

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 305
A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF RACINE: 2035

Chapter V

**AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL
RESOURCES ELEMENT**

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element, together with the land use element seeks to balance long term development and redevelopment in the City of Racine with the environmental health, agricultural activities, and cultural history of the City. Implementation of the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources plan element will help to maintain the overall quality of the environment of the City, to preserve the City’s cultural and natural heritage and natural beauty, and to provide for continued opportunities for related recreational and educational pursuits.

The agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element is one of the nine elements of a comprehensive plan required by Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. Section 66.1001 (2) (e) of the *Statutes* requires this element to compile goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the conservation and effective management of the following natural resources:

- Groundwater
- Forests
- Productive agricultural area
- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Threatened and endangered species
- Stream corridors
- Surface water
- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat

- Nonmetallic mineral resources
- Parks, open spaces, and recreational resources
- Historical and cultural resources
- Community design¹

In addition, the following comprehensive planning goals related to the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources 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.
- Preservation of cultural, historic, and archeological sites.
- 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 three sections:

- Inventory of Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources in the City of Racine;
- Public Input—Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Issues; and
- City of Racine Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs.

INVENTORY OF AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE CITY OF RACINE³

The conservation and wise use of agricultural and natural resources and the preservation of cultural resources are fundamental to maintaining the quality of the environment, achieving strong and stable physical and economic development, and preserving community identity. This section presents basic inventory information regarding

¹ *Community design recommendations are included in the Land Use Element (Chapter VI).*

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

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

existing agricultural, natural, and cultural resources in the City of Racine that should be considered in the preparation of the plan.

Agricultural Resources

Commercial farming has been virtually nonexistent in the City of Racine for many decades due to the City's location and urban development pattern. Agricultural activities in the City are limited, for the most part, to the operation of the Downtown State Street, Regency Mall, and West Racine farmers markets, community garden plots at the HALO Shelter/Racine County Food Bank, and home gardening.

It should be recognized that there is a symbiotic relationship between the City and the agricultural resources of rest of Racine County and the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. The City provides a convenient, accessible market for agricultural products from those areas. Infill development and redevelopment in the City can help moderate the amount of agricultural land converted to urban use in outlying areas of the County and Region.

Natural Resources

Physiography and Topography

Glaciation has largely determined the physiography and topography, as well as the soils of Racine County and the City of Racine. Of the four major stages of glaciation, the last and most influential in terms of present physiography and topography was the Wisconsin Stage, which is believed to have ended in this area about 11,000 years ago. After the glaciers receded, the City consisted of gently rolling glacial plains, or ground moraines. Ground moraines are typically comprised of dense basal till, which frequently contains a combination of silt and clay. The City of Racine also contains the lake terrace, which runs parallel to and contiguous with the shoreline of Lake Michigan.

The topographic elevations in the City of Racine range from 580 feet above sea level at the Lake Michigan shoreline to just over 700 in the western portion of the City. While most of the topography is level to gently rolling, there are a few small, narrow areas of steeply sloped lands, slopes of at least 12 percent or greater. These areas are located along the Root River corridor and associated with the Lake Michigan bluff.

Geology

The bedrock formations that underlie the unconsolidated surficial deposits in Racine County and the City of Racine primarily consist of Silurian Age dolomite. The City has prominent of dolomite reef strata that are exposed either through natural outcroppings along the Root River and Lake Michigan or in old quarries.

Lake Michigan Shoreline Erosion Protection

Shoreline erosion conditions are important considerations in planning for the protection and sound development and redevelopment of lands located along Lake Michigan. These conditions can change over time because they are related to changes in climate, water level, the geometry of the near shore areas, the extent and condition of shore protection measures, the type and extent of vegetation, and the type of land uses in shoreline areas. In 2005, Dr. Scudder Mackey of Habitat Solutions completed a study of shoreline erosion and bluff stability conditions along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Racine County. That study found that of approximately 6.8 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline along the City of Racine, about 84 percent can be considered protected. That protection is provided by structures consisting of groins, revetments, and seawalls or bulkheads.

Mineral Resources

There are no active metallic or nonmetallic mining sites in the City of Racine. There is an area in western Racine where two aggregate companies (Payne & Dolan and AW Oakes) stock pile and process recycled concrete and asphalt. The City relies 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.

Water Resources

Surface Water and Surface Drainage

In addition to Lake Michigan, surface water resources in the City consist of streams and ponds and their associated wetlands, floodplains, and shorelands. Surface water resources provide recreational opportunities, influence the physical development of the City, and enhance its aesthetic quality. Lake Michigan is the source of the City's water supply.

There are three major drainage systems within the City of Racine based upon the direction of surface water flow. The Root River and Pike River and their tributaries are part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River drainage system. A third watershed encompasses those areas adjacent to Lake Michigan which drain directly into the Lake through intermittent streams.

Streams

Major streams are defined as those which maintain, at a minimum, a small continuous flow throughout the year except under unusual drought conditions. The Root River watershed includes the Root River, East and West Branch Root River Canal, Husher Creek, and Hoods Creek. The Pike River watershed includes the Pike River and Pike Creek.

In addition, there are a number of small named and unnamed lakes and ponds in the City. Approximately 115 acres, or just over one percent of the City, was identified as surface water in the 2000 regional land use inventory.

Floodplains

Floodplains are the wide, gently sloping areas contiguous with, and typically lying on both sides of, a river or stream channel. The flow of a river onto its floodplain is a normal phenomenon and, in the absence of flood control works, can be expected to occur periodically. For planning and regulatory purposes, floodplains are defined as those areas subject to inundation by the 100-year recurrence interval flood event. This event has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. Floodplains often contain important natural resources, such as high-value woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. Floodplains are generally not well suited for urban development because of the flood hazard, the presence of high water tables, and/or the presence of wet soils.

Floodplains identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Federal Flood Insurance Program encompassed about 370 acres, or about 3.7 percent of the City of Racine in 2006.

FEMA is completing a Map Modernization Program for Racine County, including the City of Racine, which will result in updated floodplain maps. Final maps are expected to be available later in 2009.

Wetlands

Wetlands are important resources for the ecological health and diversity of the City. Wetlands form the transition between surface and groundwater resources and land resources. Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency, and with a duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstance do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally occur in depressions and near the bottom of slopes, particularly along lakeshores and stream banks, and on large land areas that are poorly drained. Wetlands may, however, under certain conditions, occur on slopes and even on hilltops. In effect, they provide essential breeding, nesting, sanctuary, and feeding grounds, as well as offer escape cover for many forms of fish and wildlife. In addition, wetlands perform an important set of natural functions which include: water quality protection; stabilization of lake levels and streamflows; reduction in stormwater runoff by providing areas for floodwater impoundment and storage; and protection of shorelines from erosion.

The location and extent of wetlands in the City of Racine are shown on Map 4 in Chapter VI. These wetlands are based upon the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory completed in the Region in 1982, updated to the year 2000 as part of the regional land use inventory. In total, the City's wetlands encompassed about 115 acres, or about one percent of the City area, in 2000. It should be noted that wetlands are constantly changing in response to changes in drainage patterns and climatic conditions. While wetland inventory maps provide a sound basis for areawide planning, they should be viewed as a providing point of departure to be supplemented with detailed field

investigations for regulatory purposes.

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater resources constitute another key element of the natural resource base. Groundwater sustains lake levels and wetlands and provides the base flows of streams. Groundwater is the primary source of water supply in parts of Racine County and the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. While most of the City of Racine is served with water supply from Lake Michigan, some industrial operations still rely on groundwater.

There are three major aquifers beneath the City of Racine, Racine County, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. The surficial sand and gravel aquifer and the Niagara dolomite aquifer are often treated as a single aquifer commonly referred to as the “shallow” aquifer due to its proximity and intimate hydraulic interconnection to the land surface. The third is commonly identified as the “deep” aquifer since it underlies the shallow aquifer. The sand and gravel aquifer consists of unconsolidated sand and gravel deposits in glacial drift and alluvium. These deposits occur over the majority of the City, either at the land surface or buried beneath less permeable drift such as glacial till. This aquifer interacts extensively with the surface water system. The Niagara dolomite aquifer in the City of Racine consists of Silurian Age dolomite, which overlies the Maquoketa shale stratum. The Maquoketa shale separates the Niagara and sandstone aquifers. The shale layer has very low permeability, which restricts the vertical movement of water and largely confines water within the sandstone aquifer. The sandstone aquifer includes all sedimentary bedrock below the Maquoketa shale stratum. The bottom of the sandstone aquifer is the surface of the impermeable Precambrian rocks. This aquifer is continuous throughout Racine County and is a part of the larger regional aquifer that is used as a source of water supply for major concentrations of urban development throughout southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. This aquifer is relatively unimportant in terms of its influence on the surface water resources of the City since it does not intersect the surface drainage.

Recharge of the aquifers underlying Racine County is derived largely by precipitation. The groundwater in the shallow aquifer typically originates from precipitation that has fallen within a radius of about 20 miles or less from where it is found. The deep aquifer is recharged by downward leakage through the Maquoketa shale and other semi-confining units or by infiltration of precipitation beyond the limits of the semi-confining units, in the western part of the Region.

Like surface water, groundwater is susceptible to depletion in quantity and to deterioration in quality as a result of contamination and over-usage. Since the eastern half of the County is largely covered by glacial till soils with a high clay content, contamination is not as much of a concern compared to the western part of the county. Even though the City relies on Lake Michigan rather than groundwater as a source of water supply, it is important to be aware of the potential impacts of development and redevelopment in the City on groundwater resources.

Woodlands

The remaining woodlands are identified by the Regional Planning Commission as upland areas having 17 or more deciduous trees per acre, each tree measuring at least four inches in diameter at breast height (4.5 feet above the ground), and having a canopy of 50 percent or greater. Coniferous tree plantations and reforestation projects are also classified as woodlands. Lowland wooded areas, such as tamarack swamps, are classified as wetlands. Existing woodlands in the City of Racine, as identified in the Commission's year 2000 land use inventory, are shown on Map 4 in Chapter VI. As shown on Map 4, relatively small woodland areas are found in scattered locations throughout the City. Woodlands encompassed about 140 acres, or just over one percent of the City, in 2000.

Woodlands in the City of Racine have ecological values, and with proper management can serve a variety of uses that provide multiple benefits. In this respect, they contribute to clean air and water, help control surface water runoff, and help maintain a diversity of plant and animal life. In addition, woodlands contribute immeasurably to the natural beauty of the City.

Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Sites

A comprehensive inventory of "natural areas" and "critical species habitat sites" in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region was completed by the Regional Planning Commission in 1994.⁴ The inventory identified the most significant remaining natural areas—essentially, remnants of the pre-European settlement landscape—as well as other areas vital to the maintenance of endangered, threatened, and rare plant and animal species in the Region.

Natural areas are tracts of land or water so little modified by human activity, or sufficiently recovered from the effects of such activity, that they contain intact native plant and animal communities believed to be representative of the landscape before European settlement. Critical species habitat sites consist of areas, exclusive of identified natural areas, which are important for their ability to support State-designated endangered, threatened, or rare plant or animal species. Such areas constitute "critical" habitat considered to be important to the survival of a species or group of species of special concern.

No natural areas were identified in the City of Racine as part of the 1994 inventory. A total of 4 critical species habitat sites were identified in the City of Racine as part of the 1994 inventory. These sites include the Caledonia Sanitary Sewer Right-of-Way and Root River Bluff sites in Johnson Park, the Pritchard Park Woods site, and the Washington Park Woods site. Together, these critical species habitat sites encompassed about 46 acres within the

⁴ Documented in SEWRPC Planning Report No. 42, A Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, dated September 1997. An amendment to this plan is currently under preparation and anticipated to be completed in 2009.

City. The regional natural areas plan also identified 2 aquatic sites supporting rare herptile species in the City, including two segments of the Root River totaling 3.4 linear miles.

Environmental Corridors and Isolated Natural Resource Areas

One of the most important tasks completed under the regional planning program for Southeastern Wisconsin has been the identification and delineation of areas of those areas of the Region in which concentrations of the best remaining elements of the natural resource base occur. It was recognized that preservation of such areas is vital to both the maintenance of the overall environmental quality of the Region and to the continued provision of amenities required to maintain a high quality of life for the resident population.

Under the regional planning program, seven elements of the natural resource base have been considered essential to the interacting relationships and maintenance of the ecological balance, natural beauty, and overall quality of life in the Region: 1) lakes, rivers, and streams, and their associated shorelands and floodlands; 2) wetlands; 3) woodlands; 4) prairies; 5) wildlife habitat areas; 6) wet, poorly drained, and organic soils; and 7) rugged terrain and high-relief topography. In addition, there are certain other features which, although not part of the natural resource base per se, are closely related to, or centered upon, that base and are a determining factor in identifying and delineating areas with recreational, aesthetic, ecological, and cultural value. These five additional elements are: 1) existing park and open space sites; 2) potential park and open space sites; 3) historic sites; 4) scenic areas and vistas; and 5) natural areas and critical species habitat sites.

The delineation of these 12 natural resource and natural resource-related elements on maps, characterized as environmental corridors by the Regional Planning Commission, results in an essentially linear pattern of relatively narrow, elongated areas of the Region⁵. Primary environmental corridors include a variety of the aforementioned important natural resource and resource-related elements and are at least 400 acres in size, two miles in length, and 200 feet in width. Secondary environmental corridors generally connect with the primary environmental corridors and are at least 100 acres in size and one mile in length. In addition, smaller concentrations of natural resource base elements that are separated physically from the environmental corridors by intensive urban or agricultural land uses have also been identified. These areas, which are at least five acres in size, are referred to as isolated natural resource areas.

The preservation of environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas in essentially natural, open uses yields many benefits, including maintenance of groundwater recharge areas; maintenance of surface and groundwater quality; attenuation of flood flows and stages; maintenance of base flows of streams and watercourses; reduction of soil erosion; abatement of air and noise pollution; provision of wildlife habitat;

⁵ A detailed description of the process of delineating environmental corridors in Southeastern Wisconsin is presented in the March 1981 issue (Volume 4, No. 2) of the SEWRPC Technical Record.

protection of plant and animal diversity; protection of rare and endangered species; maintenance of scenic beauty; and provision of opportunities for recreational, educational, and scientific pursuits. Conversely, since these areas are generally poorly suited for urban development, their preservation can help avoid serious and costly developmental problems.

Because of the many interacting relationships existing between living organisms and their environment, the destruction or deterioration of one important element of the total environment may lead to a chain reaction of deterioration and destruction of other elements. The drainage of wetlands, for example, may destroy fish spawning areas, wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge areas, and natural filtration and floodwater storage areas of interconnecting stream systems. The resulting deterioration of surface-water quality may, in turn, lead to a deterioration of the quality of the groundwater upon which low flows of rivers and streams may depend. Similarly, destruction of ground cover may result in soil erosion, stream siltation, more rapid runoff, and increased flooding, as well as the destruction of wildlife habitat. Although the effect of any one of these environmental changes may not in and of itself be overwhelming, the combined effects may eventually lead to a serious deterioration of the underlying and sustaining natural resource base and of the overall quality of the environment for life. In addition to such environmental impacts, the intrusion of intensive urban land uses into such areas may result in the creation of serious and costly developmental problems, such as failing foundations for pavements and structures, wet basements, excessive operation of sump pumps, excessive clear-water infiltration into sanitary sewerage systems, and poor drainage.

Primary Environmental Corridors

As shown on Map 2, the primary environmental corridors in the City of Racine are located along the Root River and along the Lake Michigan shoreline. These primary environmental corridors contain almost all of the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat areas in the City, and represent a composite of the best remaining elements of the natural resource base. Primary environmental corridors encompass about 500 acres, or five percent of the City.

Secondary Environmental Corridors

Secondary environmental corridors also contain a variety of resource elements, often remnant resources from primary environmental corridors which have been developed for intensive urban or agricultural purposes. As shown on Map 2, there is only one secondary environmental corridor, located along the Pike River, in the City. This secondary environmental corridor encompasses 16 acres in the City of Racine.

Isolated Natural Resource Areas

In addition to the primary and secondary environmental corridors, other smaller pockets of wetlands, woodlands, surface water, or wildlife habitat exist within the Region. These pockets are isolated from the environmental

corridors by urban development, and although separated from the environmental corridor network, these isolated natural resource areas have significant value. They may provide the only available wildlife habitat in an area, usually provide good locations for local parks, and lend unique aesthetic character and natural diversity to an area. Scattered throughout the City (see Map 2), isolated natural resource areas encompass about 106 acres, or about one percent of the City of Racine.

Park and Open Space Sites

A comprehensive inventory of park and open space sites was conducted for the City of Racine and the rest of the Southeastern Wisconsin Region as part of the initial regional park and open space planning effort in 1973. The inventory of park and open space sites in the City of Racine was subsequently updated as part of the first-edition Racine County park and open space plan completed in 1988 and the second-edition Racine County park and open space plan completed in 2001. As part of the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process, this inventory was updated to 2007. The inventory includes all park and open space sites owned by Racine County, the City of Racine, and other local units of government, as well as privately owned recreation and open space sites.

Park and Open Space Sites Owned by Racine County

In 2007, Racine County owned 4 park and open space sites in the City of Racine. These included Belle Harbor Marina, Prichard Park, Racine Harbor Park, and Reef Point Marina. Combined, these sites encompassed 139 acres.

Park and Open Space Sites Owned by the City of Racine and Other Local Units of Government

There was a total of 102 park and open space sites owned by the City and the Racine Unified School District in the City of Racine 2007. Those sites encompassed a total of about 1,080 acres. The City owned 81 park and open space sites encompassing 967 acres while the school district owned 21 sites encompassing 113 acres. The acreage attributed to school district sites includes only the portion of the site used for recreational or open space purposes.

Privately-owned Recreation and Open Space Sites

In addition to the publicly owned sites described above, there were a total of 19 privately owned outdoor recreation and open space sites, encompassing a total of 56 acres, in the City of Racine. This includes private marinas and private school sites.

Lands Under Protective Easements

Certain privately owned open space sites are protected under permanent conservation easements. These easements are typically voluntary contracts between a private landowner and a land trust or government agency that limit, or in some cases, prohibit, future development of the parcel. Conservation easements do not require public access to the property, although public access is generally required if Wisconsin stewardship funds or other WDNR grant

funds are used to acquire the property. There was one conservation easement held by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources along the Root River, encompassing one acre, in 2006.

Cultural Resources

The term “cultural resources” encompasses historic buildings, structures and sites, archeological sites and museums. Resources such as historic and archeological sites can also provide educational and economic opportunities in the enhancement, protection, and development of communities. Historic sites in the City of Racine have been identified by various units and agencies of government and historical societies, as described below.

National and State Registers of Historic Places or Districts

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation’s official list of significant historic resources and is maintained by the National Park Service. In most cases, historic places or districts listed on the National Register are also listed on the State Register. Since the State Register was created in 1991, all properties nominated for the National Register must first go through the State Register review process. Upon approval by the State review board, a site is listed on the State Register of Historic Places and recommended to the National Park Service for review and listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The only exceptions to this detailed process are federally-owned properties, which may be nominated for the National Register directly by the National Park Service. The National Register of Historic Places includes 38 listings in the City of Racine. This includes over 33 historic buildings or structures and five historic districts. Of the National Register Places in the City of Racine, all but one district, the Racine Rubber Company Homes Historic District, is listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

Historical Markers

The Division of Historic Preservation at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers the Wisconsin Historical Markers Program. Wisconsin historical markers identify and honor people, events, and sites that have significance at the national, state, or local level. Sites may qualify as a potential marker if they are associated with the State’s history, architecture, culture, archaeology, ethnic associations, geology, natural history, or legends. There are six historical markers scattered throughout the City of Racine. The historical markers in the City are for the following sites: Karel Jonas Monument; Northside Historic District of Cream Brick Cottages; Racine County Heritage Museum; Soldiers of the American Revolution; Southside Historic District; and the Spark.

Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory

The Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, which is also maintained by the Wisconsin Historical Society, is a more extensive inventory of buildings, structures, and objects that are historically significant. While the inventory does include sites listed in the State and National Registers, it is not limited to sites that have a special

status or designation. A total of 1,951 properties in the City of Racine are currently included in the Architecture and History Inventory database. The inventory is accessible through the Wisconsin Historical Society's website at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/>.

Local Historic Preservation Commissions

Under Wisconsin law, cities, villages, and towns are authorized to create landmarks commissions to designate historic landmarks and establish historic districts. The City of Racine created the Racine Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1973.

Archaeological Sites

Preservation of archaeological resources is also important in sustaining the sense of cultural heritage and identity in Racine County. Like historical places and districts, significant prehistoric and historic archaeological sites increase the understanding and awareness of the past and may provide for economic opportunities through tourism if properly identified and preserved. The Office of the State Archaeologist, Historic Preservation Division, of the Wisconsin Historical Society maintains a database on the location and nature of known archaeological sites in Wisconsin—the State Archaeological Site Inventory. No known prehistoric or historic archaeological sites are located in the City of Racine.

Local Historical Societies and Museums

There are two local historical societies/museums in the City of Racine. These include the Old Engine House No. 3 Museum and the Racine County Historical Society and Heritage Museum.

The Racine County Historical Society maintains items of historical or archaeological significance as well as historical records. Otherwise known as the Racine Heritage Museum, the Racine County Historical Society is housed in the early 20th century Racine Public Library, which is also on the National Register of Historic Places. The Racine Heritage Museum contains extensive databases such as Census files dating back to the 1830s, thousands of photographs including a collection of images from the J.I. Case Company, and Racine Journal Times clippings mostly from the 1950s to the 1990s.

PUBLIC INPUT—AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ISSUES

The comprehensive plan should address key agricultural, natural, and cultural resources issues based upon the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources-related inventory 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 agricultural, natural,

and cultural resources related issues to be addressed in this element. These issues include:

- The plan should strive to preserve parks and associated green space land.
- The plan should seek to preserve natural resources.
- The plan should seek to enable and support the continuation of farming as an important part of the County economy.
- 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 seek to enable and support the planting of trees in community areas.
- The plan should recognize and take into consideration the impacts of new developments on open space lands and uses.
- The plan should strive to preserve cultural resources and historic sites and districts.

CITY OF RACINE AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

The agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element goals and objectives, along with the implementing policies and programs were developed based upon consideration of the recommendations of regional, County, and City plans, the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources 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 of Racine agricultural, natural, and cultural resources related goals were developed under the comprehensive planning program and previously presented in Chapter IV.

City of Racine Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Goals

- Goal V-1:** Guide future growth in a manner that preserves and enhances the quality of life and character of the City.
- Goal V-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 V-3:** Encourage activities that support the agricultural economy of other communities in Racine County.

Goal V-4: Maintain the environmental assets of the City through the protection and preservation of valuable natural features including rivers, Lake Michigan, open spaces, and floodplains.

Goal V-5: Preserve open space to enhance the total quality of the environment, maximize essential natural resource availability, give form and structure to urban development, and provide opportunities for a full range of outdoor recreational activities.

Goal V-6: Protect and enhance cultural structures and activities and historic sites and districts.

Goal V-7: Encourage a public participation process that provides equity and fairness to property owners and other stakeholders, balanced with responsible land use.

City of Racine Agricultural Resources Objectives

- Maintain existing community gardens plots and farmers markets in the City and consider the establishment of additional areas for such uses.
- Maximize the benefits of the City's proximity to agricultural areas in Racine County and Southeastern Wisconsin.

City of Racine Natural Resources Objectives

- 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 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 the remaining critical species habitat sites in the City.
- Preserve surface and groundwater quality and quantity in the City.
- Protect floodplains from incompatible land uses.
- Protect natural and manmade/engineered drainage ways in the City to minimize the impacts of stormwater runoff on existing natural resources and urban land uses.
- Protect Lake Michigan's water quality and shoreline, including Lake Michigan bluffs.

- Preserve habitat for native plants and wildlife thereby preserving the biodiversity of the City and Racine County overall.
- Preserve the remaining natural values and vistas in the City.
- Preserve open spaces and natural resources as part of future development and redevelopment proposals in the City.
- Provide a comprehensive system of parks and open spaces within the City to enhance the quality of the environment and life.
- Provide City residents adequate opportunities to participate in resource and nonresource-oriented outdoor recreation activities, including water-based outdoor recreation activities.

City of Racine Cultural Resources Objectives

- Preserve and enhance the historic and cultural resources and character of the City.
- Preserve historical resources that contribute to the City’s heritage.
- Preserve historical resources that contribute to the City’s distinct urban and neighborhood characteristics.
- Preserve historical and cultural resources and activities that contribute to tourism and educational opportunities in City.

City of Racine Agricultural Resources Policies and Programs

- Expand community gardening opportunities on publicly owned land or other vacant land in the City where feasible.
- Maintain the existing farmers markets and consider opportunities to establish new markets in other areas of the City. Such markets provide City residents convenient access to fresh farm products and support the County’s agricultural sector.
- Support economic initiatives to ensure that farming remains viable in Racine County, including agri-tourism and direct marketing of farm products.

City of Racine Natural Resources Policies and Programs

- Encourage development to occur in areas outside of environmental corridors, isolated natural resource areas, natural areas, floodplains, wetlands, and critical species habitat sites in the City.
- Review City regulatory tools, such as zoning and land division ordinances and zoning maps, to identify any necessary revisions to protect the primary environmental corridors identified on Map 2.
- Based on local needs and concerns, review City regulatory tools, such as zoning and land division ordinances and zoning maps, to identify any necessary revisions to protect the secondary environmental corridors and isolated natural resources identified on Map 2.
- Encourage the protection of environmental corridors and critical species habitat sites through public and non-profit conservation organization (NCOs) fee simple purchase and conservation easements.
- Implement strategies regarding the preservation and protection of environmental corridors and critical species habitat sites recommended in the City park and open space plan as well as in the County land and water resource management plan and the Racine County park and open space plan—as those plans pertain to the City of Racine.
- Continue to support the Racine County Land Conservation Division (LCD) in its efforts to: protect and improve land and water resources; implement recommendations set forth in the County land and water resource management plan as they pertain to the City; provide technical assistance on controlling soil erosion and water pollution; and implementing and administering County and State soil and water conservation programs.
- Implement strategies regarding the protection and restoration of wetlands, stream corridors, floodplain areas, the Lake Michigan shoreline and bluff; and protection of natural systems; pollution reduction and control; and protection of public safety and public recreation recommended in the County land and water resource management plan.
- Implement the recommendations for acquisition and management of critical habitat sites as set forth in the regional natural areas plan.
- Encourage the preservation of natural resources outside the environmental corridor network.

- Develop and implement programs to control and reduce the spread of invasive species in the City.
- Consider the development of a City ordinance that protects existing trees, especially along streets.
- Continue to administer and enforce existing regulations that protect wetlands, woodlands, floodlands, surface water, and groundwater resources.
- Implement the recommendations of the City of Racine park and open space plan and the Racine County park and open space plan as it pertains to the City—and any subsequent plan updates.
- Update City park and open space plan and cooperate with Racine County in updating the County park and open space plan as necessary to maintain eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Stewardship funding.
- Support, and, where applicable, implement sanitary sewer and stormwater management standards recommended in the regional water quality management plan update and subsequent amendments.
- Continue to partner with appropriate Federal, State, and non-profit conservation organizations (NCOs) to promote natural resource enhancements and restorations in the City.
- Develop an incentive program to promote the use of best management practices (BMPs) and new technologies to improve water quality and to reduce stormwater runoff, such as rain gardens and permeable pavement.
- Support educational programs that distribute educational materials regarding techniques that promote land use patterns and practices that are sensitive to natural resources.
- Work with the Kenosha/Racine Land Trust and other NCOs to protect environmental corridors and critical species habitat sites through easements, and/or land purchases.
- Work cooperatively with appropriate State and Federal agencies to identify programs, grants, and tax credits that are available to help fund the implementation of the natural resources element of the comprehensive plan.
- Support and, where applicable, implement the objectives, principles, and standards recommended by the regional water supply plan.

- Support the development of land use patterns that minimize potential adverse impacts on Lake Michigan and other surface and groundwater resources.
- Prepare, update, and implement comprehensive stormwater management plans on a watershed, or subwatershed, basis to facilitate the implementation of the Racine County land and water resource management plan and the regional water quality management plan.
- Capitalize on natural and recreational tourism amenities.

City of Racine Cultural Resources Policies and Programs

- Preserve historic structures, sites, and districts that have been listed on the National and/or State Registers of Historic Places.
- Encourage the preservation of local landmarks.
- Encourage the preservation of historical resources that contribute to the heritage and economy of the City, but have not yet been recognized or designated by a Federal, State, or local unit of government.
- Encourage development and redevelopment that is sensitive to the preservation of historic and cultural features, and is compatible with such uses.
- Encourage new development and redevelopment that is compatible with the existing historic and cultural character of the downtown area of the City and City neighborhoods.
- Continue to administer architectural design guidelines that preserve the aesthetics that contribute to the City's character.
- Continue to implement historic preservation ordinances to help guide the City in its efforts to protect and preserve such areas.
- Continue to support the institutional framework for historic preservation, such as the Racine Landmarks Preservation Commission, historical societies, and museums.

- Review City regulatory tools, such as zoning and land division ordinances and zoning maps, to identify any necessary revisions to promote the protection, reuse, and rehabilitation of historic structures.
- Work cooperatively with appropriate State and Federal agencies to identify programs, grants, and tax credits that are available to help fund the implementation of the cultural resources element of the comprehensive plan.

Natural and Cultural Resources Financial and Technical Assistance Programs

Various types of financial and technical assistance programs are available from Federal, State, and County agencies to protect natural and cultural resources. Although there are numerous programs offered by a wide variety of public agencies, the most significant agencies that provide the majority of conservation and preservation programs that may be applicable to the City 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). Federal and State programs are also available to help the City of Racine and nonprofit conservation organizations (NCOs) acquire park and open space lands, and to help County and local governments provide recreational facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Most programs that assist in cultural preservation primarily provide assistance for the restoration of historic buildings, districts, and landmarks through preservation tax credits, grants, loans, or restoration guidance. In Wisconsin, the WSHS provides assistance for properties designated as either State or Federal historic places, such as those listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places. Also, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private non-profit organization, provides funding through tax credits and matching grants, and administers the Main Street Program that focuses on the historic preservation and revitalization of traditional commercial districts.

Information on programs applicable to the City to assist in the implementation of the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources 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.

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