

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 305

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF RACINE: 2035

Chapter VI

LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The land use element, together with the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element, seeks to balance long-term development and redevelopment in the City of Racine with the environmental well-being and cultural history of the City. The land use element sets forth major objectives concerning the desirable physical development of the City of Racine. Arguably the most important element of the comprehensive plan, the land use plan provides a means of relating day-to-day development and redevelopment decisions to long-range objectives and provides for an efficient and attractive development pattern that promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The land use element is one of the nine elements of a comprehensive plan required by Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. Section 66.1001 (2) (h) of the *Statutes* requires this element to compile goals, objectives, policies, programs, and maps to guide future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The *Statutes* also require an analysis of data and maps regarding existing land use, land use trends, and land use projections as a basis for formulating land use goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the City including:

- Information regarding the amount, type, and intensity or density of existing land uses in the City.
- Land use trends in the City.
- Projected land use needs in five year increments to the plan design year 2035.

- Maps showing existing and future land uses, productive agricultural soils, natural limitations to building site development, floodplains, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive lands.¹

In addition, the following comprehensive planning goals related to the land use element are set forth in Section 16.965 of the *Statutes* and must be addressed as part of the planning process:²

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
- 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 government, and utility costs.
- 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.
- Balancing property rights with community interests and goals.
- Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

Element Format

This chapter is organized into the following five sections:

- Inventory of Existing Land Uses and Trends in the City of Racine;
- Public Input—Land Use Issues;
- City of Racine Land Use Plan;
- Urban Development Tools and Techniques; and
- City of Racine Land Use Element Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs.

¹ *Separate maps are not required by the Statutes for each of the items listed under this bullet. Multiple items may be combined on one or more maps, and some maps included in other chapters are referenced where appropriate.*

² *Chapter IV lists all 14 of the comprehensive planning goals included in Section 16.965 of the Statutes.*

INVENTORY OF EXISTING LAND USES AND TRENDS IN THE CITY OF RACINE³

Historic Urban Growth

The Regional Planning Commission's historic urban growth inventory provides insight into the spatial pattern of urban development in the City of Racine over time. This inventory delineates the outer limits of concentrations of urban development at selected points in time beginning in 1850. Areas identified as urban include locations where residential structures and other buildings have been constructed in relatively compact groups, representing concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial, and other urban land uses. In addition, the identified urban areas encompass certain open space lands such as parks and other small permanent open space areas within the urbanized areas.⁴

The historical growth and development of the City is depicted on Map 3. As shown on that map, urban development in the City was largely confined to the area at the mouth of the Root River along Lake Michigan before 1850. Over the next 50 years, from 1850 to 1900, as public water and sewer systems, electricity, telephone, and gas used for cooking and heating became available, growth continued to expand outward from the City center. That same pattern continued between 1900 and 1950. Growth has continued steadily since 1950 with the City being almost fully developed today.

Existing Land Use

The Regional Planning Commission's land use inventory delineates and quantifies the area devoted to various urban and nonurban land uses throughout the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. The initial regional land use inventory was completed in 1963, while the most recent inventory was completed in 2000. Existing land uses in the City of Racine in 2000 are shown on Map 4.

³ Detailed maps and tables of the information described are available in SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 301, A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Racine County: 2035.

⁴ As part of the urban growth ring analysis, urban areas are defined as concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial, governmental, or institutional buildings or structures, along with their associated yards, parking, and service areas, having a combined area of five acres or more. In the case of residential uses, such areas must include at least 10 structures—over a maximum distance of one-half mile—located along a linear feature, such as a roadway or lakeshore, or at least 10 structures located in a relatively compact group within a residential subdivision. Urban land uses which do not meet these criteria because they lack the concentration of buildings or structures—such as cemeteries, airports, public parks, golf courses—are identified as urban where such uses are surrounded on at least three sides by urban land uses that do meet the afore-referenced criteria.

Urban Land Use

Urban land uses consist of residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, communication, and utility uses, governmental and institutional, recreational and unused urban land.⁵ As shown on Map 4, urban land uses encompassed 9,324 acres (14.6 square miles), or about 93 percent of the City in 2000. This compares to urban land uses comprising 23 percent of Racine County and 28 percent of the total area of the Southeastern Wisconsin Region in 2000.

Residential land comprised the largest urban land use category in 2000, encompassing about 3,620 acres, or 39 percent of all urban land in the City. Commercial land encompassed about 690 acres, or 7 percent of all urban land. Industrial land encompassed about 600 acres, or 7 percent of all urban land. Land used for governmental and institutional purposes encompassed about 650 acres, or 7 percent of all urban land. Land devoted for intensive recreational uses encompassed about 780 acres, or 8 percent of all urban land.⁶ Lands devoted to transportation, communication, and utilities uses encompassed about 2,360 acres, or 25 percent of all urban lands; street and highway rights-of-way accounted for 1,860 acres, or 79 percent of the transportation, communication, and utilities category. Unused urban land accounted for about 620 acres, or 7 percent of all urban land.

Nonurban Land Use

Areas identified as nonurban land uses under the land use inventory include agricultural lands, wetlands, woodlands, surface water, extractive and landfill sites, and unused rural lands.⁷ As indicated on Map 4, nonurban lands encompassed about 730 acres (1.1 square miles), or 7 percent of the City in 2000. Natural resource areas—consisting of surface water, wetlands, and woodlands—encompassed about 370 acres, or 51 percent of all nonurban lands in 2000. Areas identified as being in agricultural use encompassed just 25 acres, or 3 percent of all nonurban lands. All other nonurban lands—including extractive, landfill and unused rural lands—comprised about 335 acres, or 46 percent of all nonurban lands.

⁵ *Unused urban lands consist of open lands other than wetlands and woodlands within urban areas. Such lands were not in any particular use at the time of the inventory. In some cases, they were previously developed and cleared before the inventory or development was underway but not yet complete.*

⁶ *Intensive recreational land includes only parks or portions of parks that have been developed with facilities such as playgrounds, major trails, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and other playfields; it excludes wetlands, woodlands, surface waters, and open lands having no developed facilities within existing park and open space sites.*

⁷ *Unused rural lands consist of open lands, other than wetlands and woodlands, which were not in agricultural, pasture, or related use at the time of the land use inventory.*

Land Use Trends

Section 66.1001 of the *Statutes* requires an analysis of past land use trends in addition to the inventory of existing land uses. The analysis includes trends in land supply, land demand, and land prices.

Land Supply and Demand

Between 1963 and 2000, urban land uses in the City of Racine increased by about 1,530 acres, or 21 percent, while nonurban lands in the City decreased by about 1,530 acres, or 53 percent. During that time period, all urban land uses—including residential; commercial; industrial; transportation, communication, and utility; governmental and institutional; and recreational uses—experienced increases in acreage. From 1970 to 2000, 601 lots were created by residential subdivisions in the City, about 20 lots per year. From 2000 to 2007, in the years since the most recent land use inventory, only 14 residential lots were created by subdivisions in the City—reflecting the diminishing amount of vacant land available for new development.

The City of Racine is now nearly fully developed, with only limited amounts of “raw” undeveloped land remaining in its northernmost and southernmost areas. Entirely surrounded by incorporated villages and Lake Michigan, the City does not expect to grow in size in the years ahead. Nevertheless, the City’s landscape is expected to continue to change as a result of infill development on the remaining undeveloped land and renewal and redevelopment activity in older areas of the City.

Land Price

Equalized value trends by real estate class in the City of Racine in 2003 and 2008 are set forth in Table 1. Residential and commercial properties experienced increases in equalized value in the City between 2003 and 2008, increasing by 38.3 percent and 35.4, percent respectively. Industrial properties experienced modest decrease of 9.7 percent over the same time period. This decrease in equalized value is attributable in part to the conversion of industrial land to other uses. The City experienced an overall increase in equalized value of about 35 percent between 2003 and 2008, which was less than Racine County (47 percent) and the State of Wisconsin (43 percent) over the same time period.

PUBLIC INPUT—LAND USE ISSUES

The plan should address key land use issues based upon the land use-related information and public input gathered during the comprehensive planning process. The countywide public opinion survey, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses—both completed in 2007—and

additional City efforts to gather public input, including a citywide online survey, resulted in the identification of a number of land use issues to be addressed in this element. These issues include:

- The plan should recognize the importance of balancing various urban land uses.
- The plan should strive to maintain and enhance community and neighborhood character and identity.
- The plan should consider the impacts of growth on public infrastructure and environmental and economic sustainability.
- The plan should identify sufficient lands for new residential development having the capability to accommodate a diversity of housing choices.
- The plan should strive to redevelop older urban and downtown areas.
- The plan should strive to accommodate mixed use developments that could include housing, jobs, shopping, and schools.
- The plan should identify sufficient lands to accommodate job growth and economic development in the City.
- The plan should strive to preserve parks and associated green spaces.
- The plan should seek to balance the preservation of open space lands with property rights.
- The plan should strive to protect wetlands, forest lands, areas of wildlife habitat, and Lake Michigan.
- The plan should strive to protect surface water and ground water quality and quantity.
- The plan should strive to maintain the environmental health of the City.
- The plan should recognize and take into consideration the impacts of new developments on open space lands and uses.

CITY OF RACINE LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan for the City of Racine, as set forth in this section, consists of recommendations for the type, amount, and spatial location of the various land uses required to serve the needs of the residents of the City to the year 2035. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for future development and redevelopment in the City, resulting in a more efficient and attractive pattern of land use that promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Plan Determinants

A number of important determinants, described elsewhere in this chapter and other chapters of this report, underlie the land use plan for the City of Racine, including:

- Existing land use conditions and trends;
- Location of environmentally significant lands, including environmental corridors, floodlands, and areas of soils poorly suited for urban development;
- Projections of future population, household, and employment levels.
- Public input on land use;
- Existing local and neighborhood area plans;
- Evaluation, update, and development of local and neighborhood plans through meetings with City staff and community officials;
- Goals, objectives, and recommendations of the adopted regional land use plan; and
- City and neighborhood goals and objectives.

It should be noted that, prior to this comprehensive planning process, the City of Racine had prepared detailed development and redevelopment plans for a number of neighborhoods and districts in the City. These plans are described in Chapter II of this report. These plans were incorporated into the city-wide land use plan map (Map 5), as appropriate. The City will continue to consider these detailed plans—within the broader context of the city-wide land use plan—in future decision-making on land use in the areas concerned.

Recommended Land Use Plan for the City of Racine

The recommended land use plan for the City of Racine is presented graphically on Map 5. Quantitative data relative to the plan are provided in Table 2.

The land use plan for the City was developed in accordance with the previously identified plan determinants. The land use plan seeks to encourage new urban development and redevelopment that is compatible with existing uses and the character of the City; to maximize the use of existing infrastructure; and to preserve the primary environmental corridors remaining within the City. The land use plan map identifies areas where new urban development and redevelopment could be accommodated during the planning period and provides a means of relating day-to-day development decisions to long-range development needs. However, the precise timing and location of future development and redevelopment is dependent on a number of factors including the political and economic climate, the availability of

public utilities, and—in redevelopment efforts—land assembly and any environmental cleanup needs. Consequently, it is possible that not all of the lands identified for future development and redevelopment will be fully developed/redeveloped by the year 2035.

Residential Development

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to residential development within the City:

1. Additional residential land uses would be created through the infilling of remaining vacant lots in areas already committed to such use in platted subdivisions; on vacant developable land in designated residential areas; and on lands designated for redevelopment to residential or mixed use. The amount of unplatted developable land designated for residential use under this plan is very limited, consisting primarily of an area south of Three Mile Road in the northern portion of the City.
2. As set forth in Table 2, residential lands within the City are anticipated to increase by about 80 acres, or about 2 percent, between 2000 and 2035.

The residential density categories identified on the City land use plan map are intended to reflect the overall density within a given area. The recommended residential density could be achieved through a mix of housing types and styles, including single-family, two-family, and multi-family, and mixed-use structures, subject to appropriate zoning and specific details included in detailed neighborhood plans.

Commercial Development

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to commercial development within the City:

1. Additional commercial land uses would be created through the development of the remaining vacant developable land in designated commercial areas, and on lands designated for redevelopment to commercial use or mixed uses. Commercial areas as identified on the City land use plan map include lands categorized as commercial, office park, and mixed use-commercial and residential. While not specifically shown on the land use plan map, it is also anticipated that additional commercial uses would be created through the development of office and commercial service uses as complementing uses within industrial/business parks. The type and size of commercial and mixed-use developments to be accommodated will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by local officials to determine that the projects

proposed are in conformance with detailed area/neighborhood plans and consistent with long-term plan objectives and policies.

2. As set forth in Table 2, between 2000 and 2035, commercial land uses within the City are anticipated to increase by about 50 acres, or about 7 percent.

Industrial Development

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to industrial development within the City:

1. Additional industrial land uses would be created through the development of vacant developable land in designated industrial areas, and on lands designated for redevelopment to industrial uses. Industrial areas as identified on the City land use plan map include lands categorized as industrial and industrial/business park. The type and size of industrial developments to be accommodated will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by City officials to determine that the projects proposed are in the best interest of the community and consistent with long-term plan objectives and policies.
2. As set forth in Table 2, between 2000 and 2035, industrial land uses within the City are anticipated to increase by about 160 acres, or 26 percent.

Transportation, Communication, and Utility Development

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to transportation, communication, and utility development within the planning area:

1. Additional transportation, communication, and utility land uses would be created through the development of needed streets and highways in developing/redeveloping areas, additional development at John H. Batten Airport, and expansion of utility facilities.
2. As set forth in Table 2, between 2000 and 2035, transportation, communication, and utility land uses within the planning area are anticipated to increase by about 90 acres, or about 4 percent.

Governmental and Institutional Development

The land use plan does not identify any specific increases with respect to governmental and institutional uses over the plan design period. Such uses, as shown on the land use plan map, represent a continuation of existing uses in the City. Any needed expansion of existing facilities may likely be accommodated in areas adjacent to existing uses and would not conflict with plan objectives. While not specifically shown on the land use plan map, it is also anticipated that additional governmental and institutional uses would be created as supporting uses in association with developing and redeveloping neighborhoods.

Recreational Development

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to recreational development within the planning area:

1. Additional recreational land uses would be created through the further development of existing park sites, future expansion of existing park sites, and the development of new park sites in developing or redeveloping areas.
2. As set forth in Table 2, between 2000 and 2035, recreational land uses within the City are anticipated to increase by about ____ acres, or about __ percent.

Mixed Use Urban Reserve

As shown on Map 5A, the City of Racine has identified a “mixed use urban reserve area” that encompasses an area of downtown Racine. This includes many of the areas for which the City has completed detailed plans for the maintenance, enhancement, or redevelopment of older fully developed or redeveloping urban neighborhoods. The intent is to provide the City with greater flexibility in reviewing and approving development proposals with respect to recommendations contained in detailed City plans for this area.

Environmental Corridors and Isolated Natural Resource Areas

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to environmental corridors and isolated natural resources within the City:

1. Primary environmental corridors would be preserved in essentially natural open uses. As set forth in Table 2, by the year 2035, primary environmental corridors within the planning area are anticipated to increase by about 50 acres, or about 10 percent. The increase includes

floodplains adjacent to existing primary environmental corridors that may be expected to revert to more natural conditions over time and become part of the corridor.

2. Secondary environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas should be considered for preservation as the process of urban development proceeds based upon local needs and concerns. As set forth in Table 2, by the year 2035, the configuration of secondary environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas within the City is anticipated to remain essentially unchanged over the plan design period.

Extractive and Landfill Uses

The land use plan envisions the following with respect to extractive and landfill uses within the City:

1. The plan recognizes the continued operation of existing extractive and landfill facilities, as well as the possible expansion of such facilities to adjacent lands subject to appropriate zoning. As described in Chapter V, extractive uses in the City are limited to an area where aggregate companies stock pile and process recycled concrete and asphalt. The City will continue to rely on operators of mining sites in adjacent communities for an adequate supply of aggregate resources in the form of crushed stone (gravel), dimension stone, sand, and gravel, for new construction and for the maintenance of existing infrastructure.
2. As set forth in Table 2, between 2000 and 2035, lands devoted to extractive and landfill uses are anticipated to increase by as much as 190 acres, or about 200 percent. However, on-going restoration of these areas may be expected to offset some of the increase, as areas are returned to useable open space.

Agricultural and Unused Land

The year 2000 land use inventory identified about 25 acres of agricultural land and just over 600 acres of other undeveloped land—excluding wetlands and woodlands—in the City. These lands would be converted to other uses under planned conditions. Most would be converted to urban use. Roughly 50 acres, consisting of undeveloped floodplains, are expected to revert to more natural conditions, becoming part of the environmental corridor network in the years ahead.

Opportunities for Redevelopment and Smart Growth Areas

Because the City is nearly fully developed and has little potential for expansion, efforts to maintain, renew, and redevelop older areas of the City are extremely important. The City has identified areas that appear to have the greatest potential for redevelopment based upon a consideration of.....Shown on Map 6, these areas include.....In some cases, potential new uses for these areas have been identified in detailed neighborhood plans; in other cases, detailed plans have not been prepared.

[Text will be completed when Map 6 is developed]

The City has a number of contaminated sites that are located both within and outside the City-identified potential redevelopment areas shown on Map 6. The reclamation and re-use of contaminated sites has multiple benefits: mitigating environmental hazards; restoring vitality to formerly abandoned or underutilized land; and maximizing the use of existing public utilities, facilities, and services. Existing contaminated sites in the City are shown on Map 12 in Chapter IX. Some of these sites may be eligible for Brownfield grant programs to offset environmental cleanup costs.

The City currently has nine active tax incremental districts which are intended to promote the renewal and redevelopment of property within the districts. Property tax increments on new development are used to fund public infrastructure improvements needed within each district. Active and inactive tax incremental districts are shown on Map 13 in Chapter IX.

Housing rehabilitation efforts represent yet another opportunity to renew and upgrade older parts of the City. The vast majority of housing in the City is considered to be in fair to excellent condition; only about 800 residential structures are considered to be in unsound or poor condition. Rehabilitating housing that is in the worst condition and maintaining housing that is in fair or better condition can contribute immeasurably to the vitality of older residential neighborhoods, at the same time preserving the supply of affordable housing.

Smart Growth Areas, as defined by Section 16.965 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, are areas that will enable development and redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure and municipal, State, and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, State governmental, and utility costs. The potential redevelopment areas shown on Map 6, the tax incremental areas shown on Map 13 in Chapter IX, and areas that may be targeted for environmental cleanup or housing rehabilitation would all be considered part of the City's Smart Growth Areas.

The opportunities for redevelopment and smart growth areas envisioned under the City comprehensive plan are consistent with the land use design concepts developed under the regional land use plan. The regional land use plan was designed to accommodate new urban development in planned urban service areas, including infill development and redevelopment where appropriate. The regional plan envisions that about 90 percent of residential growth would be accommodated in medium and high density ranges within planned urban service areas. Residential development at these densities facilitates the efficient provision of basic urban facilities and services. The regional land use plan also designates additional land for commercial and industrial growth, and associated employment, within planned urban service areas.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Implementation of the land use plan depends upon the judicious application of the City's land use regulations, additional neighborhood-level planning, and other measures, as discussed below.

Regulatory Measures

The City of Racine has long administered zoning and subdivision regulations as a means of guiding and shaping urban development in the public interest. The City zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are described in Chapter II of this report. Implementation of the City land use plan depends to a great degree on the administration of the City zoning and land subdivision ordinances in a manner consistent with the plan. It should be understood that, under the State comprehensive planning law, beginning on January 1, 2010, City actions with respect to zoning and land subdivision regulations must be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Official mapping powers granted to cities under Section 62.23(6) of the *Wisconsin Statutes* provide a means for reserving lands for future public uses as streets, highways, waterways, transit facilities, and parkways—providing another regulatory tool for implementation of the land use plan and other elements of the comprehensive plan. The enabling statutes generally prohibit the issuance of building permits for the construction or enlargement of buildings within the limits of such areas as shown on the official map. The City of Racine has adopted an official map under Section 62.23(6). The State comprehensive planning law also requires consistency between the local official map and comprehensive plan beginning on January 1, 2010.

Neighborhood and Special District Planning

As already noted, over the years the City of Racine has prepared detailed development and redevelopment plans for a number of neighborhoods and districts in the City. Among these are the Racine Downtown Plan, the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan, the Live Towerview Plan, the Neighborhood Strategic Plan for Southside Racine, the Uptown Improvement Plan, and the West Racine Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. The City should continue to consider these detailed plans within the broader context of the citywide land use plan in future decision-making on land use in the areas concerned.

In addition, as part of the process of implementing the comprehensive plan, the City should consider the preparation of detailed plans for other neighborhoods or special-purpose districts showing signs of land use instability or deterioration. Such plans should identify areas recommended for redevelopment to a different use, areas recommended for rehabilitation, any local street re-alignments or improvements, and other public utility and facility improvements. Special consideration should be given in such planning to overcoming contamination problems at, and reuse of, brownfields. Redevelopment plans should seek to preserve those historic, cultural, and natural features and features of the urban landscape which provide for neighborhood identity within the larger urban complex. Such plans should maximize opportunities for the provision of living arrangements and amenities that may be unique to the City, such as “downtown” housing and urban waterfront development.

Where feasible and appropriate, the preparation of plans for the renewal or redevelopment of existing neighborhoods and other urban districts should make use of the many design concepts that can enhance the living environment and increase efficiency in the provision of urban services and facilities and in travel patterns. Among these design concepts are the following:

- Mixed-Used Development: Residential development in mixed use settings can provide a desirable environment for a variety of household types seeking the benefits of proximity to places of employment as well as civic, cultural, commercial, and other urban amenities. Examples of mixed use settings include dwellings above the ground floor of commercial uses and residential structures intermixed with, or located adjacent to, compatible commercial, institutional, or other civic uses.
- Traditional Neighborhood Development: The term “traditional neighborhood development” refers to very compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods typically characterized by a gridlike street system and street-oriented setbacks and building designs. The overall design,

including the layout of streets and sidewalks, encourages walking and bicycling as alternatives to automobile transportation within the neighborhood.

- Transit-Oriented Development: The term “transit-oriented development” refers to compact, mixed-use development whose internal design is intended to maximize access to a transit stop located within or adjacent to the development. Within the development, commercial uses and higher-density residential uses are located near the transit stop. The layout of streets and sidewalks provides convenient walking and bicycling access to the transit stop.

Community Design and Sustainability

One of the goals of the comprehensive plan is to achieve a community that is aesthetically pleasing and efficient while promoting a sustainable land use pattern that meets the social, economic, physical, ecological, and quality-of-life needs of the City, maintaining a sense of place in urban areas. Achieving this goal depends upon good community design. Community design includes beautification techniques, such as tree planting programs, Main Street redevelopment, neighborhood enhancements, and the aesthetic benefits of buffering and landscaping. A well-designed City will attract quality development, improve the visual character, and enhance important natural resources. Community design is an integral part of the planning process, and directly affects land use patterns, transportation planning, and neighborhood livability.

As the City of Racine continues to develop and redevelop, sound community design concepts and methods should be utilized to accommodate new residential, commercial, utility, community facility, and industrial uses. Development designs should be environmentally sensitive and complement adjacent land uses. In the City, new growth can be accommodated through compatible infill, higher density mixed-use development, and redevelopment areas. Mixed-use development, Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)—described earlier—are types of development associated with high-density areas. For example, mixed-use development may help minimize street and utility requirements and may promote alternative modes of transportation, particularly if such development is designed to provide high-density residential development; employment opportunities; transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities; parks; retail areas; and personal services.

Neighborhood planning designs should also incorporate pedestrian/bike trails, pathways, and multi-use trails as means of transportation or recreational activity. New development should be designed so it is compatible with established development.

Commercial and office uses should be grouped in commercial nodes or located in suitable locations in mixed use neighborhoods. Ideally, mixed-use development in redevelopment areas should promote the use and improvement of existing infrastructure, increase pedestrian activity and transit use, and provide needed goods and services for nearby residents. Industrial uses and business and industrial parks should be developed in areas served by existing infrastructure with convenient access to transportation facilities. Such areas should also be served by transit to serve employees, where practicable, and should have pedestrian access and facilities between transit stops and employment centers.

The use of flexible zoning techniques in the City is encouraged to accommodate a variety of housing options, such as infill development, accessory dwelling units, live-work units, planned unit developments (PUDs), and TND. “Universal design” concepts, which provide increased accessibility for disabled persons by providing homes with wider doors and hallways, step-free level surfaces, locating key rooms on ground or first floor levels, and other features, should also be considered during the review of proposed development projects. The scale of buildings should be consistent with the surrounding area. In addition, variation in the sizes of lots and homes should be considered to avoid a repetitious facade on the homes in a subdivision or neighborhood.

Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability or “green” development should be practiced throughout the City and at government facilities, with the intent of improving air and water quality and conserving energy. All types of development should consider incorporating energy-efficient techniques such as high efficiency lighting or renewable energy, solar energy, wind energy, and geothermal energy. Residential “green-related” development programs such as Energy Star Qualified Homes, Green Built Home, and LEED provide initiatives that certify new homes and remodeling projects that meet sustainable building and energy standards. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

New and existing development should include techniques and designs that protect and improve water quality. Some examples of water quality management and conservation practices include maximizing

permeable surface areas by allowing water to drain to natural systems, vegetated buffers, infiltration zones, or permeable soil; incorporating infiltration and retention areas such as rain gardens, green (vegetated) roofs, bioswales, organic layers, sand beds, and vegetated buffer strips; and installing “gray water” systems, which allows water that has been used for hand washing, showering, and any other uses from sinks, showers, or washing machines to be reused for other purposes, especially landscape irrigation. Rain barrels, xeriscaping, low-flow toilets and showerheads, and energy-efficient washing machines, dishwashers, and water heaters should also be considered as water quality management practices. The regional water supply plan and the regional water quality management plan provide additional information about other water conservation practices.

CITY OF RACINE LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, and PROGRAMS

The land use element goals and objectives, along with the implementing policies and programs were developed based upon consideration of the recommendations of regional, County, and local plans; the land use data inventoried; meetings with local officials; and the results of the public participation process including input from public opinion surveys and other public input exercises.

The following City land use related goals were developed under the comprehensive planning program and previously presented in Chapter IV.

City of Racine Land Use Goals

- Goal VI-1:** Guide future growth in a manner that preserves and enhances the quality of life and character of the City.

- Goal VI-2:** Encourage efficient and sustainable growth that provides for the protection of natural systems and preserves the stability and diversity of the City’s neighborhoods.

- Goal VI-3:** Maintain and develop a land use pattern that strengthens the character and livability of the City’s downtown core, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.

- Goal VI-4:** Encourage development patterns that promote efficient and sustainable use of land, that can be readily linked by transportation systems and that utilize existing public utilities and services.

Goal VI-5: Promote the coordination between land use and housing development that supports a range of transportation choices.

Goal VI-6: Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of land for development and redevelopment to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

Goal VI-7: Promote redevelopment and infill in areas with existing infrastructure and services, enhancing existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Goal VI-8: Encourage a public participation process that provides equity and fairness to property owners and other stakeholders, balanced with responsible land use.

City of Racine Land Use Objectives

- Provide a balanced allocation of space to each of the various land uses in order to meet the social, physical, and economic needs of the City of Racine.
- Promote a spatial distribution of the various land uses which will result in a convenient and compatible arrangement of land uses.
- Promote the development/redevelopment of neighborhoods which contain an appropriate mix of housing with supporting commercial, institutional, and recreational uses.
- Coordinate a spatial distribution of the various land uses which is properly related to the existing and planned transportation, utility, and community facility systems in order to assure the economical provision of public services.
- Provide for the development of neighborhoods having distinctive individual character, based on physical and functional conditions, historical factors, and local desires.
- Provide for the development and preservation of residential areas within a physical environment that is healthy, safe, convenient, and attractive.

- Provide for the preservation, development, and redevelopment of a variety of suitable industrial and commercial sites both in terms of physical characteristics and location.
- Provide for the conservation, renewal, and full use of existing developed areas.
- Encourage urban infill development and urban redevelopment, including the intensification of development in redevelopment areas if appropriate, to maximize the use of existing infrastructure.
- Encourage compact and efficient development patterns.
- Promote compact, walkable neighborhood designs that can encourage daily physical activity and healthier neighborhoods.
- Promote development in areas near economic development centers to increase the use and development of public transit systems.
- Maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the City by encouraging a diversified tax base of commercial, industrial, and residential uses.
- Preserve the remaining primary environmental corridor lands in the City of Racine and, to the extent practicable, preserve the remaining secondary environmental corridor lands and isolated natural resource areas in the City in order to maintain the overall quality of the environment; to provide opportunities for recreational and educational activities; and to avoid serious environmental and developmental problems.
- Preserve green spaces and natural resources as part of future development proposals in the City.
- Support carefully planned efforts to restore open space lands to more natural conditions that could result in the expansion of the environmental corridor network. This should include linkages between existing environmental corridors and isolated natural resources, especially those areas that are identified in and neighborhood land use plans.
- Seek to reduce conflicts between neighboring jurisdiction's urban development.

- Seek to eliminate substandard and obsolete buildings, blighting influences, and environmental deficiencies which detract from the aesthetic appearance, and economic welfare of the City of Racine and its neighborhoods.
- Strive to create a balance between private rights and public interests that ensures the best interests of the community as a whole.
- Develop and maintain a balance between the built environment and the natural environment.
- Develop and maintain a balance between the built environment and the protection of, and public access to, Lake Michigan and rivers in the City.

City of Racine Land Use Policies and Programs

- Implement all land use related policies contained in other elements of the comprehensive plan, especially the policies of the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element.
- Accommodate future land use development in areas recommended to be developed or redeveloped for the specific land use as identified on the land use plan map.
- Implement specific objectives and policies identified in detailed City neighborhood/area plans.
- Implement detailed design guideline recommendations contained in adopted neighborhood plans with respect to building size, building design, and streetscapes.
- Consider the creation of design guidelines for new developments that address buffers, fencing, architectural variety, parking lot and road landscaping, gateways, and signage.
- Promote the development of small commercial businesses and residential developments in close proximity to business park/economic activity centers.
- Encourage the development of “green” sustainable sites and buildings, including adaptive reuse and flexible building designs, following the national Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Program (LEED) design system.

- Continue to create and implement detailed neighborhood plans that are consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- Encourage the preservation of historic buildings, sites, and features in the development of detailed neighborhood plans.
- Encourage future residential and commercial designs that create and improve neighborhoods, including downtowns and business districts, and that provide support services and amenities that meet the daily needs of the entire City.
- Continue to enforce existing design ordinances with respect to new developments and redevelopments. This includes, but is not limited to, open space requirements, street tree requirements, driveway installation, and landscaping.
- Implement the detailed recommendations and design standards included in the Racine Downtown Plan, the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan, the Live Towerview Plan, the Neighborhood Strategic Plan for Southside Racine, the Uptown Improvement Plan, and the West Racine Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.
- Review and revise, as necessary, the City zoning ordinance to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive plan and to meet the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001 (3) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*.
- Review and revise, as necessary, the City land division ordinance to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive plan and to meet the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001 (3) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*.
- Review and revise, the City official map, as necessary, to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive plan and to meet the consistency requirement of Section 66.1001 (3) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*.

Land Use Financial and Technical Assistance Programs

Various types of financial and technical assistance programs are available from Federal, State, and County agencies that are applicable to the implementation of the land use element recommendations. The

agencies that provide the majority of such programs include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the National Parks Service (NPS); and the Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS). Information on programs applicable to the City to assist in the implementation of the land use element is summarized in the Racine County multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan. More detailed information on each program is available through the websites of the agency that administers the program.

Additional existing programs that could assist in the implementation of the land use element are described in the housing and economic development elements of the comprehensive plan (Chapters VIII and IX respectively). Examples include the Green Built Home and LEED Programs. These programs relate to the design, construction, and operation of “green” buildings and are described in the housing element (Chapter VII).