

Chapter One: Introduction

The City of Whitewater is an historic, independent community of 14,000 residents in south central Wisconsin. The City is the proud home of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Owing in part to the University's presence, Whitewater is characterized by a unique and vibrant culture, offering many of the amenities typical of a larger community—including a vibrant downtown; a variety of businesses and jobs; a full range of housing options; and numerous opportunities in the arts, education, and recreation. Whitewater is ideally located among Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago; at the doorstep of the Kettle Moraine; and among rich agricultural lands—all of which have also contributed to the City's success.



In the coming years, the City will be faced with ongoing growth and change. For instance, the establishment of a Whitewater University Technology Park will help bring “next generation” businesses and jobs to the community. In addition, the continued growth and evolving policies of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater will generate a growing influx of young people, who will continue to shape the City's character. Such changes will present both opportunities and challenges, as the City strives to maintain the quality and character of its residential neighborhoods, direct new development to appropriate locations, and contribute to a high quality of life and business activity.

Purpose of this Plan

This *City of Whitewater Comprehensive Plan* is intended to help the City guide growth and development to ensure continued and enhanced community prosperity. Specifically, the *Comprehensive Plan* will:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years.
- Recommend appropriate types of land use for specific areas in and around the City.
- Preserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources in and around the City.
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses.
- Direct housing, neighborhood, and economic investments in the City.
- Provide a framework for long-term community sustainability.
- Supply detailed strategies to implement plan recommendations, featuring a Neighborhood Preservation Strategy.
- Build from the rich array of City plans that have been adopted and implemented over the past several years.

The *Plan* is organized into chapters that specifically address each of the elements required by the State of Wisconsin (e.g., Transportation, Land Use). Each chapter presents background information on the element it is addressing and then presents an outline of the City’s goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs for that element. The final chapter—Implementation—indicates priority steps and a timeline to ensure that the recommendations presented in this *Plan* become a reality.

Planning Process

This *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared under Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning legislation, adopted in 1999, and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This *Plan* meets all of the statutory requirements of the legislation. Starting in 2010, only those plans that contain the nine required elements and adopted under the state’s prescribed procedures will have legal standing for zoning, subdivision, and official mapping actions.

The planning process was guided by the City’s Plan and Architectural Review Commission. In order to provide sound public policy guidance, a comprehensive planning process should incorporate inclusive public participation procedures to ensure that final recommendations reflect a broadly supported vision. In spring 2009, the Common Council adopted the City’s plan for public participation in this process plan by resolution. Public participation activities are described in the Vision and Opportunities chapter.

Regional Context

Understanding the region is critical to an informed exploration of Whitewater’s future opportunities. The City is located approximately 40 miles southeast of Madison, with the quickest connection being Highway N to Interstate 39/90, which itself is 15 miles to the City’s west. Whitewater is also located about 55 miles southwest of Milwaukee—and even closer to the burgeoning Waukesha County area. The best connection to Milwaukee and Waukesha is Highway 59. Finally, Whitewater is less than 100 miles from the “global city” of Chicago, which is accessible either via Highway 12 or Interstate 90. Highway 12 is the City’s major roadway connection to the region, but Highways 59, 89, and N are also important (See Figure 1.1).

City residents are within a 20-minute drive to the other incorporated communities of Fort Atkinson, Palmyra, Elkhorn, and Milton. Larger-scale shopping and employment opportunities are available in Janesville (population 65,000), which is about 30 minutes to the southwest.

Map 1 shows the relationship of the City to neighboring communities. The extent of the map covers the expansive boundaries of the Whitewater Unified School District, which has all of its schools within the City except for Lakeview Elementary School, which is located along the border between the Town of Whitewater and the Town of Richmond. The School District boundary can be understood as the boundary of the “Whitewater community,” which of course extends considerably beyond the City limits. The City straddles two counties (Walworth on the south and Jefferson to the north) and abuts a third (Rock to the west), which can complicate City decision making. The City abuts the Town of Whitewater to the south, the Town of Cold Spring to the north, and the towns of Lima and Koshkonong to the west.

Relationship to Other City Plans

Over the years, the City has prepared numerous plans and studies to help guide the growth and development of the community. This *City of Whitewater Comprehensive Plan* is intended to incorporate and generalize directions from the City's other plans, most of which are not intended to be incorporated as part of the City's comprehensive plan themselves. Where appropriate, this *Comprehensive Plan* document includes references to the other planning documents that provide more specific information about a particular subject or recommendation. Also, this *Comprehensive Plan* functions as an update and replacement to some of the City's older planning documents, particularly the City's 1997 Central Area Plan.

The graphic that follows summarizes the nine required elements of this *Comprehensive Plan* and for each element lists more detailed planning documents the City has already adopted. The neighborhood development plans that are referenced in this graphic (for the north, south, east, and west quadrants) are described in more detail in the Land Use chapter.

Insert Comprehensive Planning in Whitewater Graphic

Comprehensive Planning in Whitewater



9 Required Elements of a Comprehensive Plan

Required Content of Each Plan Element

Whitewater's More Detailed Planning and Implementation Efforts (Generally Not Part of Comprehensive Plan Document)

	Issues and Opportunities	Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources	Land Use	Transportation	Utilities and Community Facilities	Housing & Neighborhood Development	Economic Development	Intergovernmental Cooperation	Implementation
	Compilation of background information, demographic trends and forecasts, and overall goals and objectives	Recommendations for conserving farmland, natural features, historic/cultural sites, open space, and community design	Recommendations for the amount, intensity, and location of residential, commercial, industrial and other land uses	Recommendations for new or altered roads, transit service, bike and pedestrian facilities, railroads and airports	Recommendations to expand or reconfigure utilities (e.g., sewer and water) and community facilities (e.g., police, fire, schools)	Recommendations to supply sufficient affordable housing for all incomes, ages, and special needs	Recommendations to attract and retain desired businesses and industries and to promote "brownfield" redevelopment	Recommendations to encourage joint planning and services and to resolve conflicts among plans	Recommended actions to be completed in a stated sequence (timeline) to guide progress toward plan implementation
	Strategic Planning Initiative (2005)	Historic Preservation Inventory (2008) Sanitary Sewer Service Area Plan (SEWRPC) Historic Preservation Commission Activities Downtown Whitewater Design Guidelines (2006)	Neighborhood Development Plans • East (1999) • West (2002) • North (2006) • South (2009) Central Area Plan (To be replaced by Comprehensive Plan) Redevelopment Plans • Whitewater Street Corridor (1994) • Downtown (1997) Whitewater Riverway Corridor Plan (1995) Zoning Decisions	Comprehensive Bikeway Plan Capital Improvement Program Special Area Studies (e.g. West Main)	Park and Open Space Plan Detailed Park Design Plans Stormwater Management Master Plan Wellhead Protection Plan Water and Sewer System Studies Campus Master Plan (LW-W)	Neighborhood Preservation Strategy (To be part of Comprehensive Plan) Housing / Zoning Code Enforcement	Whitewater First Initiative Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plans Action Plan for Downtown Revitalization Main Street Program (Downtown Whitewater Inc.) Community Development Authority Activities	Intergovernmental Service Agreements (e.g. Fire) Extraterritorial Powers	Capital Improvement Program Grants Zoning Ordinance Subdivision Ordinance Official Map Development Review

Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries

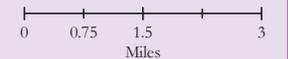
Jurisdictional Boundaries

Map 1

City of Whitewater Comprehensive Plan

- City of Whitewater
- Other City/Village Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Town Boundaries
- Sections w/Section Numbers
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Boundaries
- City of Whitewater Potential 3 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Boundary
- Whitwater Unified School District Boundary
- Other School District Boundaries
- City of Whitewater Sewer Service Area Boundary
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Surface Water

Source: SEWRPC, Rock County LIO, Jefferson County LIO, Walworth County LIO, City of Whitewater, V&A



Adopted: February 2, 2010



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