

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Intent of the Plan

Wisconsin's Smart Growth Legislation

The Planning Process

Public Participation

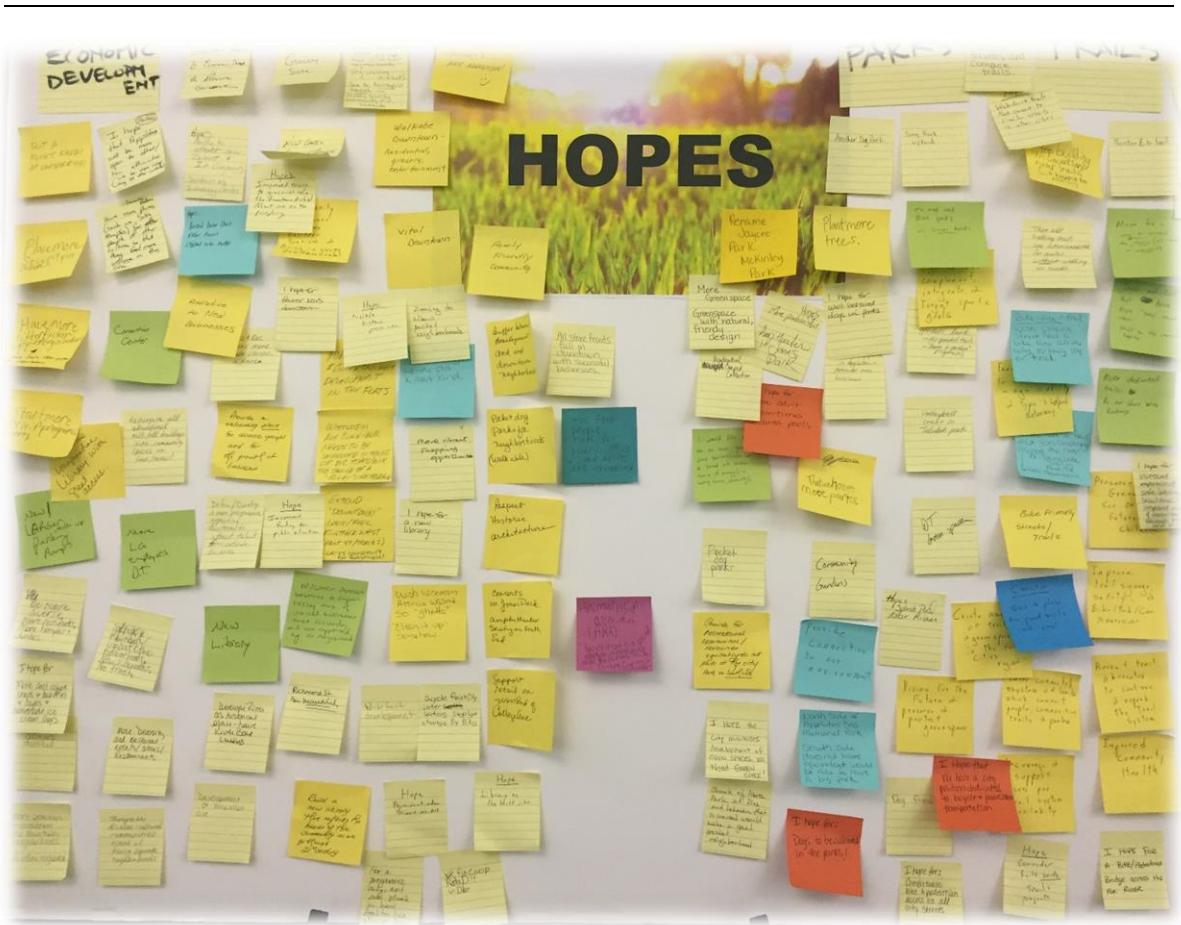


Figure 1 Hopes and Concerns exercise results - March 2016 Issues & Opportunities Workshop

## Intent of the Plan

The City of Appleton's **Comprehensive Plan** establishes a vision for future land use, physical development, and quality of life in the City, and provides a comprehensive set of goals, policies, and initiatives to achieve that vision. It is a coordinated and unified plan used to maintain and enhance conditions within the community and provide guidance on private and public development issues.

The **Comprehensive Plan** addresses the entire geographic area of Appleton and its extraterritorial planning jurisdiction. It is a long range plan, addressing current pressing issues while also looking beyond to the perspective of future problems and possibilities within the City.

The **Comprehensive Plan** is intended to be more than a policy document. Many of the recommendations in the plan relate to new or continued initiatives to help bring about a shared community vision. The plan contains special area plans providing detailed analysis and recommendations for areas of particular concern, such as downtown, the Fox River corridor, Wisconsin Avenue, Richmond Street, and South Oneida Street. In addition, the City has incorporated their Downtown Plan as well as the 5-Year Outdoor Park and Recreation Plan into the **Comprehensive Plan**.

## Wisconsin's Smart Growth Legislation

In 1999, the Wisconsin legislature passed a highly structured piece of land use legislation known as the "Smart Growth Law". The statute (Wis. Stats. 66.1001) requires that after January 1, 2010, local general zoning ordinances; county, city, and village shoreland zoning ordinances; county and local subdivision ordinances; and local official mapping ordinances be consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan. The Appleton Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030 was adopted by the City on March 3, 2010. The Smart Growth Law requires that adopted comprehensive plans be updated no less than once every 10 years. This plan is an updated version of the plan adopted in 2010.

The Smart Growth Law provides fourteen goals that state agencies are asked to consider when taking action and which communities must consider when writing a comprehensive plan:

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures;
- Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices;
- Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources;
- Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests;
- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs;
- Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites;
- Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government;
- Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards;
- Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community;
- Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses;



- Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels;
- Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals;
- Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities; and
- Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

The Smart Growth Law also establishes common elements to be addressed in each community's comprehensive plan. The nine required elements are summarized here.

### Issues and Opportunities Element

The plan must include background information on the City of Appleton and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of land over a 20-year planning period. Background information must include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels, and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.

### Housing Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand. The element must assess the age, structural value, and occupancy characteristics of the City's housing stock. The element must also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the City of Appleton, and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups, and persons with special needs. It must address policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the City's existing housing stock.

### Transportation Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element must compare the City's objectives, policies, goals, and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element must also identify highways within the City of Appleton by function and incorporate state, regional, and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans, and rail plans that apply in the City.

### Utilities and Community Facilities Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the City such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other



public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element must describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the City of Appleton, and must include an approximate timetable that forecasts the need in the local governmental unit to expand or rehabilitate existing utilities and facilities or to create new utilities and facilities and shall assess future needs for government services in the City that are related to such utilities and facilities.

### Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources, parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

### Economic Development Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the City of Appleton. The element must assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the City. The element must assess the City of Appleton's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element must also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element must also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

### Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element must analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element must incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. 66.0301, 66.0307 or 66.0309 (note: previously, s. 66.30, 66.023, or 66.945). The element must identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

### Land Use Element

The plan must include a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the City of Appleton, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element must analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element must contain projections for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the



projections are based. The element must also include a series of maps that show current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

## Implementation Element

The plan must include a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, sign regulations, erosion and storm water control ordinances, historic preservation ordinances, site plan regulations, design review ordinances, building codes, mechanical codes, housing codes, sanitary codes or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in the other eight elements. The element must describe how each of the elements of the plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan, and must include a mechanism to measure the City of Appleton's progress toward achieving all aspects of the plan.

The Implementation Element must include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan must be updated no less than once every 10 years.

## The Planning Process

The process of developing a plan starts with analysis of existing conditions and trends regarding physical, environmental, social and economic aspects of the City. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process included the following phases:

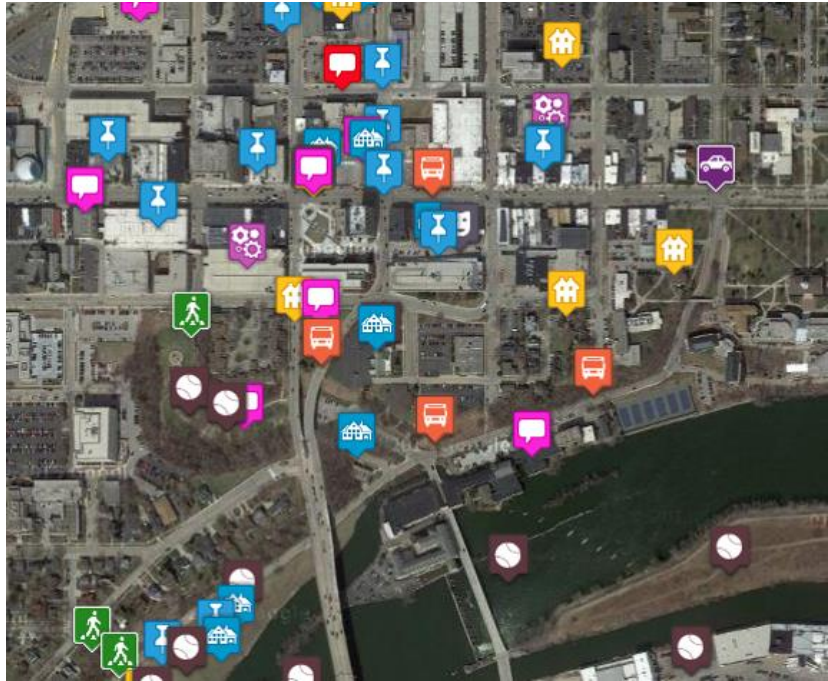
1. Data Gathering and Analysis. During this phase, background information was gathered and the majority of public input activities were conducted.
2. Alternatives Development. During this phase chapter elements were updated and discussed with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC). Key trends pertaining to each element were identified and discussed. Objectives and policies were updated along with existing condition information.
3. Plan Adoption. During this phase the draft Plan was brought to the public through a series of open houses and other outreach activities. The CPSC recommended the Plan for adoption and a public hearing was held by the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission adopted a resolution recommending to Common Council the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, the Common Council reviewed the Plan, held a Public Hearing, and passed an ordinance to adopt the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan contains five sub-area plans within the City, four of which were not updated as part of the 2016 Plan update. Chapter 14 Downtown Plan was rewritten as part of the 2016 Plan update. The following plans were not:

- Fox River Corridor Plan
- Richmond Street Corridor Plan
- Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Plan
- South Oneida Street Corridor Plan

## Public Participation

Establishing the vision for Appleton is a process that involves the entire community. For this reason, the comprehensive planning legislation mandates adoption of written procedures that “foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information service and public meetings.” A **Public Participation Plan** was developed to create an outline and strategic direction of how to educate and inform the citizenry and solicit input and feedback throughout the comprehensive planning process. Throughout the planning process, appropriate public participation techniques were utilized to bring diverse stakeholder viewpoints into the decision-making process, enabling the City to make more informed decisions and improve quality through collaborative efforts.



*Figure 2 On-line commenting provided an opportunity for hundreds of citizens to provide input into the planning process*

For the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update, significant public participation occurred throughout the following activities:

- Interactive Project Website
- Regular Newsletters
- Online Survey
- Press Releases
- Meetings in a Box (self-facilitated issues and opportunities exercise)
- March 2016 Issues and Opportunities Workshops
- March 2016 Annual ADI Awards Banquet (plan your downtown exercise)
- Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups
- 3-day Downtown Design Charrette in May 2016
- Monthly Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meetings
- Downtown Sub Committee Meetings
- Draft and Final Plan Open House
- Public Hearing



*Figure 3 March 2016 Issues & Opportunities Workshop*