant Program**

Façade grants are available to eligible downtown business owners to make improvements to the exterior of their building. Improvements must follow the Downtown Whitewater Design Guidelines, and projects must be reviewed by the Design Committee of Downtown Whitewater, Inc. These grants are funded through TIF #4 funds, which will expire in 2011.

### **Capital Ideas Technology Zone**

The City's historic downtown and Business Park are both included in the Capital Idea's Technology Zone, which consists of businesses producing high-tech products or employing advanced technology in their operation. Eligible businesses within the Zone may apply to receive up to \$150,000 in state income tax credits for new projects.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

The City of Whitewater uses tax incremental financing to promote economic development in the community. There are currently six active TIF Districts in the City. These TIF Districts were created to provide incentives for commercial, industrial, and residential mixed-use development in key areas of the City by providing public improvements such as roads and sewer to these areas. The presence and locations of these six TIF Districts will profoundly influence where development in Whitewater will occur over the coming years.

- TIF District #4 covers a significant land area, including lands immediately surrounding the downtown, lands that comprise the Whitewater Business Park on the eastern/northeastern portion of the City, and lands in the north-central portion of the City.
- TIF District #5 comprises land on the western periphery of the City, north of West Main Street.
- TIF District #6 includes lands south of the bypass, northwest of Highway 59 and on either side of Indian Mound Parkway, north of the bypass on the west side of Indian Mound Parkway, and north and south of the bypass along Highway 59.
- TIF District #7 is located on the southeast side of the City and includes lands north of the bypass and on either side of Elkhorn Road.
- TIF District #8 is located in the northeastern-most portion of the City, between Highway 59 and Howard Road, and west of Highway 59 and north and south of County Highway U.
- TIF District #9 is located on the eastern edge of the City, east of Howard Road and north of the railroad tracks.

## **County and State Economic Development Organizations and Programs**

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### **Community Based Economic Development Program**

The State's Community Based Economic Development Program (CBED) provides funding assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning, development, and technical assistance projects that support business development. Using CBED program funds, local governments can finance economic development plans, small business and technology-based incubator grants, revolving loan programs, and entrepreneur training programs for at-risk youth. Any Wisconsin city, village, town, county, tribe, or community-based organization is eligible to apply for grant funding. Funds are available on an annual basis through a competitive application process. Some grants must be matched by local funds. Application materials are available from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

**U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program**

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements; grading; street improvements; utilities; parking lots and landscaping; construction of new facilities; or modernizing, renovating, or converting existing facilities. A Certified Development Company (CDC) is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community.

**Walworth County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA)**

The Walworth County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) is a private corporation that is dedicated to promoting economic development in Walworth County. WCEDA provides technical assistance to commercial and industrial businesses in Walworth County in areas such as marketing, writing business plans, planning for business expansion, and acquiring necessary permits. The organization also offers direct, secured loans to businesses with 50 or fewer employees and less than \$1 million in gross receipts. Loans cannot exceed \$50,000 and must generate one job for every \$10,000 loaned. WCEDA offices are located in Elkhorn, WI.

**Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC)**

The Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC) serves as the lead economic development organization in Jefferson County. The Consortium was formed in June 2003 to implement Jefferson's Overall Economic Development Program and to achieve the economic development goals of the County. Its overall goals are to foster and encourage responsible, sustainable economic development activities that result in job creation, job retention, increase the tax base and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Jefferson County. The JCEDC is a non-profit organization that supports the business community and maintains a positive business climate. In this effort, JCEDC offers training programs and has assisted numerous businesses in obtaining financing information from banks, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Wisconsin Business Development, the Women Business Initiative Corporation, and other financing sources. In 2007, the JCEDC hired Vandewalle & Associates to undertake a county-wide economic positioning initiative, which will ultimately lead to the development of a vision and framework for economic development in Jefferson County and a strategy for implementing the vision.

**Assessment of Desired Future Economic Development Focus**

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In order to adequately assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that would be desirable in Whitewater, it is important to first understand the City's assets, and how to capitalize on those assets by identifying strengths and weaknesses for economic development.

Figure 10.7 lists the City's strengths and weaknesses for economic development.

**Figure 10.7: Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Highway 12 bypass provides good access to the City and is planned for expansion to a freeway sometime in the next 20 years.	Competition from other communities located closer to the population centers of Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Janesville.
Employers have access to a young, educated workforce coming out of college, as well as interns and/or inexpensive student labor where needed.	Some may have the perception that Whitewater is “just a college town.”
Access to outdoor recreational opportunities.	Lack of direct access to an interstate highway.
Access to University resources, research, and cultural offerings.	Potential to lose many graduated students to jobs in bigger cities or areas with a greater diversity and quantity of employment and cultural options.
City already makes active use of TIF and supports the use of such tools to spur economic development.	Shortage of lodging options within the City.
The City has an established Community Development Authority.	Lack of an independent grocery store.
The City has a well-established and active downtown, and now an organization devoted to supporting it (Downtown Whitewater, Inc.).	
The City has good regional access, located between Madison, Milwaukee, Janesville, and with access to Chicago.	
The City already has an established business park, with room to grow.	
The University is a “recession-proof” industry, and University students and staff provide positive spill-over economic benefits to the community.	
The City and University have recently collaborated on a new Technology Park, with groundbreaking in 2009.	

## **Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

### **Goal**

*Grow a sustainable local economy that offers a range of careers, shopping, and services; allow our residents to meet their daily needs without leaving the City; and take advantage of existing businesses, new partnerships, and future-oriented economic opportunities.*

### **Objectives**

1. Become a more economically self-sufficient and sustainable community.
2. Continue to promote the downtown as the commercial and civic heart of the City.
3. Facilitate the growth of high-quality retail and employment opportunities to serve the daily shopping, service, and job needs of all residents.

4. Plan for an adequate supply of improved land to accommodate future commercial and industrial development.
5. Attract an independent grocery store.
6. Continue to promote and advance the development of the Whitewater Business Park, Whitewater University Technology Park, and other job centers.

### **Policies**

1. Provide for and support infrastructure improvements that foster desired types of economic activity, including commercial, office, industrial, and technology-based businesses.
2. Provide for new shopping and commercial service opportunities in concentrated, planned areas serving the community and surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Promote a vital and healthy downtown by encouraging mixed-use redevelopment; reuse of vacant and underused buildings and sites; additional housing; increased activity levels and informal gathering spots; and good organization through Downtown Whitewater, Inc.
4. Support proposals that provide a range of commercial opportunities while still considering the importance of preserving the City's character, existing locally owned businesses, and the viability of the downtown.
5. Plan for smaller-scale neighborhood commercial developments convenient to and integrated with residential neighborhoods, without impairing neighborhood character.
6. Support mixed-use development projects that integrate non-residential and residential uses into high-quality, unified places, both in the downtown and in other key locations such as along West Main Street, Highway 12, and Elkhorn Road (see also the Land Use chapter).
7. Locate industries on sites and in areas where they have adequate expansion space to meet anticipated future needs, focusing in particular on the continued growth of the Whitewater Business Park.
8. Continue the strategic use of tax increment financing to promote new development, expansion and relocation of existing businesses and industries, and redevelopment. Remain poised to capitalize on opportunities within the City's active TIF districts.
9. Seek opportunities to locate industries in the City that could take fuller advantage of the Cogentrix power plant.
10. Support the clean-up and restoration of brownfield sites for economic reuse.
11. Continue to invest in and promote the redevelopment of key sites in the downtown, along West Main Street, and in other key corridors around the City (see the Land Use chapter for a list).
12. Work with existing businesses and industries to ensure their continued health and ability to grow, in collaboration with the Whitewater Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Whitewater, Inc.
13. Continue to rely on the Whitewater Community Development Authority as a conduit for economic expansion and diversification in the City, and Whitewater Downtown, Inc., as a key partner in downtown redevelopment.
14. Work with other communities in Jefferson, Walworth, and Rock counties on regional economic development initiatives, such as the Jefferson County regional economic positioning project initiated in 2007.
15. Consider new sources of funds to sustain the Downtown Façade Grant program. The existing funding source, TIF #4, will expire in 2011.

## Economic Development Programs and Recommendations

### **Advance Development of the Whitewater University Technology Park**

Working in collaboration with CDA and UW-W, the City will promote the development and marketing of the Whitewater University Technology Park, located on the eastern side of the City, to accommodate the appropriate future technology- and innovation-driven business growth. Development in the Park is guided by protective covenants that address land use, building appearance, landscaping, parking, and other development characteristics, and will be partially funded by a large federal grant.

In addition to providing a location for high quality research, development, and office uses, a secondary goal of the Technology Park is to promote “green” site and building design practices (see description of and policies for the Office/Technology Park future land use designation in the Land Use chapter). The Technology Park will also provide an opportunity to retain University of Wisconsin-Whitewater students after graduation by offering well-paying jobs.

### **Continue to Invest in the Downtown**



Downtown Whitewater is an important asset to the economy and culture of the City, representing the historic center of the community, and contributing to the City’s unique identity and character. The City has worked hard over recent years to strategically invest in the downtown, and in the future will continue to actively work to promote the downtown as a diverse and vibrant commercial, service, and civic center that can serve everyone in the community—from University students to senior citizens. To advance this goal, the following strategies will be explored:

- Bring more events downtown and promote them: The downtown provides an attractive and logical location to host community events. Such events and activities draw people to the City, help build a sense of pride in the community, support the City’s businesses, promote the downtown as a community gathering place, and encourage people to spend time in Whitewater. For example, the City may consider working to relocate the farmers market, which currently takes place in the Walmart parking lot, to the downtown.
- Advance downtown as an entertainment venue: Downtown Whitewater is already home to various restaurants and bars. The City will continue to promote the establishment of additional entertainment uses and supporting uses in the downtown including coffee shops and cafes, and music venues.
- Attract additional businesses to the downtown: The City, in cooperation with Downtown Whitewater, Inc., and the CDA, will continue to use marketing, investment, and incentive strategies to attract and retain specialty retail businesses, offices, and services in the downtown.
- Promote a variety of compatible land uses: Part of what will continue to make downtown Whitewater a unique and interesting environment is a diversity of compatible uses, including retail, dining, office, service, and appropriate residential uses. Such diversity encourages 24-hour activity in the downtown, with different uses mutually supporting one another. In addition to promoting upper-story residential uses in existing downtown buildings, redevelopment projects in the downtown also present opportunities to provide new housing options. Infill, redevelopment, and rehabilitation projects in the downtown should be regulated so as to maintain the character and image of this area of the City.
- Preserve historic structures: Work with downtown property owners, businesses, Downtown Whitewater, Inc., the Landmarks Commission, and the Downtown Design Committee to preserve and renovate historically significant buildings cost effectively (also see the Cultural Resources chapter).

### **Support the Economy through Enhancement of City Neighborhoods and Amenities**



An important and sometimes overlooked approach to promoting economic development is providing attractive neighborhoods, a variety of amenities, and a high quality of life for residents and business owners. Quality housing, attractive and safe neighborhoods, a strong downtown, parks and trails, and good schools draw employers and workers to a community.

The external appearance of the City and the City's neighborhoods will make Whitewater a more desirable place to live, work, and own a business. The City intends to actively implement the recommendations outlined in the Neighborhood Preservation Strategy (see Housing and Neighborhoods chapter) to improve the cohesiveness and appearance of neighborhoods throughout Whitewater, and will also invest in other improvements such as streetscaping, gateway features, community entry and wayfinding signage, parks, trails, and, potentially in the future, other unique amenities like an outdoor aquatic facility and community center, as constrained budgets and other City priorities permit.

### **Recruit Retail and Other Commercial Businesses to Appropriate Locations in the City**

The 2008 Retail Coach, LLC retail market analysis and recruitment strategy identified several general locations throughout the City where future retail development would be appropriate. These locations included properties on either side of Elkhorn Road close to the Highway 12 bypass, the East Towne Market site at the corner of Elkhorn and Bluff Roads, a redevelopment site on the northwest corner of West Main Street and Tratt Street, undeveloped lands west of Culvers on Main Street, and lands west of the High School campus. The future land use recommendations in this *Comprehensive Plan* regarding locations for commercial development are generally consistent with the recommendations in the Retail Coach study. However, while it was the Retail Coach's primary objective to identify the most viable areas of the City for retail development, the land use recommendations in this *Plan* are the result of a variety of factors and considerations that go beyond the factors considered as part of the Retail Coach study.

For example, the Retail Coach study identifies the roughly 70-acre site west of the High School campus, and located on either side of Indian Mound Parkway, as a viable location for retail development. But this does not mean that the entire site should be planned for retail development. When developing the Future Land Use map, a range of factors were considered, such as the nature of surrounding land uses, traffic concerns, community character issues, a desire to distribute retail opportunities and other commercial development throughout the community, and the need to interconnect and integrate this site with existing and other planned areas of the City. Based on these considerations, the City's proposed land use pattern for this area west of the High School campus accommodates commercial development on the west side of Indian Mound Parkway, but indicates Future Neighborhood uses for the east side of Indian Mound Parkway, adjacent to the High School. This is illustrated on Map 5.

A second example is the Elkhorn Road corridor. While this area of the City provides an ideal location for retail development given its proximity to and visibility from the Highway 12/Elkhorn Road intersection, the City's proposed plan for this corridor (as advised through this *Comprehensive Plan*) advises not only commercial development, but also planned housing and mixed use areas for different tracts. This future land use pattern will still accommodate a variety of retailers (including those with a large building size) and restaurants, but will also provide appropriate transitions to existing and planned residential areas, open spaces, and Trippe Lake.

For those areas that have been identified within this *Comprehensive Plan* as appropriate locations for future commercial development, the City, in cooperation with the CDA will actively recruit appropriate retail businesses and restaurants, implementing the steps and strategies identified in the Retail Coach report (specifically "How to Best Utilize the Retail Gap Analysis Report").

### **Reserve Land around Planned Highway 12 Interchanges for the Highest-Quality Development**

The City recognizes the economic value of the undeveloped lands located around the Highway 12 interchanges, particularly at Highway 12 and Tri County Road, Highway 12 and Walworth Avenue, Highway 12 and Highway 89, and Highway 12 and Elkhorn Road. In these areas, the City will plan for high-quality,

attractive employment, commercial, and mixed use uses. Development in these areas should showcase Whitewater’s employment, shopping, and service opportunities, function as an attractive entryway into the community, and provide an important location for new jobs. These areas should not be prematurely developed or “undersold” to lower-quality uses. Patience and persistence will be key.

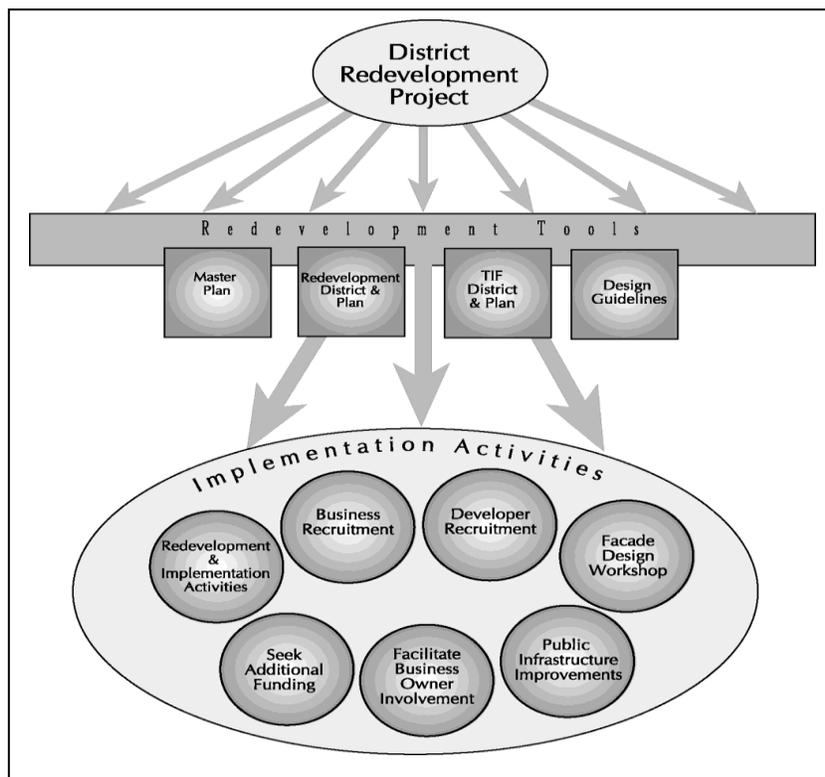
### **Assertively Pursue Redevelopment on Key Sites in the City**



As listed near the end of the Land Use chapter, there will be several redevelopment opportunities in Whitewater over the planning period. These include several older properties in the downtown area and scattered site redevelopment opportunities in other parts of the City.

Sites like these typically do not redevelop themselves. Instead, careful planning, site assessment, public-private partnerships, redevelopment incentives, and persistence over a number of years are required. Typically, this type of detailed planning and implementation process includes:

- Prioritizing redevelopment sites.
- Evaluating the redevelopment sites’ conditions.
- Conducting a regional and local economic opportunities analysis.
- Identifying goals and objectives for each redevelopment site.
- Conducting a market assessment for each redevelopment site.
- Preparing a redevelopment strategy and concept plan map, for each priority site.
- Aggressively pursuing implementation, possibly through adoption of a statutory redevelopment plan and blight determination; establishment of a tax increment financing district (where not presently available); possible brownfield remediation; possible site acquisition, consolidation, and demolition; and developer recruitment.

**Figure 10.8 Redevelopment Planning and Implementation Process**

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Redevelopment strategies for brownfield (contaminated) sites are extremely site-specific, dependent upon factors such as previous ownership, past land use, and the type of potential environmental contamination. A detailed environmental site assessment and market analysis is recommended before proceeding in any brownfield redevelopment project. There is a range of funding sources and implementation tools available from both public and private agencies to assist communities, businesses, lenders, and private citizens in the clean-up and redevelopment of brownfields in Wisconsin.

To assist with redevelopment, the appropriate and thoughtful use of TIF will place Whitewater in a much stronger position when working with developers and business owners and will allow the City to vie for types of projects that might not otherwise be possible without it: projects of a scale and quality that can change the local market and generate other quality projects.

When considering the use of TIF to attract new businesses and promote redevelopment, the City should emphasize projects that generally meet the following criteria:

- Construction exceeds a pre-set minimum value per square foot.
- Site planning and building design works with the topography, includes green building and innovative stormwater management practices, features enhanced landscaping and on-site open space, is designed to promote pedestrian access, and meets or exceeds community architectural and site planning standards included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Uses complement other Whitewater businesses and developments and make the area more attractive for future business investment or redevelopment.
- The project clearly advances the City's economic development direction as described in this *Plan*.

- The project would be financially infeasible without TIF.
- TIF is necessary to make project costs comparable to those associated with doing a similar project on a “greenfield” site under similar market conditions.
- The project is guaranteed to support itself by generating enough new tax increment to service any incurred debt.
- The project has the ability to remove or prevent blight.
- The project will help retain existing businesses or attract new businesses from outside of the community.