

Community Vision

Citizen input was sought throughout the planning process. A combination of more than two dozen public meetings, numerous interviews, focus groups, workshops, open house sessions, surveys, and public announcements were used to keep residents informed and to encourage comments on plan elements as they were drafted. As planning began, residents helped to establish a shared vision for the community:

Appleton is the Heart of the Fox Valley.

It is a vibrant, successful and highly regarded place, providing its citizens with an enviable quality of life including...

...safe and attractive neighborhoods with historic and newer homes, in a variety of styles, for owners and renters at all income levels and stages of life,

...a vibrant economy and a thriving downtown, providing diverse career opportunities in expanding economic sectors,

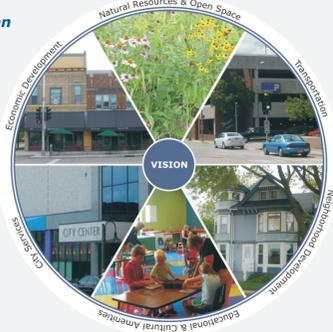
...exceptional cultural resources and local and regional educational opportunities for life-long learning,

...a revitalized Fox River Corridor and expanded park, open space, and recreational offerings for community residents,

...convenient and efficient multi-modal transportation options including local roads and highways, a regional transit system, and an integrated system of bicycle and pedestrian paths,

...outstanding city services, public safety, and medical care, and

...an environment of cooperation with neighboring communities on issues of regional importance.



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- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
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- Fox River Corridor Plan
- Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Plan
- Richmond Street Corridor Plan
- South Oneida Street Corridor Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law

Why plan? The State of Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law requires any community to have a comprehensive plan if it intends to enforce local ordinances related to land subdivision, zoning and land use, storm water regulation, and several other functions. Still, Appleton had adopted a series of plans even before this law was enacted. Planning is seen as an effective tool to identify community needs, establish priorities, guide investment, and collaborate with others to improve the quality of life for residents. Concurrent with the comprehensive planning process, the City conducted detailed planning for the Fox River Corridor and for three of the City's commercial corridors. The City also updated its Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which must be updated every five years. These additional plans are incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan, as is the Downtown Plan which was adopted in 2007. These plans are available on the City of Appleton Department of Community Development's website at www.appleton.org.

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Implementation (Chapter 12)

This plan updates the Vision 20/20 Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1996. Addressing a 20-year horizon, the plan extends to the year 2030. The plan may be amended or updated periodically as conditions change, and the implementation element calls for a review in every fifth year following its adoption. The chapter also addresses specific actions that should be taken to achieve the vision of the plan, with greater detail found in each chapter of the plan text.

Housing and Neighborhoods (Chapter 5)

Continue efforts to ensure an adequate supply of housing affordable to all income levels in the community.

- Monitor the balance between household incomes and for-sale housing or market rents to identify trends that may impact affordability.
- Continue to support, seek continued or additional funding, and expand the number of housing programs available to defray the costs or rental housing or home ownership.
- Continue to support programs that provide assistance to homeless persons in the community.

Work proactively to prevent decay of the City's housing stock and blight conditions within neighborhood areas.

- Monitor property maintenance conditions in neighborhoods, evaluate existing codes to determine their effectiveness in addressing property conditions, and ensure adequate code enforcement.
- Evaluate the need to provide greater authority to conduct inspections of rental properties.
- Support and encourage programs that provide recognition for exemplary property maintenance.
- Support existing programs to provide funding for home improvements for lower-income households.
- Encourage and facilitate renovation and redevelopment that preserves and enhances the viability of existing housing and neighborhoods.
- Utilize housing relief funding or other sources of assistance to minimize the risk of property foreclosure, and to acquire foreclosed or blighted properties to support neighborhood stabilization.

Provide a range of housing styles that meet the needs and appeal to all segments of the community.

- Evaluate conditions under which it may be appropriate to allow accessory units in some parts of the City.
- Identify preferred locations and encourage urban infill and redevelopment to meet the needs of retirees and Generation X and Y buyers or renters, such as redevelopment sites on the north side of downtown or along Wisconsin Avenue, among other locations, targeted to moderately-priced condominiums and rental units; redevelopment sites along the Fox River Corridor, including the industrial flats, that are suited to higher-value condominium and rental units.
- Plan for a supply of market-affordable vacant land suitable for continued attainable residential development, primarily on the north side of the City.

Expand the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program to establish neighborhood organizations as partners in carrying out City functions.

- Identify coherent neighborhood areas within Appleton, which may be centered around features such as shopping districts, schools, or parks.
- Provide assistance to help form neighborhood organizations that will work with City staff and elected officials to promote neighborhood vitality.
- Engage neighborhood areas to identify target activities on which residents and City government can partner to take action.

Projected Population and Household Growth in Appleton									
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Population	70,087	72,053	74,260	77,005	79,817	82,421	84,683	14,596	20.8%
Households	26,864	28,039	29,378	30,854	32,331	33,649	34,944	8,080	30.1%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Transportation (Chapter 6)

Plan for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles on local and regional roads.

- Collaborate with state and county transportation officials and neighboring municipalities to plan and coordinate improvements to the regional transportation network.
- Evaluate dimensional criteria for truck routes for the need to design for larger vehicles, either as a general policy or on a case-by-case basis.
- Establish a parking analysis process, as discussed in the Downtown Plan (Chapter 14), for reviewing parking needs in the downtown.
- Consider amending commercial district parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to encourage redevelopment in older commercial corridors such as Wisconsin Avenue, Richmond Street, and South Oneida Street.

Support regional efforts to preserve and enhance air service in the Fox Valley.

- Encourage existing plans to improve air service facilities at Outagamie County Regional Airport.

Create an environment that is safe and conducive to walking and bicycling throughout the entire city.

- Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects that enhance connectivity between important destinations within the community, and to regional bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- Maintain existing sidewalks and implement plans to install new sidewalks in targeted areas where they do not exist. Continue the City's policies to require sidewalks in new neighborhoods.
- Adopt and implement an on-street bicycle network plan.
- Implement the recommendations of the City's Safe Routes to School program.
- Continue to implement the on-street bike lane plan and the sidewalk policy

as approved by the Common Council to ensure multi-modal transportation opportunities including investigating the potential for a pedestrian/bicycle path along County Highway "JJ"

Preserve and enhance rail service within Appleton and the Fox Valley.

- Collaborate with the Canadian National Railway and the State of Wisconsin to preserve existing rail service and to accommodate new rail users on tracks serving Appleton.
- Encourage state and regional efforts to expand passenger rail service into the Fox Valley, including stops within the City of Appleton.
- Evaluate future opportunities to create a multi-modal passenger hub in downtown Appleton.
- Monitor traffic conditions at existing rail crossings and make appropriate improvements, in collaboration with the railroad and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, as required to ensure safety.

Continue efforts to improve boating conditions on the Fox River.

- Support efforts of the Fox River Navigational Authority System to rehabilitate and maintain locks on the Fox River for public use.
- Develop a water trail suitable for use by non-motorized boats.

Maintain diverse and cost-effective options for public transportation that meets the needs of all segments of the population.

- Implement recommendations from the Metropolitan Planning Organization to establish a regional transportation authority as a funding mechanism for Valley Transit, in anticipation of losing federal funds.
- Seek long-term funding options, in collaboration with neighboring communities, to support Valley Transit.
- Help to identify funding for continuation and expansion of the Downtown Trolley.

Utilities and Community Facilities (Chapter 7)

Provide a pattern of development that minimizes impacts to municipal services and utilities.

- Prioritize development and redevelopment that minimizes the need for additional public and private infrastructure such as water storage facilities and sewage lift stations.
- Collaborate with other units of government to share utilities, services, and community facilities where appropriate, and where resulting in improved services or lower costs.
- Continue to utilize planning tools, such as the Facilities Management Plan and Capital Improvements Plan, to implement improvements.

Ensure that municipal services and utilities are delivered in a sustainable manner.

- Prepare a sustainability audit of municipal utilities, services, and facilities to

determine where enhancements may be made to embrace the "triple bottom line" of people, planet, and profits.

Work with other public private utilities and service providers to assist them, when appropriate to do so, in delivering services to Appleton residents.

- Continue to collaborate with the Appleton School District and private schools on issues such as joint development and use of recreational fields, telecommunications infrastructure, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and similar issues.
- Work with the hospitals in the City to address access and expansion issues that may hinder their growth or efficient operation.

Agricultural, Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources (Chapter 8)

Maintain the viability of the regional agricultural sector that provides locally-grown food for residents and raw materials for Appleton's food processing and other businesses.

- Preserve important farmlands and avoid fragmentation of agricultural areas in the region by directing new development to infill or redevelopment sites or to locations contiguous to existing urban areas in Appleton and other communities; encourage compact development patterns that use land efficiently; and supporting county, state, and private initiatives with the goal of preserving prime agricultural land in the region.
- Support programs that connect farmers and consumers to bring locally-grown food into the community through actions such as designing and constructing enhancements to Houdini Plaza and Soldier's Square that allow expansion of the Summer Farm Market; and working with the Community Garden Partnership and other organizations to provide locations for community gardens and education on gardening.
- Pursue economic development initiatives that seek to retain and expand Appleton's existing food processing and agriculture-related businesses, and to attract new ones that provide a market for regional agricultural products.

Preserve important natural features and enhance environmental quality throughout the community in order to secure economic, recreational, and health benefits for area residents.

- Provide adequate protection for Appleton's important natural features including the Fox River and other streams, wetlands, undeveloped bluffs and ravines, habitat areas, and other features.
- Work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, non-profit organizations, and private entities to continue environmental clean-up and restoration of the Fox River.
- Preserve and enhance the remaining wetlands within Appleton and areas into which the City will continue to grow.
- Identify, implement, and educate the public about "best management practices" for stormwater management to mitigate non-point pollution and improve stormwater quality.
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness and environmental benefits of strategies that may reduce the amount of pollutants that Appleton's city government operations contribute to the atmosphere, and encourage local businesses to join voluntary programs to improve air quality.
- Establish policies to require use of energy efficient technology for new and retrofitted government buildings and infrastructure, and investigate the feasibility of using renewable energy sources.
- Continue and expand the City's participation in programs to eliminate or reduce the use of pesticides, mercury, lead, and other persistent bioaccumulative toxic substances, and continue to educate the public on the potential harmful effects of these substances.
- Restore and preserve the quality of natural plant and animal communities through initiatives such as identifying priority locations and conducting natural habitat restoration projects in City parks and on other City-owned properties; educating and encouraging homeowners, businesses, and developers concerning the benefits of using native landscaping materials; and implementing programs to educate the public and to halt the introduction and spread of invasive species in the Appleton area.
- Support Appleton's existing forestry program to plant new trees and to maintain the health of the City's urban tree canopy.

Continue and expand efforts to preserve, restore, and interpret important features of Appleton's rich history

- Preserve Appleton's historic resources through the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and actions of the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Educate property owners and encourage context-sensitive restoration of Appleton's historic and potentially historic properties.
- Improve on-site marking and interpretive signage for Appleton's historic sites.
- Develop a historic walking tour or tours for the downtown, Fox River

- Corridor, and historic neighborhoods.
- Continue to maintain the City's status as a member of the Certified Local Government Program through the Wisconsin Historical Society.
- Continue to recognize individual efforts for exterior restoration and maintenance of buildings and structures through the annual historic restoration and a stewardship/revitalization certificate awards program.

Support the organizations, events, and venues that make Appleton the arts and cultural center of the Fox Cities.

- Provide appropriate financial, technical, and other resources to ensure the continued viability and growth of cultural organizations and attractions, in partnership with organizations such as Appleton Downtown, Inc. and the Fox Cities Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a downtown convention center. (See Chapter 14: Downtown Plan for additional discussion of this item.)
- Pursue the availability of adequate event space and logistical services to facilitate cultural and related events within the community.

Continue support for programs targeted to Appleton's diverse ethnic and cultural communities.

- Support the Intercultural Relations Program and the coordinator position within the Mayor's Office.
- Continue coordination with the Appleton Area School District on historical and cultural resource staff development.
- Explore the creation of a diversity statement and its incorporation into City of Appleton communications.
- Continue to coordinate activities and events with cultural organizations and other entities that serve diverse populations.
- Provide assistance to support the formation and success of small businesses serving the City's diverse ethnic communities.

Fox River Corridor Plan (Chapter 13)

Residents value the Fox River Corridor for its history and natural characteristics. The City of Appleton and other communities along the river have engaged in a number of recent initiatives to clean the river, redevelop its obsolete industrial properties, and create new recreational opportunities along its banks. This plan lays out a blueprint for continuation of these efforts.

The Fox River Corridor Plan establishes eight key goals:

- Support state and regional efforts to enhance and promote the entire Lower Fox River Corridor
- Achieve a fair balance between desires for urban development and open greenspace along the riverfront
- Promote an economically viable mix of existing and redeveloped uses along the riverfront
- Support ongoing environmental clean-up and enhancement in the river corridor
- Improve connectivity between the river valley and adjacent neighborhoods
- Ensure that the development of public and private spaces along the river is held to the highest design standards
- Encourage green and environmentally-friendly practices within the river valley
- Preserve and interpret historic and natural resources along the river

Several redevelopment opportunities lie along the river. The largest of these is the Industrial Flats, where the community envisions a mixed use neighborhood comprised of residential, open space, shopping and dining, and employment uses. Existing industries within the area are likely to remain for a long time, and new development will need to be sensitive to potential conflicts.

The plan contains design recommendations intended to encourage redevelopment with a unique urban character. New development should provide access to the river and help to create an integrated network of trails and open spaces in the river valley.

Economic Development (Chapter 9)

Grow Appleton's business community through recruitment, expansion, and retention programs that ensure a diverse business mix and jobs that pay well.

- Prepare and implement a business recruitment program that targets suitable businesses in manufacturing, business and professional services, retail, and other industries.
- Work with the existing business community to help identify and tap opportunities for expansion.
- Implement business retention program including regular business visits and monitoring of business conditions within key industry groups.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of state, regional, and local incentive programs in meeting the financial and technical assistance needs of businesses, and create or revise programs accordingly.

Create the resources and culture in which entrepreneurial development is encouraged.

- Develop a program for entrepreneurial development comprised of networking, financial assistance, training, and supportive services for all types of entrepreneurs.

Ensure the continued vitality of downtown and the City's neighborhood commercial districts.

- Implement the recommendations found in the Downtown Plan.
- Implement the recommendations adopted in the corridor plans for South Oneida Street, Richmond Street, and Wisconsin Avenue.
- Monitor business activity and physical conditions within Appleton's business district on a regular basis to provide early identification of issues that may need to be addressed.

Encourage new development and redevelopment activities that create vital and attractive neighborhoods and business districts.

- Ensure a continued adequate supply of industrial and commercial land to sustain new business development.
- Proactively acquire property targeted for redevelopment and develop a land bank to assist in property assembly.
- Ensure quality development by requiring that all new construction meets or exceeds the minimum design criteria determined appropriate for the area in which the site/building is located.

Create a community environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining the creative class.

- Continue the City's efforts to expand and improve its amenities such as parks and recreation, the Performing Arts Center, and other cultural or civic offerings.
- Encourage the creation of vibrant mixed-use urban areas in the downtown and on along the Fox River that is both walkable and bicycle-friendly.

Work collaboratively with other municipalities, organizations, and private entities to advance the economic development of the entire region.

- Continue the City's involvement and support for regional economic development organizations such as NEWREP and the New North.
- Collaborate with neighboring communities on economic development issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries, such as commercial vacancies along College Avenue.

Land Use (Chapter 10)

Provide an adequate supply of suitable land meeting the demand for development of various land uses.

- Adopt, and as necessary, amend the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Adopt, and as necessary, amend an Official Map that designates street right-of-way requirements, existing and future city parks, school sites, and utility locations, along with other features permitted by state statute.

Encourage redevelopment to meet the demand for a significant share of future growth, and to enhance the quality of existing neighborhoods.

- Identify areas in which redevelopment may be desirable and prepare planning to guide that redevelopment.
- Continue to provide assistance, through tools such as tax incremental financing, redevelopment bonds, loan programs, business or neighborhood improvement districts, and other resources, to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in established neighborhoods.

Intergovernmental Cooperation (Chapter 11)

Maintain a positive relationship with local area governments to foster collaboration on issues of mutual concern.

- Ensure continued discussion between Appleton and neighboring municipalities and counties, including both elected officials and department staff.
- Continue Appleton's involvement in regional organizations, such as those to promote economic development, to work to provide affordable housing, to restore and revitalize the Fox River, and to provide transit services in the Fox Valley.
- Act upon the specific opportunities for collaboration identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Work with the State of Wisconsin and federal agencies on issues of concern to the City of Appleton.

- Monitor policy issues and advocate for rules and legislation that will benefit Appleton and its residents.
- Work with state agencies to ensure timely compliance with mandates, and to monitor and shape policy decisions that impact the City.
- Seek available opportunities for grant funding and programs that can help to develop capital facilities or improve delivery of municipal services, acquire parks and open space land, or stimulate economic or cultural development.

Downtown Plan (Chapters 14)

The plan recognizes Appleton's downtown as...

the heart of the Fox Valley, a destination for entertainment, business, shopping, education, and recreation. The downtown is unique within the region and contains activities which are themselves unique. It is the center of decisions regarding community and economy; it is busy, vital, and attractive. Downtown is the premier urban neighborhood in the Fox Valley, offering an exceptional quality of life to its residents. Downtown Appleton is interesting and exciting to work in, fun to be at and live in, the pride of the Fox Valley.

This 2007 update to the City of Appleton's Downtown Plan charts a course for continued vitality of the City's central business district and surrounding neighborhoods. The update reflects maturation of the City's downtown revitalization program, which has achieved exceptional results since the original Downtown Plan was completed in 1995.

The downtown is comprised of several sub-areas, including the core downtown, the arts and entertainment district, two areas of mixed use, a public use district, residential areas north and south of the core downtown,

and a neighborhood commercial district located on North Richmond Street. Depth is added to the specially retail node on College Avenue by redeveloping Soldier's Square and an aging parking garage. Design guidelines will ensure that future redevelopment projects reflect community desires regarding building, form, scale, massing, and density. Opportunities for additional open space and trail connections are identified to improve connections between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods and the Fox River.

The Downtown Plan is an action plan consisting of 29 strategies that are organized under six broad initiatives:

- Urban design
 - Tourism, arts, and entertainment
 - Neighborhood and residential development
 - Business and office development
 - Transportation and parking
 - Downtown management
- Responsibility for implementing these strategies is shared among several entities including the City of Appleton, Appleton Downtown, Inc., and other public and private entities.

Commercial Corridor Area Plans (Chapters 15 to 17)

Special area plans were prepared for Wisconsin Avenue, Richmond Street, and South Oneida Street. Each plan is based on a market analysis that identifies potential uses for the corridor. Recommendations address land use and redevelopment, zoning and site design standards, and public infrastructure or streetscapes. Each corridor is envisioned to consist of a combination of four

different character districts based on use, pedestrian and automobile access, and site design. The four districts include general commercial, pedestrian-oriented commercial, residential mixed-use, and service commercial. Specific implementation measures are addressed within each of the plans.

The Fox River is a community destination and one of Appleton's most recognized assets. As the river corridor continues to evolve, Appleton will support opportunities that provide greater public access to the river, establish an integrated network of riverfront open spaces, encourage redevelopment resulting in new housing and businesses while maintaining the viability of existing uses, improve the environmental quality of the river valley, and enhance its cultural and historic resources.

