

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 305

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF RACINE: 2035

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In 1999 the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a new comprehensive planning law, set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The new requirements supplement earlier provisions in the *Statutes* for the preparation of county development plans (Section 59.69(3) of the *Statutes*) and local master plans (Section 62.23 of the *Statutes*). The new requirements, which are often referred to as the “Smart Growth” law, provide a framework for the development, adoption, and implementation of comprehensive plans in Wisconsin. The law includes a “consistency” requirement, whereby zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances adopted and enforced by counties, cities, villages, and towns must be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the county or local unit of government. Under the comprehensive planning law (Section 66.1001 (3) of the *Statutes*), the consistency requirement will take effect on January 1, 2010.

To address the State comprehensive planning requirements, a cooperative comprehensive planning process was undertaken by Racine County, all of the cities, villages, and towns in the County, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). That planning process was intended to result in a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan that satisfies planning requirements set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Statutes* for the County and each participating local government. The 17¹ local government bodies that participated in the County comprehensive planning process were the Cities of Racine and Burlington; the Villages of Caledonia, Elmwood Park, Mt. Pleasant, North Bay, Rochester, Sturtevant, Union Grove, Waterford, and Wind Point; and the Towns of Burlington, Dover, Norway, Raymond, Waterford, and Yorkville.

After obtaining a resolution from all the participating local units of government, Racine County proceeded with the preparation of a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning grant application. On September 27, 2005, the

¹ After the comprehensive planning process began, the Town and Village of Rochester were consolidated as the Village of Rochester in December 2008, reducing the number of participating local units of government from 18 to 17.

Racine County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution to submit a grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) under Section 16.965 of the *Statutes* to help fund preparation of the plan. A grant was awarded in February 2006. Prior to accepting the grant, Racine County and SEWRPC signed a three-party Cooperative Agreement with each of the participating local governments. Each agreement is a formal commitment among the local government, Racine County, and SEWRPC to participate in a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning effort. All agreements were executed in the fall of 2005. The agreements are available for review at the office of the Racine County Planning and Development Department. On May 23, 2006, the Racine County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution accepting the awarded grant funds.

In November 2007, the City of Racine and SEWRPC entered into an agreement under which SEWRPC would prepare a separate local comprehensive plan for the City based on the information developed as part of the multi-jurisdictional plan for Racine County. The County plan is documented in SEWRPC Community Assistance Report No. 301, *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Racine County: 2035*. The comprehensive plan for the City of Racine is documented in this report.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The State planning law specifies in detail the topics that must be addressed in a comprehensive plan, the elements that must be included, and procedures with respect to public participation and plan adoption. The comprehensive planning program for the City of Racine was carried out in a manner ensuring that the statutory requirements would be satisfied. Key statutory requirements are described below.

- **Plan Content**

The State planning law requires that a comprehensive plan include all of the following plan elements: 1) issues and opportunities; 2) housing; 3) transportation; 4) utilities and community facilities; 5) agricultural, natural, and cultural resources; 6) economic development; 7) intergovernmental cooperation; 8) land use; and 9) implementation. The specific items to be considered as part of each element are set forth in Section 66.1001 (2) of the *Statutes*. The comprehensive plan for the City of Racine was structured in a manner consistent with statutory requirements as to plan content.

- **Public Participation Requirements**

Section 66.1001(4) of the *Statutes* requires that the governing body of any County or local government preparing a comprehensive plan adopt written procedures that are “designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan.” Proposed plan elements of the comprehensive plan must be widely distributed, and opportunities must be provided

for written comments to be submitted by the public to the governing body. A procedure for the governing body to respond to those comments must also be identified.

A public participation plan was adopted by the City of Racine on April 4, 2007, as a basis for public involvement in the comprehensive planning program. The public participation plan is available for review at the office of the Department of City Development. In accordance with the public participation plan, many opportunities were provided for the public to learn about, and comment on, the planning process and the resulting plan. As part of the multi-jurisdictional County comprehensive planning process, this included technical advisory committee meetings, numerous informational meetings and open houses, and public hearings. During the course of the multi-jurisdictional planning process, pertinent information was widely disseminated through fact sheets, news releases, and a website (www.sewprc.org/smartgrowth/racinecounty/). A public opinion survey—seeking public input on many of the issues to be addressed in a comprehensive plan—was also conducted. Additional surveys and public meetings were conducted to obtain additional public input on issues that relate specifically to the City of Racine.

- **Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan**

Section 66.1001 (4) of the *Statutes* requires that a comprehensive plan or plan amendment be adopted by an ordinance enacted by the concerned county board or local governing body. The law further requires that all nine elements be adopted simultaneously, and that at least one public hearing be held prior to adopting county and local comprehensive plans.

- **Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance Consistency**

As previously indicated, under the State planning law, beginning on January 1, 2010, zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances administered by county and local units of government must be consistent with the comprehensive plan. To comply with these consistency requirements, the City of Racine must make any changes that may be needed to bring the City zoning ordinance, shoreland ordinance, subdivision zoning ordinance, and official map ordinance into compliance with the comprehensive plan prior to January 1, 2010.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

As noted earlier, the comprehensive plan presented in this report was developed based on the information included in the County multi-jurisdictional plan. This included: 1) inventory, or collection of basic data required for the plan; 2) the preparation of projections of future population and employment levels to be considered in

developing the plan; 3) issue identification and the formulation of goals and objectives; 4) preparation of the various plan elements which together comprise to the comprehensive plan; 5) identification of plan implementation measures; and 6) plan review, refinement, and adoption.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The multi-jurisdictional planning effort was carried out under the guidance of the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee. As created by the Racine County Board, the Racine County Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee is comprised of one representative appointed by each of the participating local governments and one member of the Racine County Board Land Use and Economic Development Committee.

The preparation of the comprehensive plan for the City of Racine was carried out under the guidance of the Department of City Development (DCD) and the City of Racine Plan Commission. The role of DCD and Plan Commission is to review the plan and to recommend a plan for adoption by the City Common Council.

REPORT FORMAT

This planning report documents the comprehensive planning process and the resulting comprehensive plan. It consists of 13 chapters:

Chapter I	Introduction and Background
Chapter II	Existing Plans and Ordinances
Chapter III	Trends and Projections
Chapter IV	Issues and Opportunities Element
Chapter V	Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element
Chapter VI	Land Use Element
Chapter VII	Transportation Element
Chapter VIII	Housing Element
Chapter IX	Economic Development Element
Chapter X	Utilities and Community Facilities Element
Chapter XI	Intergovernmental Cooperation Element
Chapter XII	Implementation Element
Chapter XIII	Summary

CONCLUDING REMARK

The comprehensive plan presented in this report serves a number of functions. Most importantly, it provides a basis for decision-making on land use-related matters by local government officials. The very structure of the comprehensive plan as prescribed under the State planning law, including the nine required plan elements, seeks to ensure that such land use decision-making is truly broad-based in nature. The importance of the comprehensive plan as a basis for decision-making is reinforced by consistency requirements in the State planning law, which specify that, beginning on January 1, 2010, zoning, land division, and official mapping regulations must be

consistent with the plan.

In addition, the comprehensive plan serves to increase the awareness and understanding of City planning goals and objectives by landowners, developers, and other private interests. With an adopted comprehensive plan in place, private sector interests can proceed with greater assurance that proposals developed in accordance with the plan will receive required approvals.

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